

# Admissions Policy

**University of Liverpool  
Mathematics School**

September 2020 enrolments

## 1. Introduction and Overview

- 1.1. The *University of Liverpool Mathematics School* (ULMaS) aims to recruit students who will benefit most from a challenging preparation for the study of advanced mathematics and related courses at university. We will implement an admissions policy that identifies the most suitable students in terms of their current performance and their potential to grow in response to the teaching we will provide. We aim to select students who are developing a fascination for mathematics and have a strong desire to pursue this interest far beyond A-level, and who will find it beneficial to be challenged to think deeply and reason with clarity.
- 1.2. Our intention is to recruit a significant number of students from groups who would not otherwise have access to high quality mathematics provision and also to increase the total pool of high-achieving young mathematicians in the local community. Our mission to widen participation in mathematical degrees and careers is reflected in this admissions policy and we envisage an increase in socio-economic diversity in undergraduate intake to degrees in the mathematical sciences as a result.

## 2. Key Principles and Values

It is our policy to:

- 2.1. operate a clear, fair and transparent admissions process which is based on valid and reliable assessment;
- 2.2. assess and consider the needs of each applicant individually, on an impartial and unbiased basis;
- 2.3. consider not just the current academic performance of applicants, but also
  - 2.3.1. the potential for a place at ULMaS to be of particular benefit to the applicant, and
  - 2.3.2. the potential for the applicant to contribute positively to the ethos and curriculum of ULMaS;
- 2.4. provide expert pre-entry advice and guidance in order to ensure that students know what type of school they are applying for and make an informed judgement about whether it is suitable for them;
- 2.5. ensure that all students, parents and carers have sufficient opportunity to find out about the school and what it might offer them.

## 3. Planned Admissions, Eligibility Criteria and Assessment

- 3.1. The school will have capacity for 160 students aged 16-19.
- 3.2. We have a planned admission of 80 Year 12 students each academic year.
- 3.3. In 2020 we will admit students to Year 12 only.
- 3.4. Applicants will normally be in Year 11 and have their sixteenth birthday during the academic year in which they apply.
- 3.5. Potential applicants who do not fit this description are advised to contact the school for advice via our website.

## 4. Minimum Entry Requirements

4.1. General minimum entry requirements for the ULMaS are set out below:

<b>Criterion 1</b>	Performance in the admissions test and interview process which suggests the student will thrive in the educational environment at ULMaS.
<b>Criterion 2</b>	<b>Grade 8 or above</b> in GCSE* Mathematics
<b>Criterion 3</b>	<b>Grade 8 or above</b> in GCSE* Physics or <b>grade 8-8 or above</b> in GCSE Combined Science
<b>Criterion 4</b>	<b>Grade 5 or above</b> in GCSE* English Language or in GCSE English Literature
<b>Criterion 5</b>	At least 4 further GCSEs* at <b>grade 5 or above</b>

- 4.2. Equivalences apply: in order for a qualification to be treated as equivalent to a GCSE it should be recorded as a Level 2 qualification which is equivalent to a full GCSE and is worth at least 5 points in performance table measures (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-4-qualifications-discount-codes-and-point-score>)

es). iGCSE / Level 2 certificate qualifications which do not count in the school performance tables are treated as follows: A\* = grade 8, B = grade 5.

- 4.3. Applicants with qualifications other than GCSE may provide evidence of equivalence through a UK NARIC Statement of Comparability. If in doubt, please contact us to discuss this.
- 4.4. Given the significant changes to the GCSE assessment approach prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic the school will consider the individual circumstances of students who fail to meet the conditional offer. Where students fail to meet the terms of their offer but the evidence provided by the student's performance in our admissions process or by their Year 11 teachers gives us reason to believe they will cope well with the curriculum at ULMaS we may waive some of the requirements of the conditional offer in August 2020.

## 5. Application Process

The selection process for students will have four stages.

### 5.1. Stage 1: A written application via the ULMaS website

5.1.1. This will gather all necessary information about the applicant including:

- 5.1.1.1. any individual needs they may have which will need to be accommodated during the selection process, and
- 5.1.1.2. the details of a teacher who can provide a reference about the applicant's suitability for the A-Level courses they have chosen, their capacity to work hard and their record of punctuality and attendance.
- 5.1.1.3. The school reference will be scored 0 if it does not support the applicant, 1 if it does not provide good evidence of suitability, 3 if it provides convincing evidence of suitability and 2 if it paints a mixed picture.

5.1.2. In order to be acceptable, an application must be factually correct, contain all the required information, be from an applicant who is eligible for sixth-form funding and be received by the relevant deadline.

### 5.2. Stage 2: Mathematics Aptitude Test

5.2.1. (Covid-19 Revision) While it is not possible for students to take a written test they will instead take part in a longer mathematics interview (of approximately 60 minutes) which provides them with a broader range of opportunities to demonstrate their mathematical potential. When it is possible for students to take a written test we will return to the policy described below.

5.2.2. All applicants who make acceptable applications will be invited to take the aptitude test.

5.2.3. The aptitude test will be based on mathematics which will be drawn from the Key Stage 3 curriculum and will not require knowledge of material which is not normally taught until GCSE.

5.2.4. The assessment will enable applicants to demonstrate problem solving ability, fluent algebraic skills and the capacity to see the mathematics in superficially unfamiliar situations.

5.2.5. Sample questions will be published on the ULMaS website, and applicants who apply by the early deadline (below) will be offered an opportunity to complete some preparation work supported by ULMaS tutors.

5.2.6. The aptitude test will take between 60 and 90 minutes to complete.

5.2.7. Where assessment Access Arrangements are approved for an applicant, and the necessary supporting information about these arrangements and the applicant's eligibility are available to us, we will facilitate these.

5.2.8. The available marks for each question will be stated on the paper and the applicant's test mark will be the sum of the marks earned on all questions according to a well-defined mark scheme used by all markers involved.

5.2.9. Students will not routinely be informed of their test score but may request it as part of post-interview feedback.

5.2.10. Where students believe an error may have been made in the marking of their paper they may ask for a review of marking, in which case the application of the mark scheme will be

reviewed by a different marker and, where appropriate, a correction made and the offer decision reviewed.

### 5.3. Stage 3: Interview

5.3.1. It is anticipated that all candidates who complete the aptitude test will be invited for interview. If a student scores very poorly in the aptitude test, they may be advised of this before the interview date and given the option to withdraw their application if they wish.

5.3.2. The interview will be the primary tool for assessing the applicant in terms of the following characteristics:

5.3.2.1. Their ability to respond to mathematical problems of varying difficulty with the guidance of a mathematics teacher (up to a total of 6 points for each of two exercises making a total 12 points).

5.3.2.2. How well they respond to the thought-provoking teaching approaches that will be used at ULMaS (up to a total of 6 points).

5.3.2.3. Their apparent academic potential judged on the basis of their current performance and their apparent potential for growth (up to a total of 6 points).

5.3.2.4. Their motivation and work ethic (up to a total of 6 points, including 3 from the reference).

5.3.2.5. The suitability of the education to be offered at ULMaS for the applicant (up to a total of 6 points).

5.3.2.6. How well their values and aspirations fit with the inclusive, collaborative and ambitious values of ULMaS (up to a total of 6 points).

For each applicant, each of the factors listed above will be assigned a score of up to 6 points following the approach below:

Band	Meaning	Score
Upper Band	Ample evidence that the student has strength in this characteristic.	5 or 6 points
Middle Band	Some evidence of strength in this characteristic.	3 or 4 points
Lower Band	Little or no evidence of strength in this characteristic even with prompting and follow up questions.	1 or 2 points
Zero	Evidence that the student is not suitable in this characteristic.	0 points

These scores will then be added together, along with their score in the aptitude test (proportionate to their raw score up to a maximum of 48 points for a student scoring 100%), combining to a possible maximum score of 90 points.

### 5.4. Stage 4: Decision

5.4.1. Decisions will be made by an Admissions Panel chaired by the Headteacher. The membership of the Admissions Panel will be determined by the Trustees and will include at least one trustee in addition to the Headteacher. Other staff or volunteers co-opted by the trustees may also be appointed to the admissions panel.

5.4.2. Any students with an Education Health and Care Plan naming ULMaS will be offered a place.

5.4.3. The Admissions Panel will then make conditional offers to remaining applicants using process in 5.4.3.1 to 5.4.3.6 below.

5.4.3.1. The Admissions Panel will be presented with the aptitude test and interview scores for each applicant.

- 5.4.3.2. The Admissions Panel may ask to see further information such as copies of the applicant's application form, aptitude test and notes from interviews in order to verify that the scoring has been done correctly, and may adjust scores if the available evidence suggests an error has been made and the score recorded is not in line with the agreed standard.
- 5.4.3.3. Applicants' scores from the aptitude test and the total interview score will be aggregated into a single score and this score will then be used to rank the applications from high to low.
- 5.4.3.4. If the Admissions Panel determine that the weighting of certain factors should be adjusted arithmetically then this may take place, provided that the arithmetic adjustments are applied consistently to the scores of all applicants.
- 5.4.3.5. A threshold will be determined below which candidates are judged to be unsuitable for the education offered at the school. Applicants whose aggregated scores fall below the threshold will not be offered places.
- 5.4.3.6. If there are more than 80 applicants above the threshold the Admissions Panel will make conditional offers to the 80 highest ranked applicants remaining in this list.
- 5.4.4. The list of candidates whose scores are above the threshold but who have not been offered conditional places will constitute a waiting list to be used if places become available at a later stage.

## 5.5. Oversubscription Criteria

Places will be allocated based on the scoring from the aptitude test and interview process, as described above.

## 6. Timeline

- 6.1. The timeline for applications and offers will be published annually. The timeline for 2020 entry is outlined in appendix 1.

## 7. Waiting List

- 7.1. The process described in 5.4 above will yield an ordered list of applicants who meet the admissions criteria. If there are more than 80 applicants who meet the admissions criteria, the ordered list of applicants who are eligible for a place but have not been offered one will constitute the waiting list.
- 7.2. Late applicants may be added to the end of the waiting list if they meet the criteria for entry that has been applied in that year's recruitment round.
- 7.3. We will make offers to the applicants on the waiting list if:
  - 7.3.1. Any offer holder rejects the offer or initially accepts it and then later informs us that he/she no longer wishes to take up their place.
  - 7.3.2. Any offer holder does not meet the conditions of their offer when GCSE results are announced in August 2020.
  - 7.3.3. Any offer holder ceases to be an eligible applicant because it becomes apparent that their application was not acceptable on the basis of not being factually correct, or their not being eligible for a place for some other reason outside our or their control.

## 8. Appeals

- 8.1. Any applicant refused a place at ULMaS will be offered a right of appeal to a committee of the academy trust operating the school.
- 8.2. The panel will consider the applicant's case and decide whether to uphold the appeal. Please see the ULMaS Pupil Admissions Appeals policy for further details.

## 9. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and any amended policy for the following September will be published on the school website before the end of the preceding September. The policy will remain on the website throughout the college year.

## 10. Complaints

If you are unhappy with any aspect of the admission policy or appeal process you may submit a complaint, outlining your concerns to the ESFA at [Academy.QUESTIONS@education.gov.uk](mailto:Academy.QUESTIONS@education.gov.uk), though you should first raise any concerns with the school via [livmaths@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:livmaths@liverpool.ac.uk).

## 11. Equality & Diversity

- 11.1. ULMaS will do everything it can to facilitate a process which is fair and free from discrimination. Individual adjustments can be made to ensure that no student experiences a substantial disadvantage in the process. We will create an atmosphere in which each applicant is able to perform to the best of their ability and give a fair and honest representation of their talent and interest in mathematics.
- 11.2. We are keen to encourage applications from all students who feel that ULMaS is suitable for them. We will do everything within our power to ensure that the application process, the school ethos and the school environment is as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- 11.3. Any reasonable adjustments that are needed, both prior to the entrance exam and/or interview and after admission, will be made. The school building is old, but reasonably well adapted for users with access needs.
- 11.4. Offers will be made free from bias in terms of disability, race, sex, gender orientation/assignment, religion or belief.

## 12. Appendix 1

12.1. The process is divided into two rounds. If all 80 places are likely to be filled from the first round of applicants, the second round may not proceed. Applicants are therefore encouraged to apply in the first round.

<b>September 2019</b>	Applications open Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September with the publication of the application form on the ULMaS website.
<b>November 2019</b>	Early deadline for first round applications: end of <b>11/11/2019</b>
<b>December 2020</b>	<b>Aptitude test</b> preparation session/s for those who meet the early deadline will then take place at some point between <b>18/11/2019</b> and the date of the aptitude test. All early applicants will be invited to at least one session; those who come from outreach target schools may be offered more than one session.
<b>January 2020</b>	Late deadline for first round applications: Friday <b>10/1/20</b> . The aptitude test will take place on Saturday <b>18/1/20</b> and marking of the assessment will be complete by Monday <b>20/1/20</b> . Invitations to interview will be sent during w/c <b>20/1/20</b> . <b>Interviews</b> will take place between <b>27/1/20</b> to <b>8/2/20</b> . In order to avoid the school day, interviews will take place from 4pm to 7pm on weekday evenings, and between 10am and 3pm on Saturday <b>1/2/20</b> and Saturday <b>8/2/20</b> . If applicants are unable to attend the first interview appointment offered, they will be offered an opportunity to rebook. If no mutually acceptable appointment time is available, the applicant's application will not be progressed further. An opportunity to reapply will be available should there be a second round of applications.
<b>February 2020</b>	A letter will be sent out to those applicants who are given a conditional offer during February half term. Applicants will be asked to respond within 3 weeks, and those who do not respond will be contacted again at this time to ascertain their intentions. Applicants will be told to ensure that they have an alternative option should ULMaS not open on time.
<b>March 2020</b>	Deadline for second round applications should places remain; Friday <b>6/3/20</b> Second round of aptitude test. Saturday <b>14/3/20</b>
<b>April 2020</b>	Interviews and offers for second round applicants. <b>21/3/20</b> to <b>3/4/20</b>
<b>April 2020 to August 2020</b>	Late applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis if unallocated places remain. These applicants will be subject to the same process and standards as previous applicants.
<b>August 2020</b>	Applicants holding offers will have places on results day (Thursday <b>20/8/20</b> ) where they have successfully met their offer in terms of GCSE (and equivalent) results <sup>1</sup> . They will have until Friday <b>21/8/20</b> at <b>1pm</b> to contact us with their notification of results <sup>2</sup> . If they fail to do so they may forfeit their place to another student on the waiting list. Special consideration will be given to those falling just short and these decisions will be influenced by our widening participation agenda.

	Applicants on the waiting list may be given the opportunity to firmly accept an offer following results day in August if spare places arise. Places will be offered to applicants in the order in which they appear on the waiting list. They will then have 24 hours in which to firmly accept the offer and will be required to present themselves in person <sup>2</sup> at ULMaS with confirmation of their GCSE results. Applications received after the published closing date will be accepted should places still be available after all applicants from the waiting list have been offered a place.
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12.2. <sup>1</sup> Students who are not taking GCSEs (e.g. Scottish students in the process of moving to Liverpool) will be able to provide confirmation of their results by arrangement, at an appropriate time, according to the date of publication.

12.3. <sup>2</sup> Students will need to send us a photograph of their results slip/s including their UCI number, or provide us with a paper copy.

<b>Status</b>	<b>STATUTORY</b>
<b>Delegated to</b>	Headteacher, ULMaS
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Chair of Trustees, ULMaS
<b>Last Updated</b>	06/06/2019 Updated for Covid-19 after consultation with the Board of Trustees on 20/5/2020
<b>Review Date</b>	August 2020
<b>Ratified Date</b>	09/09/2019 Ratified by Board of Trustees