

Harper & Keele

VETERINARY SCHOOL

Admissions Policy 2024/25 Entry

1. INTRODUCTION

The Harper and Keele Veterinary School strives to be a place where learning, living and working is a positive experience for all. The Vet School is committed to providing a professional and transparent admissions process. This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in the guiding principles outlined by the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access November 2018, and complies with current legislation affecting the admission of students. The Code's expectation is that: "HE providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully. The application process should be inclusive and allow all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome, regardless of background".

The Harper and Keele Veterinary School's policies and procedures satisfy the requirements established within the principles set out by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS).

The Policy ensures that the Vet School works within the guidance for Higher Education providers published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) which enables prospective students to have access to accurate and reliable information and allows them to make informed decisions about higher education.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide:

i) enquirers, applicants, parents and advisors with clear information regarding the Harper and Keele Veterinary School's admissions processes; ii) a framework for all staff involved in recruitment, selection and the admissions process to ensure consistency and transparency within the admissions process ensuring the interests of applicants are protected.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Vet School's Student 'Terms and Conditions' Agreement, the Host Institutions' Student Protection Plans and the Vet School's Transfer Policy, which can all be found on the [Vet School Key Information page](#).

This Policy is underpinned by the relevant Universities' strategies, regulations and policies on Data Protection, Safeguarding, and Equality and Diversity.

1.2 Scope

This policy covers solely the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme for UK, EU and overseas students which is managed by the Vet School, leading to an award jointly made by Harper Adams University and Keele University.

2. POLICY

2.1 Application Process

Undergraduate

- i) Applications for full time undergraduate programmes at the Harper and Keele Veterinary School should be made normally through UCAS. Specific guidance on applying to the Vet School programmes is on the [Vet School website](#).
- ii) All applications received by the UCAS standard application deadline (16th October 2023) will be guaranteed equal consideration in line with UCAS guidelines.

2.2 Consideration of applications

- i) Admissions activities are carried out by the Vet School, although admissions processing is predominantly administered by the Harper Adams University Admissions Team, working closely with admissions professionals at Keele University and Vet School admissions tutors.
- ii) Standard entry requirements will be published on the Vet School webpages and are reviewed on an annual basis.¹
- iii) The selection process will take in to account:
 - The applicant's potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study;
 - Actual or predicted academic or professional qualifications and grades;
 - Applicants who have followed a non-standard educational route will be considered on an individual basis. The Vet School recognises that standard selection measures may not enable an applicant to demonstrate their suitability and alternative evidence may be requested;
 - Vocational Experience Form– All applicants must submit an online vocational experience form by 1 calendar week after the UCAS deadline. The form must be submitted independently of, and in addition to, the UCAS application. The Vet School will not normally contact applicants reminding them to submit the form before the deadline. The form will be available on the Vet School website for the duration of the UCAS application window from 1st September, on the admissions pages of the Vet School website: www.harperkeelevetschool.ac.uk/;
 - Academic reference(s);
 - Performance at a selection event;
 - Qualifications in English language;
 - Applicant's UCAS personal statement, which should include information regarding the reasons for applying for the programme, career aspirations and motivation to study.
- iv) Where an applicant is unsuccessful with their application to their original choice of course, the Harper Adams University Admissions Team may refer the applicant to an alternative relevant programme at either Harper Adams University or Keele University. Annexe 1 sets out the host universities' approach to 'cascading' unsuccessful applicants to other programmes at either institution.
- v) Admissions decisions will be made as quickly as possible where applications are complete.²

¹ Any changes to our entry requirements will be finalised by the start of that application cycle (31 August) and will not change after this date.

² Where applicants have included all required information on their application, e.g. completed and pending qualifications, personal statement, references and relevant supporting documentation.

2.3 The Admissions process

The admissions process involves two phases – shortlisting and a selection event.

Phase 1 – Shortlisting

All applicants will be considered on an equal basis, against set criteria which will be determined at the start of the Admissions cycle. Shortlisting for the selection event is based on previous qualifications awarded e.g. GCSEs or equivalent, qualifications currently being taken, vocational experience and the supporting reflective statement and reference. Contextual data will also be taken in to account. Please see section 2.11 Equality of Opportunity below for more information.

Phase 2 – Selection event

The final decision on the offer a place will be made entirely on the basis of a selection event.

- Applicants are called to a selection event on the basis of the standard scoring system used to shortlist applications. Applicants will normally be given at least two weeks' notice of their selection date. If an applicant is unable to attend on the date provided, reasonable steps will be taken to offer an alternative date, if one is available. If an applicant fails to respond to the invitation to a selection event or fails to attend a selection event, their application will normally³ be rejected.
- Selection events are likely to take place from the end of November to March.
- Each candidate will experience a similarly structured selection event and be assessed against a standard set of criteria. An assessment form will be completed for each candidate. The assessors are drawn from staff from the Vet School, Harper Adams University, Keele University and industry representatives. All staff have undergone specific training for Vet School selection activities.
- After a selection event, applicants will receive the Vet School's decision via UCAS; successful applicants will be invited to attend an Offer Holder Day.

2.4 Host Institution Preference

Once an applicant has received an offer, there will be an opportunity to state a preferred host institution (where they would be based and the university with which they would be registered for statutory reporting purposes and individualised support) and provide any specific reasons supporting this preference, including challenging personal circumstances and proximity of residential location to either host institution. An applicant's preference and supporting documentation will be considered at confirmation but cannot be guaranteed. Annexe 2 outlines the Host Institution Allocation Procedure.

2.5 Deferred Entry

Requests to defer entry will be considered, but must be made in writing, giving details of the reasons why a deferral is required and must be made by 31st July in the original intended year of entry.

Applicants wishing to defer must have satisfied any conditions of their offer by the end of the original admissions cycle, and are unable to carry forward conditions over in to the following cycle.

Students are subject to the fee responsibilities of their year of entry cohort, rather than the admissions cycle in which they gained a place.

³ Unless the candidate provides evidence of mitigating circumstances that prevented their attendance without notice.

2.6 Age

Because of the travel and the animal handling which students will be involved in from an early stage in the course, applicants need to be at least 18 by the start of the course. Usually a deferred entry place for the following year may be offered to students who do not reach the age threshold at that time.

2.7 Immigration Visa Sponsorship

Overseas applicants who require a Student VISA to study in the UK cannot be considered at this time. This restriction will be reviewed annually.

2.8 Resit Examinations and Re-applications

The Vet School considers applicants who are resitting whole or parts of their qualifications. However, normally a maximum of one resit is allowed in any one subject.

Applicants who have been unsuccessful in a previous admissions cycle can re-apply (this includes those unsuccessful following a selection event). It should be noted that having been called for a selection event in a previous cycle does not necessarily guarantee an interview in a subsequent cycle, as applications will be assessed in competition with all the other applications of that admissions year.

2.9 Re-marks and Examination Appeals

Confirmation decisions will be made on the basis of the outstanding qualification grades published, which for A-levels will normally take place in August. Applicants who don't meet the conditions of their offer and subsequently decide to appeal to the Examination Board for a re-mark must advise the Vet School immediately in writing. While the Vet School will make every effort to reconsider applicants whose grade(s) are subsequently amended as a result of a successful re-mark, this cannot be guaranteed. However, if the Vet School is unable to reconsider because the course is full, an applicant may be offered a deferred entry place.

2.10 Readmission to Study

Former students who wish to be readmitted to study at Harper and Keele Vet School, following a formal withdrawal from their study at the Vet School, will need to reapply. It should be noted that readmission is not automatic and will depend on the circumstances of the individual and the availability of places.

Those students applying for readmission after being withdrawn by the Vet School, either following the decision of an Exam Board or under another Vet School policy or regulation, will not be readmitted.

2.11 Equality of Opportunity

The Vet School is committed to providing fair access to students from all educational and social backgrounds. To this end, contextual data is used in the admissions process.

To be eligible for Access and Participation consideration, applicants require two or more contextual data flags arising from information on your UCAS application. These are based on residential postcode, school performance and time spent in care. For more information please

see the Contextual Offers section in the Admissions procedures guide on the Vet School webpages.

2.12 Applicants with Disabilities

- i) The Vet School welcomes applications from students with disabilities or special needs. The Vet School is committed to giving academic opportunities to all appropriately qualified applicants, irrespective of disability, wherever practical. All applicants are advised to read the RCVS [Day One Competencies](#) which describe the knowledge, skills and competencies which all veterinary students must demonstrate prior to graduation.
- ii) Applicants who have a disability or health problem, which they believe may have an impact on their ability to carry out procedures that are required of a Veterinary Medicine and Surgery student, are invited to discuss this with the Vet School prior to making an application.
- iii) Applications from students with disabilities are subject to the same academic selection process as all applications. Discussions about support requirements are separate from the selection process.
- iv) All applicants with an offer will be asked to complete an Occupational Health questionnaire as enrolment on to the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme is subject to Occupational Health Clearance.
- v) In the very rare cases whereby the Vet School withdraws an offer of a place on the Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme, it is likely to be because of one of the following:
 - there are health and safety concerns
 - while the Vet School is committed to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students, it must ensure that these adjustments do not exceed what would also be considered reasonable within a veterinary practice workplace
 - RCVS regulations, which may prevent membership due to particular disability or health problem (please see [HEOPS guidance for more information](#)).

2.13 Fitness to Practise/study

The Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme is a professional qualification enabling those students who successfully complete to practise as a veterinary surgeon (following registration with the RCVS). This means that some of the training and teaching will be conducted in a professional veterinary practice/hospital setting. Therefore, students must abide by the professional code of conduct set out by the RCVS.

Applicants who attend a selection event are declaring themselves fit and able to undertake the selection process.

For more information regarding the RCVS requirements please see their [Fitness to Practise Guide](#).

2.14 Fee Status

In the majority of cases, the Vet School Admissions Team will be able to determine an applicant's fee status from the information provided on the UCAS application. Where the information is unclear, the Vet School Admissions Team will ask for further information usually via a fee assessment enquiry form. Applicants may also be required to send in supporting documentation, which may include copies of passports (applicant and parents), employment contracts, Home Office letters and evidence of residency in the UK.

Fee status is determined by the rules set out by the UK government, more information on which can be found on the [UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\) website](#).

2.15 Applicants with Criminal Convictions

Annexe 3 outlines the arrangements by which criminal conviction declarations are managed and guidance provided to applicants on whether convictions preclude RCVS fitness to practise demands.

2.16 Responsibility of the applicant

- i) The Vet School expects that an applicant will provide full and accurate information in order to be considered for admission. The Vet School reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if an application is found to be fraudulent or key information has been purposefully omitted. Where the Vet School finds that a student has provided fraudulent or misleading information after enrolment, the Vet School reserves the right to suspend the student pending an investigation, which could result in the student being permanently excluded.
- ii) The Vet School expects applicants to comply with any Fitness to Practise and professional standards.
- iii) All students are required as a condition of their registration to accept the approved arrangements of the Vet School and the associated Student Terms and Conditions.

2.17 Applicant Conduct

All applicants of the Vet School are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is responsible and respectful to others, whether they are other applicants, students, members of staff, visitors to the Vet School/host University, placement colleagues or members of the local community. By accepting an offer of a place at the Vet School, students agree to abide by all relevant provisions of the ordinances and regulations of the University which have been designed to support the Vet School's key values.

Where the Vet School believes behaviour is inappropriate and represents a risk to the health, safety or welfare of others or themselves or the reputation of the Universities, the Vet School may decide to rescind the offer of a place.

2.18 Feedback and Appeals

- i) Vet School admissions staff will normally record the reason(s) why an applicant has been unsuccessful, and this will be communicated to the applicant in their rejection email
- ii) We recognise that there may be occasions when applicants will wish to ask for more detailed feedback. Due to the high volume of applicants, we are unable to provide more detailed feedback.
- iii) An appeal is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision. For further information please see our Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure at Annexe 4.

2.19 Information received during the admissions cycle All applicants, with 'live' applications will be sent relevant information during the admissions cycle. This information will include both relevant information regarding the application as well as details regarding the latest developments at both Universities and the Vet School. All applicants will be sent an email upon receipt of application which sets out the next steps and provides the University Privacy notice detailing how the Vet School will process applicant personal information.

All applicants who receive an offer will receive information in line with the guidance set out by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) for Higher Education providers. This includes course information (normally in the format of a Programme Specification) and a 'Terms and Conditions' document detailing the instances where a course may be changed. The document also contains links to policies that are applicable once a student has enrolled and govern the student's relationship with the Vet School and the Host Institutions, including requirements for continued enrolment on the programme.

2.20 Record keeping duties

The Universities will retain admissions documentation in line with approved Records Management Policy and Retention Schedules.

3. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Admissions Policy is underpinned by a number of policies and processes designed to ensure fairness and transparency within its admissions process. These include the following annexes to this document, as follows:

- Cascade Procedure (Annexe 1)
- Host Institution Allocation Procedures (Annexe 2)
- Criminal Convictions Policy (Annexe 3)
- Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure (Annexe 4)

Other policies and procedures and which most closely relate to Admissions Policy are as follows:

- Student Transfer Policy available on the Harper Keele Vet School Key Information webpages.
- Student Agreement – ‘Terms and Conditions’ available on the Harper Keele Vet School Key Information webpages.
- Data Sharing Agreement between Harper Adams University and Keele University, available on request from admissions@hkvets.ac.uk.
- Harper Adams Data Protection Policy available on the Harper Adams ‘Publication Scheme’ webpage.
- Harper Adams University’s Personal Data Record Retention Schedule available on the Harper Adams ‘Publication Scheme’ webpage.
- Keele University’s Data Protection Policy available on the University’s Information Governance webpage.

4. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

- The Vet School Admissions policy will be reviewed annually taking in to account any changes to RCVS or other relevant external agency regulations for approval by the Joint Management Board.
- The Admissions policy will be published on the Harper and Keele Veterinary School website

Approval and Amendment History Version 1.1, approved by Joint Management Board October 2020 Version 1.2 approved by Joint Management Board June 2021 Version 1.3 approved by Joint Management Board August 2023	
Lead	Harper & Keele Admissions Teams
Policy to be reviewed	Annually
Date of next review	In preparation for 2025 entry

Annexe 1. Cascade Procedures

Introduction

Due to the highly competitive nature and the limited number of places available on the Bachelors in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme, the Harper and Keele Veterinary School will be restricted in the number of offers that it can make to applicants.

The School seeks to ensure that all suitably qualified applicants are made an offer of a course as a result of their application and is in the unique position that those applicants who are unsuccessful in being made an offer of the Bachelors in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme, can be considered for alternative courses at either Harper Adams University or Keele University.

Process

All applications to the Bachelors in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme will be assessed and reviewed in line with standard admissions shortlisting procedures. Those applicants who pass the initial screening will be invited to attend a selection event where they will be scored on their performance over a variety of skills based tasks. Only those applicants who meet the threshold score will be made an offer for course.

Where an applicant is either not shortlisted for interview, or does not meet the threshold to be made an offer following a selection event, their application will automatically be revisited under our cascade procedures. They will not receive an automatic rejection decision.

Applicants who are not shortlisted to attend a selection event but who meet the general entry requirements for other courses at either Harper Adams University or Keele University will be given the opportunity to have their application considered for an alternative course of their choosing. Applicants in this position will be notified that their application for the Bachelor Degree in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme has been unsuccessful, and will be encouraged to review the course portfolios of both Universities and to make a request to be considered for another course. Where an applicant has expressed in their application, a specific interest in an area, other than Veterinary Medicine, they may be signposted towards this area if applicable.

Applicants who are unsuccessful following attendance at a selection event will also be given the opportunity to be considered for another course at either Harper Adams University or Keele University. These applicants will be encouraged to review the courses which are more closely aligned with Veterinary Medicine such as those in the School of Life Sciences at Keele University and the Animal Health, Behaviour and Welfare Department at Harper Adams University, although they will be able to request to be considered for any courses, which are open to applicants, which they meet or potentially meet the entry requirements for.

Applicants will be subject to relevant UCAS decision deadlines when being considered for another course, so if the applicant does not ask to be considered for another course they will be rejected. All applicable dates will be communicated to applicants.

Where an applicant does request to be considered for another course, their application will move away from the Harper and Keele Veterinary School and will be dealt with by the Harper Adams University or Keele University Admissions Teams as appropriate. Where an offer is

made, the applicant will then be subject to terms and conditions in relation to that University and no longer those of the Vet School. Where the applicant is not made an offer for a requested alternative course, they may wish to request to be considered for another alternative.

Unless it is deemed appropriate based on the information in the application, applicants who are applying to the Bachelor Degree in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme, as a second degree will not normally be given the opportunity to be considered for an alternative course if their application is unsuccessful as this is generally not in the applicant's best interests. Should an applicant who has been rejected wish to be considered for an alternative course, they should contact the Admissions Office of the relevant University for advice.

Applicants who do not wish to be considered for another course can request that their application be rejected to allow them to make decisions on their other choices elsewhere.

Annexe 2. Host Institution Allocation Procedures

The Harper and Keele Veterinary School, as a split site, will allocate applicants equally between Harper Adams University and Keele University. This will become the applicant's host institution for the duration of their studies. A Host Institution is either Harper Adams University or Keele University, to which the student has been allocated for purposes including, but not limited to, residential accommodation entitlement, access to 1 – 1 support and where the majority of their teaching will take place.

The applicants will be given an opportunity to state a host institution preference as part of the admissions processes and this will be taken under consideration, but their preference, unfortunately, cannot be guaranteed. In most cases, the Host Institution will be normally confirmed during the admissions confirmation period, following the publication of most level 3 entry qualifications results in mid-August.

Process

All applicants to the Bachelors in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme, who are successful in receiving an offer after the selection events have concluded, will be invited to complete and return the Harper and Keele Veterinary School Host Institution Preference Form.

The Host Institution Preference Form will allow applicants to state their preferred host institution, as well as being able to give any specific reasons against our agreed Access and Participation criteria, which would prevent them from being hosted at a specific institution. The information supplied on the Host Institution Preference Form, will be used in conjunction with supporting documentation submitted in their application and will be used to assign an applicant a host institution in the confirmation period. Those applicants whose circumstances preclude them from being hosted at a particular institution, based on the Access and Participation criteria stated below, may receive their host institution allocation early in order for them to make any necessary arrangements to enable them to study.

The Host Institution Preference Form also gives applicants the opportunity to state that they have no preference. For applicants who do not complete or return the Host Institution Preference Form by the stated deadline, will be considered to have no preference.

Those students who are progressing/transferring from Foundation Year programmes at Harper Adams University and Keele University will not normally be expected to be registered with the other Host Institution when progressing to the Vet School programme. However, they will be invited to complete the Host Institution Preference form to indicate whether they wish to transfer to the alternative campus. Any transfer requests will be considered at confirmation alongside campus preferences of new applicants. Students applying for the course after completing the first year of a cognate course at Harper Adams University or Keele University will continue to be hosted at their current campus. The Student Transfer Policy outlines the opportunities which exist for any students to transfer host campus while on the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme.

Applicants that are unsuccessful in receiving their preferred host institution and believe they meet the agreed Access and Participation criteria can contact the Harper and Keele Veterinary School Admissions Office to discuss their allocation. Any other student who is unhappy with their allocated site, but does not meet the criteria below, should refer to the Student Transfer Policy.

Access and participation criteria:

Where applicants meet one or more of the following criteria then they will normally be allocated their preferred host institution, subject to meeting conditions and can provide documentation to support their declarations.

1. An applicant with significant and evidenced care giver responsibilities and whose home address is within 15 miles of their preferred site;
2. An applicant with a registered disability that restricts mobility and whose home address is within 15 miles of their preferred site;
3. An applicant who can provide evidence of an ongoing medical condition, which requires continuous access to specific medical support, which prohibits them from being based at a specific site.

Annexe 3. Criminal Convictions Procedure

1. Introduction

The Harper and Keele Veterinary School is committed to encouraging a more diverse cohort of students to take up veterinary degrees. Therefore, the School does not wish to deter those applicants with criminal convictions from applying. The School seeks to balance equally its commitments towards applicants, including those with criminal convictions, with its obligations to provide a safe and secure environment for the wider communities of the Universities as well as fulfilling Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) registration requirements.

In order to maintain its responsibility for staff, visitors and students, the School requires that it would ask applicants at offer acceptance stage to declare whether they have an unspent criminal conviction. A disclosure will not result in an automatic cancellation of an offer. In the area of criminal convictions, the School takes the view that it should consider all available information about whether an applicant who accepts an offer of study has a relevant unspent criminal conviction as part of a holistic assessment of an individual, their suitability to study the Veterinary Medicine Surgery Programme (including meeting the professional requirements and code of behaviour as set out by the RCVS) and the impact upon the wider university communities.

The School also requires that students who receive a caution or conviction whilst registered on the programme declare this to the Head of School, for possible consideration against fitness to practise requirements. The respective host university's student disciplinary policies will also be applied where necessary.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance to staff and applicants regarding the process when a criminal declaration is disclosed. The use of the procedure is to ensure:

- i) that all applicants are given equal and fair consideration and that the safety and well-being of the wider University communities are not jeopardised by any individual admitted;
- ii) that the applicant fulfils the professional requirements set out by the RCVS.

1.2. Scope

This procedure applies to all applications that come through UCAS or directly. The procedure has two functions:

- i) To carry out a risk assessment of whether an applicant poses a significant risk;
- ii) To consider the specific professional or statutory requirements as stated by the RCVS.

2. Procedure

2.1 Declaration regarding Criminal Convictions

The Harper Adams University Admissions team will send out an automated email to all applicants after an acceptance⁴ has been received. The applicant will be provided with a Criminal Convictions and Conduct questionnaire to complete.

The School will only ask about 'relevant', unspent criminal convictions. Convictions that are 'spent' (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) or will be spent at the point of starting the course of study do not need to be declared.

⁴ Firm or Insurance Acceptance

A “relevant conviction” is typically considered to be one that falls within one of the following categories:

- Offences concerned with violent or threatening behaviour or the causing of physical or mental harm to others, whether or not such harm was intended or actually caused;
- Offences concerned with the death, ill treatment, welfare or harm to animals;
- Sexual offences, including those listed in the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- Offences concerned with harassment, stalking or malicious communications;
- Unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances, including trafficking offences;
- Offences involving firearms;
- Any "hate crime" as defined by the Crown Prosecution Service and equivalent offences or findings in other jurisdictions;
- Fraud;
- Arson;
- Offences involving terrorism;
- An offence under section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (controlling or coercive behaviour), or any equivalent offence in another jurisdiction.

Applicants that have been convicted outside the United Kingdom for an offence listed above are also considered a relevant offence.

2.2 Process for handling cases of declared criminal convictions

For all disclosures, the details provided by the applicant will be initially considered by the Veterinary School’s Director of Operations in conjunction with the Keele University Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries to decide whether or not supplementary information is required (if not provided already by applicant). Such information may include:

- A report from the Probation Service, Social Services, senior prison officer or police liaison officer (subject to the applicant’s prior consent⁵);
- A character reference from a member of staff at the applicant’s school or equivalent;
- A statement from the applicant setting out any information which they consider to be relevant to the decision.

Once all appropriate information has been received, the School Director of Operations will then arrange for the information to be considered by the Health and Conduct Committee. Please see the Veterinary School’s Fitness to Practise policy for details regarding how this operates.

2.3 Confidentiality and Retention of Record

In all cases, Admissions Staff and School Office should restrict the access of information regarding criminal convictions to only those staff directly involved.

⁵ Information about criminal convictions is considered to be sensitive personal data and as such its use is subject to greater protections under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.

It should, however, be made clear to the applicant that in the absence of their consent being given it may not be possible to continue with their application.

Once the Health and Conduct Panel has made its recommendation, all members of the Panel should hand all papers related to the case to the Secretary who shall ensure that they are destroyed. A single copy of the papers together with the record of the proceedings will remain confidential within the Vet School, subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act (2018). The record of the meeting is to be kept in accordance with the student's host institution Document Retention Schedule.

2.4 Appeal

An applicant can appeal against the finding regarding fitness to practise and/or the sanction applied by the Fitness to Practise Committee.

Appeals can be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Joint Academic Board along with any evidence in support of the appeal being claimed within 15 working days of the date of the letter sent to the student informing them of the decision of the Fitness to Practise Committee. Please see the Fitness to Practise policy for more information.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Veterinary School Joint Academic Board is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the procedure. Questions regarding the procedure should be addressed to the Vet School Director of Operations. .

4. Related Policies and Procedures

- Admissions Policy
- Veterinary School Terms & Conditions
- Veterinary School Fitness to Practise Policy
- RCVS [Code of Professional Conduct](#) and [Fitness to Practise Guide](#)
- Veterinary School Student Conduct & Disciplinary Policy
- Host institution's Student Discipline Procedure

5. Review, Approval and Publication

The Vet School Director of Operations is responsible for the review of this procedure.

The Veterinary School's Joint Academic Board will formally review and approve this procedure.

Annexe 4. Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure

At the Harper and Keele Veterinary School we are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions policies and procedures for **all** our applicants. If applicants have cause for concern about the way their application has been handled and is not satisfied with the initial feedback received, they may use the Complaints Procedure to inform the Harper and Keele Veterinary School of their concerns through a formal channel. Admissions procedures are carried out by the Harper Adams Admissions Team. The Admissions Complaints and Appeals procedures are carried out by the Keele University Admissions Office.

The purpose of the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure is to enable applicants to raise matters of concern regarding the admissions process without risk of being disadvantaged and for both Harper Adams University and Keele University to resolve these concerns quickly and fairly.

1. Scope

- 1.1. An applicant may complain or appeal against the handling of their own application if there is reason to believe that:
 - The decision made contradicts the published entry criteria or the Vet School's Admissions Policy
 - There was an administrative or procedural error in the handling of the application.
 - There was concern regarding a member of staff's behaviour during the application process.
 - The emergence of substantial new information which may have affected the decision and which could not have been available at the time the original decision was made.
- 1.2. A complaints or appeal must be submitted within 4 weeks of receiving feedback from the Admissions Office or within 4 weeks of a decision made if substantial new information is being provided.
- 1.3. Complaints or Appeals will not be considered:
 - If the dispute is against a decision based on the academic qualifications of an applicant ('academic grounds'). Due to the level of competition particularly for selective programmes of study, there will inevitably be occasions when an applicant is disappointed with a selection decision.
 - About an applicant's failure to satisfy professional body or non-academic requirements as specified by the external agency for the Bachelor in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery programme of study.
 - If a complaint or appeal is submitted anonymously or through a third party.
 - If the dispute concerns a decision from a previous admissions cycle or one that has already been accepted by the applicant.
 - If a complaint or appeal is submitted more than 4 weeks after feedback has been provided by the Harper Adams University Admissions Office or a decision has been made if substantial new information is being provided.

2. Principles

2.1. The principles which support the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure are that:

- All complaints and appeals are treated seriously and constructively. It will also seek to ensure that complaints and appeals are dealt with quickly, with fairness and consistency.
- If it is found that an incorrect decision has been made, Harper Adams University and Keele University will make every effort to either reverse or rectify the error and will do so promptly.
- Applicants lodging a complaint or an appeal and those against whom the complaint or appeal are made may expect the matter to be dealt with confidentially and with respect for their privacy. However, it may be necessary to disclose information to others in order to deal with the complaint or appeal and in these circumstances the parties concerned will be informed of such a disclosure.

3. Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Stage 1 – Clarification Request

3.1. The Harper and Keele Veterinary School shall attempt, wherever possible, to resolve application queries quickly and informally, starting with Stage 1 of a three stage process. In the first instance, applicants should go through the Admissions Feedback Procedure and contact the Harper & Keele Veterinary School Admissions Office at admissions@hkvets.ac.uk to ask for feedback and an explanation of the admissions team decision. If the outcome arising from this course of action proves unsatisfactory, then Stage 2 should be followed.

Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

3.2. Where an applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their application and the feedback received or there is substantial new information, they may complain in writing to admissions@keele.ac.uk, for the attention of the Keele University Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries. An applicant must provide the following information:

- Name and Address
- UCAS number or Student number
- Date that feedback from the Harper Adams Admissions Office was received or date of decision if substantial new information is being provided
- Grounds for the complaint
- An indication of the outcome being sought

3.3. The Keele University Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries or nominee shall investigate the complaint and normally respond to the applicant within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint. If it should prove impossible to respond fully within 15 working days, the complainant shall be informed in writing of the revised timescale.

Stage 3 – Appeal

3.4. Where an applicant remains dissatisfied with the written response received regarding their complaint, or there is substantial new information, they may appeal in writing by

completing the Harper and Keele Veterinary School Applicant Appeal Form (Appendix 1). The completed form together with any supporting documentation should be sent to the Keele University Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions or nominee within 2 weeks following receipt of the response to their Stage 2 formal complaint.

- 3.5. The Keele University Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions or nominee shall investigate the appeal and shall respond to the appellant within 15 working days of receipt of the appeal (if it should prove impossible to respond fully within 15 working days, the complainant shall be informed in writing of the revised timescale).
- 3.6. The Keele University Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions or nominee may request additional information from either the applicant or relevant staff and may, in some cases, convene a meeting to discuss the appeal. The Keele University Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions or nominee will find either:
 - That the appeal is upheld and the School will take appropriate action.
OR
 - That the appeal is not upheld and will communicate the reasons for this decision and confirm that no action will be taken.

3.7. The decision reached by the Keele University Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions or nominee is final and will be communicated to the appellant and relevant staff within 15 working days of considering the appeal.

4. Retention of Records

- 4.1. The case file will be retained in the Keele University Admissions Office until the start of the academic year following conclusion of the complaint or appeal.
- 4.2. The Keele University Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries will be responsible for ensuring the case file held in the Keele University Admissions Office is destroyed within 30 days of that date.
- 4.3. No other copies of the case files should be retained once a formal appeal has concluded.

Appendix 1

Harper & Keele Veterinary School Applicant Appeal Form

This form is only for the purpose of submitting a formal appeal in accordance with the Vet School's Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedures. Please read this information prior to submitting the form as we may be unable to consider an inappropriate or incomplete submission.

If you have any queries concerning the completion or submission of this form, please contact the Keele University Associate Director of Admissions and Enquiries, at admissions@keele.ac.uk

Applicant Name:	
Application Number/UCAS Personal ID:	
Course(s) applied to:	
Date of decision	
Date feedback received from Admissions Office	

Please provide details of your appeal below (*please provide copies of any communications regarding your application or feedback received*)
continue on separate sheets if necessary

Please explain why you are not satisfied with the feedback or communications you have received.

continue on separate sheets if necessary

Have you already discussed your appeal informally with a member of University/School staff? If not, please refer to section 3 and complete the first stage of the three stage process. Stage 3 appeals will not be considered unless stages 1 and 2 are completed.	Y/N
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

Please provide details including details of correspondence received from Stage 2 representations.

continue on separate sheets if necessary

Your declaration

In submitting this form, I confirm that the information given on the form is accurate and a true reflection of events to the best of my knowledge and that it does not contain any false or fraudulent information. I agree to the investigating officer on behalf of Harper and Keele Veterinary School sharing details of this case, including information from my application, with other persons as part of any investigation.

Please send the completed form and any additional documentation via email to admissions@ Keele.ac.uk. Alternatively, the completed form can be sent via secure post to:

Deputy Director of Global Student Recruitment and Admissions GSRA,
Keele University
Keele
Staffordshire
ST5 5BG