

Admissions Policy for Undergraduate FIDI 2023

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Ownership	Head of Admissions
Policy contact	Warden
Approval	
Protective Marking	Public
Policy Unique ID	
Last review date	October
Next review date	2023

1 Introduction

- 1.1 FIDI is committed to a fair, transparent, and inclusive admissions process that provides equal opportunities for all applicants. This Admissions Policy outlines the principles and procedures we follow to ensure a comprehensive and equitable selection process.
- 1.2 In accordance with our Mission and core values we are committed to the principle of fair admissions and seek to operate recruitment, selection and admissions procedures that are transparent, reliable and inclusive. In addition, FIDI recognises the importance of a positive 'applicant experience' (irrespective of an eventual outcome of an application) and this policy reflects the importance of the admissions (and pre-admissions) process in the broader student experience to which it is committed.
- 1.3 FIDI will at all times seek to operate procedures that are fair and are in accordance with the relevant law which includes specific compliance with legislation relating to equality and discrimination.
- 1.4 This document is intended to be publicly accessible, and sets out FIDI's overarching policy on the admission of students to undergraduate programmes.

2 Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 Responsibility for the admissions process is shared between a number of teams and individuals in both Professional Services and academic departments. Principle among these are:
 - The Admissions Office
 - Recruitment
 - Academic Heads of Departments

2.2 Ensuring consistency and implementation of policy

- 2.2.1 All those involved in the selection process are required to adhere to FIDI Admissions Policy and complete training and commit to execute their responsibilities in a timely and professional manner.
- 2.2.2 The Admissions Office, in conjunction with academic departments, will provide ongoing training and will ensure those involved in admissions and selection processes are trained and have the authorisation to do so. Responsibility for ensuring consistency in the implementation of the Admissions Policy lies with the Admissions Office in conjunction with academic heads of departments.

2.3 Informing, advising and guiding

- 2.3.1 We are committed to a pro-active approach to offering information, advice and guidance to all applicants and enquirers. Responsibility for ensuring clear, transparent and consistent communication of our programmes and their requirements on our website, and published prospectuses lies with the Admissions team, Communications, and Marketing. The information disseminated is approved via FIDI quality assurance processes for the delivery of programmes.
- 2.3.2 The Admissions team regularly provide advice and guidance via email. Admissions liaise with academic departments and support services to ensure the information given out is accurate and up-to- date and regular information sharing happens within the team.

2.4 Setting entry requirements

- 2.4.1 Minimum entry requirements, both academic and non-academic (including competence in English language), for entry to FIDI will be reviewed annually. These entry requirements will reflect FIDI commitment to ensuring fair access and assessing a student's ability to succeed on their chosen programme of study while seeking to enrich the community of the institution with those who are best placed to contribute to its intellectual life.
- 2.4.2 In addition, requirements that reflect the qualities, skills and knowledge required for specific programmes (or groups of programmes) are determined by the academic Admissions Tutor and academic Heads of Departments in consultation with the Admissions Office.
- 2.4.3 Responsibility for monitoring requirements and ensuring that entry requirements assist in identifying those most able to succeed on a given programme lies with the academic Heads of Department and the Admissions Office.

3 Review, implementation and monitoring

- 3.1 Responsibility for the institution's Admissions Policy, its implementation, review and approval lies with the Head of Admissions, reporting to the Academic Development Committee. The Admissions Policy will be reviewed annually by the Admissions Office in consultation with academic departments and representatives from the student body.

4 The application process

4.1 Information, advice and guidance on the application process

4.1.1 FIDI Admissions is committed to the provision of high quality information, advice and guidance on all aspects of the application and decision making process following the submission of an application. Furthermore, FIDI Admissions is committed to providing information, advice and guidance that is attentive to the specific and diverse needs of individual student groups and that ensures the equality of educational opportunity and supports the recruitment of students from all backgrounds and experiences.

4.2 Application and assessment

4.2.1 Making an application

Applications to all full-time undergraduate degree programmes should be made directly to FIDI Admissions via online application service. FIDI does not take applications for part-time undergraduate study.

Only fully complete applications containing all requested information and (where required) supporting evidence will be considered. Incomplete applications may delay consideration or lead to the withdrawal of the application from the process.

4.2.2 Applications for multiple programmes

FIDI online application systems allow for applicants to apply to multiple programmes concurrently. FIDI welcomes applications for multiple programmes and commits to assess these on the basis of standard academic and non-academic selection criteria alone; the applicant's decision to apply to more than one programme will never in itself inform a selection decision.

FIDI does not permit applicants to firmly accept more than one offer. If an applicant receives more than one offer for an undergraduate programme they will be expected to identify their 'firm' and 'insurance' choice.

4.2.3 Applications for inbound exchange and Study Abroad

Applications for inbound students to study on undergraduate programmes at FIDI are made directly to FIDI Admissions. In some cases, this is made following the successful nomination from partner universities under the terms of inter-institutional agreements and contracts. These courses are administered by the Admissions Office.

4.2.4 Decision making

Decisions regarding admission to all programmes of study at FIDI are made by fully trained, professional staff according to established entry criteria, applied uniformly and consistently, ensuring equal consideration of all applications received prior to any published deadlines.

FIDI will normally attempt to make its decision and communicate this to the applicant within 10 days of receiving the application, although applications to popular programmes and applications received at busy periods may take longer to consider. In such circumstances, or where interview, audition or a 'gathered field approach to selection are in place which may delay a decision, applicants will be kept notified.

Applications are ordinarily considered on the basis of previous or predicted academic achievement, but because we believe in treating applicants as individuals, Admissions staff will look for a range of factors to demonstrate potential, which may include: previous academic performance; prior experiential learning; current courses of study (including non-assessed courses). In addition, some programmes may assess applicants on the basis of information not available on the application form, including interviews, an assessment of a portfolio, the submission of writing samples and/or a written test.

In some cases, where FIDI is unable to make an offer for an applicant's programme choice due to space limitations, an offer for an alternative future start date may be made.

Entry Qualifications are published online in order to provide a transparent standard of the needed level of study. We will not make an offer higher than that published.

When successful, the conditions of an offer (if any) will be clearly communicated to the applicant, and where necessary will be supplemented with explanatory text. Any additional requirements of acceptance will be clearly communicated at the time of offer. FIDI commits to setting conditions that are clear and achievable (based upon information provided in the application form), and to communicate these to the applicant promptly

following an initial offer being recorded with the online application system.

Our selection procedures are intended to provide opportunities to applicants and not present barriers to entry and for this reason we publish information, advice and guidance on many aspects of the application process on our website: www.florence-institute.com/bachelor_degree.html

We publish details of all entry requirements (including details of when a portfolio may be requested or interview offered) on our website.

4.2.5 Entry criteria, minimum requirements and typical offers

The responsibility for monitoring requirements and ensuring entry requirements assist in identifying those most able to succeed on a given programme lies with the Head of Department and in consultation with the Head of Admissions. Academic departments cannot set entry requirements that are higher than those set for general entry.

In principle we consider any qualification at a suitable academic level (for undergraduate level this is identified as Level 3. We consult with professional advisory bodies in order to determine the equivalency of other international qualifications and publish details of equivalent entry requirements on our website.

4.3 Mitigating circumstances

- 4.3.1 FIDI recognises that life events may sometimes impact upon academic performance and that the qualification achieved may not be a true reflection of academic potential. FIDI defines mitigating circumstances as an unexpected or unavoidable event or illness which may have had a significant and adverse effect upon the final qualification received and full details can be found in our 'Extenuating or mitigating circumstance for applicants policy' on the FIDI website.

4.4 English language proficiency

- 4.4.1 Applicants must be competent in English language. Applicants will be required to achieve one of a number of English language qualifications intended for academic purposes approved by FIDI Admissions. The level required will be dependent on the programme of study to be undertaken, and will be published on the website. English Language certificates must be verifiable through an online service (e.g. IELTS) or else must be provided as an original certificate. English language qualifications must be within the validity period specified typically of 2 years. Full details on how our English language proficiency requirements can be met can be found on our website: www.florence-institute.com/bachelor_degree.html

4.5 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

- 4.5.1 RPL is a process that enables students to receive formal recognition for skills and knowledge already gained that have not been previously assessed or awarded credit. RPL enables those who may be eligible to be exempt from having to complete all modules of a programme in order to be awarded a degree where life skills can be used to demonstrate appropriate level of skill and knowledge. RPL allows students to have that learning assessed and included within their degree. Evidence used to support admission via RPL must be no older than five years. The RPL policy is available on the FIDI website.

4.6 Applications for advanced standing and for entry into Year 2 or Year 3

4.6.1 FIDI will consider applications on their individual merits for direct entry into the second year of certain undergraduate degree programmes, where applicants have completed, or are due to complete, a year (or more) of study on a relevant programme. We will not consider such applications for some programmes and this will be made clear via the FIDI Student Transfer page. Entry into the third year will usually only be considered in exceptional circumstances, unless there is an approved institutional articulation agreement in place.

4.6.2 Applicants to certain programmes may be able to apply for 'advanced entry' after receiving an offer whereby compatible and relevant modules have already been completed at a different institution and an application is made to be exempt from doing particular modules within the degree applied for. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants are required to submit an application via the appropriate application method in order to be considered for either advanced standing or second/third year entry.

4.7 Reregistering for a previously incomplete programme of study

A student who has left part-way through their studies may choose to reapply to complete the programme. We will consider these applications where they fall within the student regulations. If a student had previously reached the maximum number of attempts to pass any individual module within a programme, they will not be able to rejoin the same programme. If a student has previously exceeded their registration period it is unlikely they will be able to resume the same programme.

4.8 Contextualised admissions

4.8.1 We recognise that applicants have differing backgrounds and experience and that they do not all have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their potential. We aim to set academic achievement in context through the consideration of a range of factors. FIDI may use contextual information alongside applications in order to build up a full and rounded view of an applicant's achievement and potential. This additional information is considered by admissions decision-makers alongside the application form. No decisions will be made on the basis of this information alone and applicants must meet our standard academic criteria to be considered for entry.

4.9 Interviews and auditions

- 4.9.1 Where applicants are to be interviewed, this requirement, as well as details on the conduct of the interview and any necessary preparation, will be clearly articulated in advance. Where programmes include interviews as part of their selection process this will be indicated on the relevant webpage. FIDIs will endeavour to provide applicants with at least 5 days' notice of the interview date and will, where possible, offer alternative dates or types of interview. Applicants will also be invited to provide details prior to the interview of any reasonable adjustments that should be taken into consideration.

4.10 Portfolios and written work

- 4.10.1 Some programmes at FIDI include the assessment of additional material as part of the selection process, for example the consideration of written work, a creative portfolio or a show-reel. Additional material may be requested as part of the initial application or requested at a later date following a short-listing process. Where the selection process includes the consideration of additional material this information will be published on the individual programme's web-pages. In line with FIDI commitment to operating an admissions process that is fair, transparent and inclusive we will, where possible, provide advice and guidance on how the material will be assessed, and how an applicant might choose to present their creative material.

4.11 Advance fee payments

- 4.11.1 All applicants will be required to pay an advance fee payment to secure their place on the programme. Details of this will be emailed once an offer of a place is made. Where a study visa is required the deposit must be paid prior to the start of the visa process.

4.12 Meeting offer conditions and confirmation.

- 4.12.1 FIDI will confirm an applicant's place on a programme once they have met all the conditions set out in their offer.
- 4.12.2 If an applicant does not meet the conditions of their offer, FIDI will reconsider the whole application again taking into account actual achieved grades and overall application to decide if the offer can be confirmed despite being lower than the requirements.

4.13 Deferred entry

- 4.13.1 FIDI welcomes applications for admission for the following year for most programmes. We also understand that an applicant's personal circumstances may necessitate a change to their intended year of entry. Admissions staff will consider deferred applications using the same selection process as for applicants for the current year. We will normally only defer an offer of a place for one year. Applicants wishing to defer a place for a second year will be required to submit a new application. Please note, FIDI cannot guarantee the exact same programme content in the case of a deferred application and the programme fees will be as year of actual entry rather than year applied for. Applicants will be contacted to confirm that they have checked the most up-to-date programme information on our website and still wish to accept their place in the spring before they start. Only unconditional offers can be deferred so applicants must still meet the conditions of their offer to be able to defer their place.

4.14 Documentation verification and fraud

- 4.14.1 An offer of a place at FIDI is made on the basis that the information provided both in the application form and any supplementary information is true and accurate. Where an applicant is suspected to have provided incorrect or false information, further details will be sought by the Admissions Office. Full-time undergraduate applicants suspected of submitting, or found to have submitted, false information will be dealt with under relevant regulations. In the case of international applicants, details may also be passed to Visas and Immigration.
- 4.14.2 Applicants may be required to show hard copy original documentation of qualifications listed in the application upon which the decision to offer a place was made. FIDI may accept soft copies but this is at the discretion of the institution. If FIDI is not satisfied for any reason with a soft copy a hard copy must be presented.
- 4.14.3 FIDI reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place and/or cancel an enrolment if fraud is discovered following an applicant receiving an offer.

5 Feedback on applications

- 5.1 FIDI recognises the need to respond to an applicant's request for information as to why their application was deemed unsuccessful. The Admissions Office will provide feedback on an individual basis in response to receiving a formal request from the applicant within 28 days of the request.
- 5.2 Any applicants wishing to appeal against a decision in light of their feedback should refer to the complaints procedure. Further details can be found in the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints (pre-enrolment) Policy.

6 Policies and Procedures specific to particular applicant groups

6.1 Applicants under the age of 18

6.1.1 All applicant to FIDI must reach the age of 18 years of age before attending the first day of classes. In the case of students who are under the age of 18 years, my apply and be accepted with written parental consent.

6.2 Applicants with disabilities or specific learning needs

6.2.1 FIDI welcomes applications from applicants with disabilities, which includes those with specific learning difficulties and long-term health conditions, and is committed to a policy that allows, as far as possible, for equality of opportunity and access to higher education. No discrimination on account of disability shall be shown against any person in determining whether or not they shall be admitted to FIDI and we recognise the need, under the terms of the EU Equalities Acts, to make reasonable adjustments throughout the admissions process to accommodate the needs of any applicant who has declared a disability.

6.2.2 Applicants will be provided the opportunity throughout the admissions process to request reasonable adjustments, which can include, but are not limited to: additional time in admissions tests; an accessible interview space; the provision of a BSL interpreter at interview; and extra consideration of factors that may have impacted upon prior academic performance.

6.2.3 FIDI welcomes visits from its applicants and encourages its students with disabilities to contact the Admissions at the earliest opportunity to discuss any requirements in more detail. We can also arrange tours of FIDI with experienced staff to discuss access issues.

6.3 Applicants declaring criminal convictions

6.3.1 Applicants applying for a programme will be asked to disclose all relevant convictions at the application stage. Applicants with declared criminal convictions will be assessed in the first instance on the basis of standard academic and non-academic selection criteria. If it is recommended that an offer be made, further information on the relevance of the criminal conviction(s) will be gathered and assessed before the final decision is made.

6.4 International applicants

6.5 FIDI welcomes applications from prospective international students. These students will be considered using the standard processes for application consideration. We will consider the equivalency of international qualifications using the UK NARIC framework and other information sources and full training is provided to Admissions Office staff in assessing qualification on equivalency. International applicants who have completed qualifications in a language other than English will have to prove their English language proficiency. Details for this can be found in section 4.5 of this policy.

Refugees and asylum seekers

6.5.1 FIDI welcomes applications from those who have been granted refugee status or are in a 'refugee like situation' and understand that additional procedures will need to be followed where documentation is not available or available in a limited way. We will consider these applications on a case-by-case basis.

6.6 Applicants with a Trans* identity

6.6.1 FIDI welcomes applications from students with a trans* identity or transgender history.

6.6.2 For purposes of clarification, trans* is used in this policy as an umbrella term to encompass a number of diverse ways in which people personally experience their gender. FIDI has both legal and moral responsibilities to ensure trans* applicants are effectively supported, during the application process, and to ensure that no discrimination on account of gender identity shall be shown against any person in determining whether or not they shall be admitted to FIDI. The college recognises the right of every individual to choose whether to be open about their gender identity (and history) and when individuals disclose this information to the college, it will be treated with the utmost sensitivity.

6.6.3 For further details via confidential email at: admin@florence-institute.com

7 Changes to and discontinuation of programmes

7.1 FIDI will strive to minimise any changes to programmes once applications begin to be processed for the next intake date. However, sometimes changes are unavoidable and in these circumstances the Admissions Office will notify applicants as soon as possible if there is a significant change to a programme of study after the receipt of application. Significant changes may include:

- Substantial changes to the content of the programme applied for;
- Changes regarding the status of the programme (e.g. validation by a professional or statutory body);
- Discontinuation of a programme of study.

7.2 Further information can be found in the Admissions terms and conditions publication.

8 Appeals and complaints

8.1 FIDI is committed to providing a fair and efficient admissions service, and encourages applicants to inform the institution of any difficulties encountered during the admissions process in order that procedures can be regularly reviewed and improved. It is hoped, therefore, that most queries and complaints can be resolved informally, but where this is not possible, applicants are advised to follow the complaints procedure outlined in the Feedback, Appeals and Complaints (pre-enrolment) Policy.

8.2 A complaint is defined as a statement of dissatisfaction with the manner in which an application has been handled in relation to the institution's admissions policies and procedures. The reasons for such a complaint will include administrative error, the behaviour of a member of FIDI staff or the conduct of an interview (where applicable). Whilst we will routinely consider all complaints that relate to the administration of an application, we will not consider appeals based on dissatisfaction with the academic judgement underpinning a decision made on an application.

8.3 A complaint should be lodged in writing as close as possible to the point at which it arises and always within 14 days of the relevant activity.
complaints@florence-institute.com

9 Related policies

9.1 The Admissions Office has a number of related policies and procedure documents to aid in the fair and transparent handling of all applications and to provide the best experience to our applicants. These include:

- Student Transfer Policy
- Feedback, Appeals and Complaints Policy
- Extenuating or mitigating circumstance for applicants policy

9.2 Further details can be obtained from the Admissions Office.