

Sheffield Hallam University

Admission of Under 18's Policy

Contents

Sheffield Hallam University.....	1
Admission of Under 18's Policy.....	1
Background.....	2
1. The Process.....	2
2. Applicants who will be 17 on the start date of their course and will become 18 during the first year of study.....	3
3. Applicants who will be under the age of 17 on the start date of their course.....	3
4. Interviews.....	4
5. UK-based parent or guardian for students under the age of 18.....	4
6. Offer of a place and enrolment.....	5
7. Offer of Accommodation.....	5
8. Parental responsibilities.....	5
9. Contracts.....	5
10. Student accommodation.....	5
11. IT Facilities and Services.....	5
12. Field trips.....	6
13. Alcohol.....	6
14. Holding office.....	6
15. Relationships with staff.....	6
16. Child protection.....	6
17. Notification.....	6
18. Parent or guardian involvement.....	6
19. Emergency contact.....	6
20. Student Expectations.....	6
21. Parent/ Guardian Expectations.....	7
Appendix 1 – Parental Consent Form.....	8
Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment form applicants under the age of 18.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Parental responsibilities.....	8
Contracts.....	8
Student Accommodation.....	8
IT Facilities and Services.....	8
Field Trips.....	8
Alcohol.....	8
Holding Office.....	8
Relationships with staff.....	9
Child Protection.....	9
Notification.....	9
Parent or guardian involvement.....	9
Emergency Contact.....	9

Background

Sheffield Hallam University (the University) is committed to equal opportunities and all applications are considered on their individual merits.

Occasionally the University admits students who are under the age of 18 years. These students and their parent or guardian should understand that the University predominantly admits students who are over the age of 18 years and that they will be entering into an adult environment. The University treats all its students as independent, mature individuals and students who are under the age of 18 years will generally be treated in the same way, subject to additional considerations set out in this policy.

The provisions of this policy generally apply to those who are under 18 for a period of time from the start date of the course, however, in the case of Apprenticeships the policy will be effective during the application and onboarding process.

The same personal and academic support arrangements will apply to students who are under or over 18 years. This includes the allocation of an academic advisor, a student support advisor, an employability advisor and access to a comprehensive range of specialist student services.

The University acknowledges that anyone under the age of 18 is legally a child and recognises that students under the age of 18 may therefore have additional needs in relation to their wellbeing, and the University may place additional expectations and requirements on these students.

1. The Process

- 1.1. On receipt of your application the Admissions Office will identify whether you will be under 18 at the point you start the course that you have applied for or are being considered for by the Admissions Office. If you are under 18 at the point you submit your application it does not mean you will be subject to this Policy, unless you are applying for an apprenticeship in which case this Policy may apply from the point of application.
- 1.2. If you are identified as under 18 we will first consider your application for the potential of an offer for the course you have applied for or a suitable alternative that may be available.
- 1.3. After this initial assessment, if you meet the academic criteria to receive an offer, your application will be forwarded to the Course Leader to verify that the course is able to support you as an under 18 student in line with this Policy and its requirements. This will occur prior to any other admissions checks that may be required before an offer can be made such as whether you have any relevant criminal convictions or if you need a disability assessment. This approach means we inform you at the earliest point whether your application can continue without commencing more in-depth procedures unnecessarily.
- 1.4. We will consider your whole application profile, the course content, delivery methods, materials, activities, etc up to the point you turn 18 years of age on the course applied for or the alternative course we are considering you for. Any requirements for reasonable adjustments will be considered but cannot be guaranteed.
- 1.5. If you are applying for an Apprenticeship, in addition to the above, our Apprenticeship Operations Team will notify your University Apprenticeship Coach that you are under 18 and they will conduct an onboarding discussion with you and your employer having specific regard to any safeguarding and wellbeing considerations during this activity.
- 1.6. We will also send you a Parental Consent Form (Appendix A). This document lists the responsibilities of the parent or legal guardian until you reach the age of 18 and requires the parent or legal guardian to consent to these responsibilities and your attendance on the course. An offer will not be made until this form has been signed and returned.
- 1.7. The University has a separate process for the following groups of applicants:
 - i. Applicants who will be 17 on the start date of their course.

- ii. Applicants who will be under the age of 17 on the start date of their course. The University will undertake a full risk assessment for all applicants in this group.
- iii. Apprentices who will be under 18 at the time of their application and for Apprentices who are under 18 for a period from the start date for whom a risk assessment and mitigation plan will be agreed with the Apprentice, parent or legal guardian and employer and to support the SHU Apprenticeship Coach.

2. Applicants who will be 17 on the start date of their course and will become 18 during the first year of study

- 2.1. We will first consider your application for the potential of an offer for either the course you have applied for or a suitable alternative that may be available.
- 2.2. After this initial assessment, if you meet the academic criteria to receive an offer, your application will be forwarded to the Course Leader to verify that the course is able to support you as an under 18 year old student in line with this Policy and its requirements. This will occur prior to any other admissions checks that may be required before an offer can be made such as whether you have any relevant criminal convictions or if you need a disability assessment. This approach means we inform you at the earliest point whether your application can continue without commencing more in-depth procedures unnecessarily.
- 2.3. The Course Leader will consider your whole application profile, the course content, delivery methods, materials, activities, etc up to the point you turn 18 years of age on the course applied for or the alternative course we are considering you for. Any requirements for reasonable adjustments will be considered but cannot be guaranteed. The Course Leader may decide at their discretion to carry out a full risk assessment.
- 2.4. If you are applying for an Apprenticeship, in addition to the above, our Apprenticeship Operations Team will notify your University Apprenticeship Coach that you are under 18 and they will conduct an onboarding discussion with you and your employer having specific regard to any safeguarding and wellbeing considerations during this activity.

3. Applicants who will be under the age of 17 on the start date of their course.

- 3.1. We will first consider your application for the potential of an offer for either the course you have applied for or a suitable alternative that may be available.
- 3.2. After this initial assessment, if you meet the academic criteria to receive an offer, a full risk assessment will be carried out to verify that the course is able to support you as an under 18-year-old student in line with this Policy and its requirements.
- 3.3. **Full risk assessment**
 - 3.3.1. Where you have met the minimum threshold for admission to the University, a panel including representatives from the academic department and relevant professional services will undertake a risk assessment and determine whether any special arrangements need to be agreed before an offer can be made. The risk assessment will cover matters relating to the content and delivery of the course, study arrangements, personal support and accommodation, placement and/or and workplace if relevant.
 - 3.3.2. You will be asked to return a signed parental consent form to as soon as possible, the risk assessment will not be completed without this and an offer cannot be made without the risk assessment having been completed.
 - 3.3.3. If you are applying for an Apprenticeship, the Apprentice Training Plan will include a contribution from your employer to confirm that they are able to meet their work-place health, safety and welfare obligations in accordance with the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks in force and affecting the occupational requirements of the job.

3.3.4. The onboarding discussion between the Apprentice Applicant, University Apprenticeship Coach and Workplace Mentor will consider any restrictions, or limitations that apply and might, for a defined period of time, affect the extent of experiences available to you to develop your knowledge, skills and behaviours. A Management Plan will be embedded in your three-way Training Plan including reference to any employer method statements and agreed adjustments required to ensure the Apprentice can fulfil their knowledge, skills and behaviours required to complete an End point Assessment.

3.4. Outcome of the risk assessment

3.4.1. If there is a recommendation to proceed with the application a final approval by the Group Director of Student and Academic Services will be required, once this sign off has been agreed the application will be progressed.

4. Interviews

- 4.1. Some courses will require an interview. These could take place face to face or on-line via Zoom or a similar platform, dependant on the course you are applying for. Interviews are usually carried out by a panel of academics (minimum 2) and sometimes will include external professionals. On occasion, if you are already 17 years old the interview can be on a one-to-one basis, this is particularly the case with on-line interviewing.
- 4.2. If you require reasonable adjustments, a relevant contact will be included in our invite to interview. Your request will be considered fully and in accordance with relevant equalities law and where possible we will meet your requirements. If we are unable to do so, we will discuss the alternative options available to you.
- 4.3. For Apprenticeships there may be an interview requirement and in addition there will always be an onboarding discussion which must include you and your employer as well as the University Apprenticeship Coach.

5. UK-based parent or guardian for students under the age of 18

- 5.1. People under the age of 18 are classified as children under UK law. This means that upon admission to the University a parent or legal guardian must make decisions on your behalf and hold legal responsibility for your protection and safety while you are in the UK.
- 5.2. The University does not take on the usual rights, responsibilities and authority which a parent or legal guardian has in relation to a child, and it will not assume parental responsibility by acting *in loco parentis* (in the place of a parent) if you are under 18. **The University must therefore be able to contact a UK-based guardian** who has been nominated by your parent or legal guardian and who can act promptly on their behalf and be the liaison between the University and your parents if an emergency situation arises or there are serious concerns for your health or wellbeing whilst under 18.
- 5.3. If you are under 18 you cannot legally enter into the student contract with the University, as such the University requires a parent or legal guardian or UK based guardian to accept legal responsibility for all obligations under the student contract until the date of your eighteenth birthday, including but not limited to the payment of tuition fees, accommodation fees and any financial liabilities incurred by you during your course.
- 5.4. If your parent or legal guardian is not based in the UK they can choose any adult to be a guardian for you whilst you are under 18 and studying at Sheffield Hallam University. If they choose a member of your family or a friend to take on this role, please ensure that:
 - i. They will be promptly accessible for contact throughout the period that you are under 18.
 - ii. That they understand that they will be contacted in case of emergency situations where they will be expected to liaise directly with your parent or legal guardian and may be required to

promptly attend the University or other location where the incident has occurred, if this is necessary.

- iii. That they may need to arrange for alternative accommodation at short notice should the University be closed due to an emergency or in the unlikely event that you are suspended from the University due to breaches in regulations.
- iv. That they would need to take responsibility for any travel activities that you arrange while in the country.
- v. If a full risk assessment is required, your UK based guardian must live within 100 miles of the University.

5.5. There are guardianship agencies available, and the AEGIS website provides a list. You should ensure that any agency you agree to work with has experience of supervising University students as many agencies are aimed at children staying at boarding schools which is very different.

6. Offer of a place and enrolment

6.1. An offer will not be made unless a signed parental consent form has been received. If your parent or legal guardian is not based in the UK, confirmation of a UK based Guardian will be required before your place can be confirmed and your Certificate of Acceptance for Study issued to enable you to apply for your visa.

6.2. In addition, for Apprenticeships, the Training Plan will reflect any specific risk management requirements, employer method statements and adjustments to the programme of delivery.

7. Offer of Accommodation

7.1. Accommodation requirements will be managed by our Accommodation team separately as you will be required to hold a separate contract with them and undergo similar procedures to get an offer for accommodation. Please note that applicants are only able to apply for accommodation after an offer has been made and it has been accepted by you and your parent or legal guardian.

7.2. For Apprenticeships your living arrangements are much more likely to be linked to the requirements to travel and attend work. The arrangements should be confirmed in the risk assessment and any risk mitigation measures agreed that can be reviewed in three-way conversations with the employer and your University Apprenticeship Coach and other University staff.

8. Parental responsibilities

8.1. The University does not take on the usual rights, responsibilities and authority that a parent or legal guardian has in relation to a child, and it will not act in *loco parentis* (in the place of a parent) if you are under the age of 18 years.

9. Contracts

9.1. A person of 16 or 17 has the status to enter into necessary contracts for education and accommodation but until their 18th birthday will not be legally competent to enter into all legal contracts. In circumstances where a person must be aged 18 or over to be legally competent to enter into a contract the University will require your parent or legal guardian to honour and guarantee all obligations (under any contracts with the University and accommodation provider) that you enter into prior to your 18th birthday.

10. Student accommodation

10.1. Your parent or legal guardian should recognise that residential accommodation offered by the University is generally intended for the use of adults and that, save in exceptional circumstances, special arrangements cannot be made for students who are under the age of 18 years.

11. IT Facilities and Services

11.1. As part of a portfolio of Teaching and Learning software resources students may have access to tools that require users to be over 18 years of age, for example Generative Artificial Intelligence.

12. Field trips

- 12.1. Programmes may involve compulsory or optional field trips, excursions or other periods of study away from the University. Subject to the University's duties under health & safety law, the University is not able to take any additional responsibility if you are under the age of 18 years in relation to such activities.

13. Alcohol

- 13.1. It is illegal for alcohol to be sold to or bought by anyone under the age of 18 years. The University will take reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under the University's control but cannot undertake to supervise any individual student. The Students' Union is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for its own licensed premises.

14. Holding office

- 14.1. Students who are under 18 years are not allowed to hold office, for example, they may not be secretary or treasurer to a sports club or other students' association.

15. Relationships with staff

- 15.1. Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust (which may include members of University staff) to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years.

16. Child protection

- 16.1. As a matter of law in England, a person under the age of 18 is a child. The University will report any suspicions or allegations of abuse of children to the appropriate Safeguarding officer. Any such suspicions or allegations will be reported to Designated Safeguarding Officer who will contact the appropriate authorities.

17. Notification

- 17.1. Relevant Student Support and Academic Advisers will be notified, both pre and post registration as appropriate, of any student within their College who will be under the age of 18 years on entry to the University (Teaching and other staff will not routinely be made aware of a student's age). In the case of Apprentices this will also extend to the University Apprenticeship Coach.

18. Parent or guardian involvement

- 18.1. It is the University's usual policy that it deals with students in relation to day-to-day communications (with whom it has a contractual relationship) and not with parents. This approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years. In most circumstances the University will therefore correspond with students, not parents or guardians; however, in emergency situations or where there is a significant concern a parent or guardian may be contacted. More detail: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/notice-to-parents>

19. Emergency contact

- 19.1. Legally, in the UK, a parent or guardian of anyone under 18 can make medical decisions (overriding the person under 18s wishes) For use in medical emergencies, contact details of a parent or guardian must be provided. However, please note that a child from the age of 16 is entitled to consent to medical treatment, and that such consent cannot be overruled by parents.

20. Student Expectations

- 20.1. As a student at Sheffield Hallam University who is under the age of 18 you will be expected to:
- i. communicate with staff if problems arise (you will usually be allocated three advisors: pastoral, academic and employability and additionally, a University Apprenticeship Coach if you are an Apprentice).
 - ii. contact your UK domiciled parent/Guardian if you have missed lectures/tutorials for more than half a day due to illness

- iii. be able to live independently in an adult environment (e.g. manage your own finances, domestic arrangements, physical and emotional wellbeing)

21. Parent/ Guardian Expectations

21.1. As parent or Guardian you will be expected to:

- i. provide ongoing support to the student
- ii. contact the student at least once a week
- iii. be the named contact in case of a medical emergency or in the case of safety concerns
- iv. contact the University with any other concerns about the student
- v. contact the University if you have concerns following the student being ill and missing lectures/tutorials
- vi. honour or guarantee any contracts entered into.

Appendix 1 – Parental Consent Form

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment form applicants under the age of 18

Introduction

Occasionally the University admits students who are under the age of 18 years. In most cases this will be a very temporary situation, as the student will be approaching their eighteenth birthday. The University is an adult environment and treats all its students as independent, mature individuals and students who are under the age of 18 years will generally be treated in the same way. The same personal and academic support arrangements will apply to students who are under or over 18 years.

The University acknowledges that anyone under the age of 18 living in England is legally a child and that some legal restrictions apply to that cohort for example the prohibition on the consumption of alcohol on licensed premises and the sale/supply of videos with a British Board of Film Classification of 18 years of age.

Parental responsibilities

The University is not able to take on the usual rights, responsibilities and authority that parents have in relation to a child, and it will not act in *loco parentis* (in place of a parent) in relation to students who are under the age of 18 years.

Contracts

A person of 16 or 17 has the status to enter into necessary contracts for education and accommodation but until their 18th birthday will not be legally competent to enter into all legal contracts. In circumstances where a person must be aged 18 or over to be legally competent to enter into a contract the University will require a student's parent or guardian to honour and guarantee all obligations (under any contracts with the University and accommodation provider) that the student enters into prior to their 18th birthday. By signing the enclosed pro-forma, the parent or guardian agrees to this.

Student Accommodation

A student's parent or guardian should recognise that residential accommodation offered by the University is generally intended for the use of adults and that, save in exceptional circumstances, special arrangements cannot be made for students who are under the age of 18 years.

IT Facilities and Services

As part of a portfolio of Teaching and Learning software resources students may have access to tools that require users to be over 18 years of age, for example Generative Artificial Intelligence.

Field Trips

Programmes may involve compulsory or optional field trips, excursions or other periods of study away from the University. Subject to the University's duties under health & safety law, the University is not able to take any additional responsibility for a student who is under the age of 18 years in relation to such activities.

Alcohol

It is illegal for alcohol to be sold to or bought by anyone under the age of 18 years. The University will take reasonable steps to seek to ensure that the law is not broken in relation to licensed premises under the University's control but cannot undertake to supervise any individual student. The Guild of Students is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for its own licensed premises.

Holding Office

Students who are under 18 years are not allowed to hold office, for example, they may not be secretary or treasurer to a sports club or other students' association.

Relationships with staff

Under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, it is a criminal offence for any person in a position of trust (which may include members of University staff) to engage in sexual activity with someone who is under 18 years.

Child Protection

As a matter of law in England, a person under the age of 18 is a child. The University will report any suspicions or allegations of abuse of children to the appropriate Safeguarding officer. Any such suspicions or allegations will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer at the University who will contact the appropriate authorities.

Notification

The University will notify the relevant education and residences colleagues on registration, of any student who will be under the age of 18 years on entry to the University. (Teaching and other staff will not routinely be made aware of a student's age).

Parent or guardian involvement

It is the University's usual policy that it deals with students (with whom it has a contractual relationship) and not with parents. This approach will also apply to students who are under the age of 18 years. The University will therefore correspond with students, not parents.

Emergency Contact

Students who have not attained the age of 18 can have their refusal to receive medical treatment overridden by parents and hence, emergency contact details must be provided by students or parents prior to the student's arrival at the University. However, please note that a child from the age of 16 is entitled to consent to medical treatment, and that such consent cannot be overruled by parents.

The below section needs to be completed by the parent or guardian of the applicant.

Please return your completed form to the Admissions Office at admissions@shu.ac.uk within 14 days of the date of this email.

Full Name of Applicant:

Student Id Number:

UCAS Personal ID Number (where appropriate):

Course Applied For:

I hereby confirm that I have read and accept the conditions outlined in the "Policy for Students under the Age of 18 Years" alongside the Acknowledgement Form document provided by the University. I accept that the University will not act in *loco parentis* (in place of a parent) should the above applicant be admitted to Sheffield Hallam University.

Name of signatory (parent/guardian):

Relationship to applicant:

Signed:

Date:

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