

## The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

## **Guidance for the admission of students to QAA-recognised Access to HE programmes**

November 2007 (revised)

## **Principles**

The arrangements and criteria for the admission of students to Access to HE courses should reflect the primary aim of this provision to provide an appropriate preparation and recognised qualification for progression to HE. In particular, Access to HE courses are targeted at those who have the ability to benefit from a course of HE but who have not previously had the opportunity to do so. To be successful in reaching their target groups, Access to HE courses are designed, through their curriculum, their delivery methods and their course structures to meet the needs of those who may have few, if any, prior qualifications, or those whose educational progress has been limited by their particular social or educational circumstances.

There is no single type of suitable Access to HE applicant, and the intention of the admissions process should be to respond positively to the diversity of background and experience of applicants and to offer opportunities to all those who meet the criteria. While courses may be targeted at particular groups, especially the disadvantaged and those currently under-represented in HE, there should, in most cases, be no group or type

- vii clear information about the course should be provided to applicants, in order to ensure that they are able to make an informed decision about whether it meets their aims and needs
- viii information about alternative options should be available, and the prospective student's legitimate interests should be taken into account in any advice given
- ix information about the broad financial implications of undertaking the Access to HE course and of following a course of higher education should be provided, including information about where applicants may access advice in relation to their personal circumstances
- x the admissions process should include consideration of, and judgement about, individual applicants' capacity to complete and benefit from the Access to HE course
- xi the timing and nature of information about the outcome of the process should be made clear to applicants, and any applicant who is turned down should be informed of the reason for the decision
- xii providers should have policies and procedures in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of their admissions process
- xiii all those involved in the admissions process should understand the process as a whole and their responsibilities within it, and should be competent to undertake their roles
- xiv the admissions process should accommodate the requirement of the QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland that 'Where an Access programme is intended to lead to further study for a professional qualification, students are made aware of, and given the opportunity to meet, the entry requirements of the national professional body concerned'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Paragraph 3.6 of