



**VOICE STUDY  
CENTRE**

# **Postgraduate Admissions Policy**

**2024 - 2025**

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# Postgraduate Admissions Policy

## Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all admissions to full-time, part-time postgraduate<sup>1</sup> taught (PGT) offered by Voice Study Centre. It covers all stages of an applicant's interaction with VSC from initial enquiry through to application, receipt of the VSC selection decision, and the transition to first registration and induction for successful applicants.

## Responsibility for policy

The Postgraduate Admissions Policy is approved by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

## Review of policy

Monitoring and review of the Postgraduate Admissions Policy is undertaken annually by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

## Principles governing Postgraduate Admissions

VSC recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity. It aims to provide an environment in which applicants are treated with dignity and respect.

VSC is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and to benefit from study at postgraduate level. Individual applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction. VSC's admissions policies and procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes Graduate Certificate and Diploma courses, which are graduate in time, but not in level. Use of the term 'postgraduate' in this document is intended to be inclusive of provision at graduate as well as postgraduate level. Graduate level study is defined as equivalent to Honours level (6) by the Quality Assurance Agency in its National Qualifications Framework; for further details, see <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/qualifications>

VSC acknowledges the guiding principles and precepts governing good admissions practice set out in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Admissions, recruitment and widening access (November 2018). VSC welcomes the recognition by the QAA of the autonomy enjoyed by higher education institutions in making admissions decisions and of the need to exercise judgement in making such decisions. Against this background, the VSC Postgraduate Admissions Policy is intended to provide a policy and procedural framework within which admissions decision-making is characterised by transparency, fairness and consistency.

VSC strives to observe the rules and procedures set down by the Office for Students (OfS) and other good practice guidance provided by the sector (for example by Universities UK), and to comply with all relevant legislation in relation to its postgraduate admissions activity.

# Section 1 – Marketing and Student Recruitment

VSC is committed to the provision of comprehensive, open and consistent messaging in its marketing and recruitment information, and to the management of activity which leads to the admission of students to VSC in ways that are fair, clear, explicit and implemented consistently.

Ensuring consistency is important especially in relation to the very wide range of different countries, in which VSC undertakes marketing and recruitment activities.

VSC's marketing and recruitment messages are delivered through promotional materials and activities which we aim to ensure are accurate, relevant, current, and accessible in order to provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

Marketing and Student Recruitment information is communicated via a number of different channels and includes:

- VSC main website ([www.voicestudycentre.com](http://www.voicestudycentre.com)) which includes specific pages for international students, including the US
- PDF prospectuses and other marketing collateral
- email campaigns to enquirers and applicants
- social media
- digital advertising campaigns

VSC ensures that communications with applicants and enquirers adheres to CMA (Competition and Markets Authority), GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) and PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations) legislation.

## Section 2 - Admissions

VSC operates a centralised postgraduate admissions function for all direct applications.

The Head Of Student Support is responsible for processing the application decision and determining whether there should be any conditions where an offer is made. A formal offer letter and VSC's Terms and Conditions (and other documents that form part of the 'student contract') are communicated to applicants at the initial offer stage.

### **Applicants' responsibilities**

Applicants are expected to:

- provide complete and honest information in applications submitted to VSC
- respond in a timely manner to requests for further information from VSC
- communicate any changes to the information originally supplied in their application as soon as possible
- be courteous and respectful in their communications with staff involved in admissions.

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<sup>2</sup> The term department is used generically in this document and includes academic centres of VSC.

# Entry Requirements

## 1. Academic requirements

Applicants for postgraduate study must meet the admissions criteria as published annually and on the VSC website. Academic requirements are reviewed and approved annually and may include achievement in specific subjects and/or the submission of specific items with the general application.

## 2. English language competence

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to achieve a minimum level of English to be admitted to a postgraduate taught course or research degree. VSC accepts a range of English language qualifications and some degrees taught in English.

The English language qualifications and tests which are acceptable for entry to VSC and the levels required are listed on our website.

## 3. Publication of entry requirements

Entry requirements are normally determined up to eighteen months before the proposed point of admission e.g. by January 2023 for October 2024 entry and are published in the postgraduate prospectus and on VSC website. VSC reserves the right to amend its entry requirements up to 12 months before the proposed point of admission, and in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to amend requirements after this point (but wherever possible this will be done ahead of any offers being made in a new admissions year).

Amended entry requirements will be published on VSC website. Applicants already holding offers at the time of the change will be admitted in accordance with the terms of the existing offer unless the new requirements are in favour of the applicant, in which case a revised offer will be issued automatically.

## 4. Acceptable qualifications

VSC accepts Bachelors and Masters degrees from UK, and international institutions where the status of the institution and its degree awarding powers can be verified. The equivalence of qualifications, including professional qualifications and non-UK qualifications,

to level 6 of the UK qualifications framework (an Honours degree) and the equivalence of non-UK grading systems to the UK classification system to be evaluated in accordance with independent national guidance provided by UK ENIC and other recognised sources.

## **5. Verification of qualifications**

Applicants are required to declare of their academic achievement to date at the point of application. Evidence of the award of a Bachelors or higher degree must be provided at the confirmation stage, if not already verified during the admissions process, and before the applicant's place is confirmed. Information and guidance on qualification verification is made available to applicants at both the initial offer and at the confirmation stage of the admissions cycle.

## **Selection**

### **6. Assessment of applications and initial checks**

All applications are subject to an initial check on receipt by admissions. The initial check will identify applications which require specific attention in order to ensure that they are dealt with in accordance with relevant procedures. The initial check will also verify that the applicant's existing academic achievements are from institutions which can be verified as acceptable in accordance with paragraph 5 above. Further evidence or clarification will be requested from the applicant if there is insufficient information for the application to be considered or for a selection decision to be made.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/qualifications>



Applications from individuals who do not meet VSC's general entrance requirements and who do not demonstrate compensating professional experience may be rejected at the initial assessment stage. Applications where there is uncertainty about the level of existing academic achievement will be referred to the relevant manager for clarification.

## **7. Selection decision**

Applicants who have the potential to achieve the course entry requirements, but to do so based on additional factors (for example, relevant professional experience) will be referred to the relevant manager who will determine the outcome (whether to make an offer or to reject).

In accordance with VSC's commitment to fair admissions, all applications are considered individually to determine whether an offer should be made on the basis of academic achievements to date, future academic achievement and other evidence of the applicant's ability and potential to complete the course for which they have applied. This includes evidence of the applicant's motivation, skills and experience, as expressed in any personal statements and supporting documents, and any extenuating circumstances.

## **8. Interviews**

Interviews are part of the standard admissions procedure for the VCS postgraduate courses, but exceptions apply, and applicants are notified accordingly during the admissions process where attendance at interview or any other evidence is required. Application processes and requirements are set out on VSC website.

VSC reserves the right to reject applications from applicants who are invited to attend an interview but do not book an interview slot or who book but then fail to attend.

## **Offer-making**

### **9. Communication of Offer**

Where VSC decides to make the applicant an offer, this is communicated to applicants via email. Applicants will receive an offer letter and information on VSC's Terms and Conditions (and other policies that make up the 'student contract').

### **10. Conditional Offers**

A conditional offer will be issued to an applicant who is still to complete an academic or English language qualification, or where other additional documentation is required.

The offer letter will set out the specific conditions that the applicant has been asked to achieve in order for their place to be confirmed. Where appropriate the offer will include the English language requirement that the applicant must achieve in order for their place to be confirmed and/or other necessary conditions.

## **11. Tuition Fees**

The VSC Tuition Fee Policy is included in the offer letter.

## **12. Deferred entry**

VSC will not automatically grant a request to defer an offer to a subsequent date of entry.

## **13. Discontinuation, Suspension or Change of Title of Courses**

VSC reserves the right to discontinue or suspend a course for which offers have already been issued but undertakes to do this in exceptional circumstances only. Where a course is discontinued or suspended, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible, and where possible and appropriate, are offered a place on an alternative course by VSC. Where the title or content of a course is changed, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible of the change and given options for how they would like to proceed.

## **Consideration of additional data in selection and offer-making**

### **14. Extenuating circumstances and other events that impact an applicant's studies**

As well as taking into account any extenuating circumstances which may have affected an individual applicant when deciding whether an offer should be made - VSC also seeks to be as responsive as possible to international conflicts and natural disasters. VSC will show due flexibility and sensitivity in dealing with applicants or prospective applicants who have been affected by global issues including, but not limited to, war and pandemics, including applicants from forced migration backgrounds.

### **15. Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning**

Applicants seeking recognition for prior or experiential learning are handled individually based on VSC internal procedures. If the request is approved, the offer will note the volume of credit which has been accredited and the changes to the applicant's planned course structure and tuition fee which result from the approval.

### **16. Applicants requesting readmission**

Applicants who have previously withdrawn, or been withdrawn, from study at VSC, and who wish to be readmitted, will be considered on an individual basis.

### **17. Assessment of applicant fee status**

Information in the application relating to fee status, including the nationality, country of residence, address, personal statement and reference is checked for each applicant. If an

applicant's fee status is unclear from the information provided on the application form, a fee status assessment will be undertaken.

VSC does not exercise discretion when determining applicants' fee status, and an assessment of eligibility for fees by VSC does not guarantee funding from the Student Loans Company/Student Finance England.

Confirmation of the applicant's fee status is included in the offer letter issued to the applicant, however VSC reserves the right to amend the applicant's fee status after the formal offer has been issued.

## **18. Fraudulent applications and credibility checks**

Where possible and appropriate the validity of a document submitted will be checked with the issuing authority. English language test results will be verified with the qualification awarding body (e.g. IELTS), where possible.

Where there is evidence that fraudulent or incorrect information, including evidence of plagiarised personal statements has been included in the application, VSC reserves the right not to proceed with the application. Where there is satisfactory or sufficient evidence that fraudulent documents or incorrect information have been used to at any point of the admissions process, VSC reserves the right to withdraw an offer with immediate effect.

VSC reserves the right to carry out further checks at any stage of the admissions process to determine that an applicant is genuine and credible.

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## **Acceptance of offers**

### **19. Applicant contract and 14 day right to cancel**

Applicants are able to accept an offer of admission from VSC by signing the Terms & Conditions included with their offer letter. If an applicant changes their mind after accepting their offer, they have the right to cancel the contract within 14 days after paying their deposit (Further details are included in the VSC Tuition Fee Policy).

Further information about the contract and the 14 day right to cancel is sent to applicants at the initial offer stage, in VSC's Terms and Conditions.

## **Confirmation**

### **20. Firm Acceptance of Places**

VSC requires each applicant to accept an offer if they wish to take up a place. An applicant may only accept one offer for a given start date. As well as accepting the offer, an applicant must provide evidence that they have met any conditions stated in the offer.

### **21. Sponsored Applicants**

Applicants with full or part financial sponsorship must provide documentary evidence of the sponsorship. Postgraduate Admissions will then record details of the sponsorship so that the tuition fee will be charged, in full or in part, to the sponsoring organisation.

## **Complaints**

VSC strives to provide a high quality experience for all applicants throughout the admissions cycle. In the event that an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of VSC's admissions process, procedure or policy, they may submit a complaint to the Head of Student Support..

## **Training of staff involved in admissions**

Training is the responsibility of the Head of Student Support. Regular briefings team members take place during the admissions cycle, with a particular focus on identifying and sharing good practice, and updates relating to postgraduate qualifications, offer making and confirmation.

## **Data protection, including communication with third parties**

VSC operates in compliance with data protection legislation and good records management practice. Applicant data is treated as confidential by all staff involved in the admissions process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. In accordance with VSC policy, staff involved in admissions communicate only with applicants themselves, unless the applicant has given express permission for a third party to communicate on their behalf. Third parties may be parents, teachers, advisers or agents acting on behalf of applicants.

## **Section 3 – Registration and induction**

As part of its Welcome and academic induction process, VSC aims to provide a comprehensive programme in order to support the transition of applicants to registered students at the end of the admissions process.

Firstly, students are prompted to activate their University email and IT account.

Before commencing their studies, all applicants are prompted to complete pre-registration (including payment of fees where required), followed by cohort induction meeting.

The welcome and induction activities aim to help create a sense of belonging for students to the learning community within VSC/

As part of this process, applicants will be provided with information about our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and a tour of its main features.