



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

Admissions Policy

Version No.1

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1. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND

The University of the Witwatersrand actively advocates the principle of diversity in its student body. It believes that the student body should reflect diversity of race, gender, socio-economic background, urban and rural geographic origin, culture, ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, national origin.¹ Consequently, its admissions procedures will try to ensure that diversity in the student body is maintained and further developed, with the eventual goal of mirroring the demographic profile of the wider Gauteng region.

2. PURPOSE

Equity is valued and requires strategic interventions to promote redress. Equity is particularly sought in the race and gender composition of the student body and in the success of students.

To this end, the University recognises that a process of fair discrimination in the admissions policy will be required for at least the next decade. It therefore commits itself to the development of access principles that do not rely entirely on success in school-leaving examinations (as reflected in matriculation points rating), for identifying potential candidates from scholastically disadvantaged groups and socio-economically deprived backgrounds.

3. PRINCIPLES

Selection and admissions decisions need to balance adherence to the principles of equity, and diversity, with the continued recognition of academic excellence. To this end the University commits itself to admissions practices that are fair and transparent; to a teaching and learning environment which is conducive to success and which actively targets students who may previously not have been admitted but who have the potential to succeed at University; and to self-assessment and reporting which ensures accountability. This may involve the flexible deployment of enrolment and equity targets in specific programmes. However, where use is made of any additional assessment processes to inform admissions decisions, these practices will conform to the relevant statutory or professional standards and norms.

An admission policy based on flexible access, and redress, has to be supported by mechanisms to ensure improved student success. The present national secondary schooling system do not yet provide equal educational opportunities, and the habits of learning necessary to University success are not equally inculcated in all young South Africans.

¹ This is not, of course, an exhaustive list.

Poverty, prejudice, and under-resourced teaching and learning environments in some schools militate against easy access to University and provide obstacles to achievement in the early years of training, while the dominance of English as sole tertiary language of instruction disadvantages second-language English learners. Postgraduate students also bring with them a range of educational experiences that are unequal in their ability to prepare students for study at Wits.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While the University has a responsibility to redress some of these inequities, it cannot, on its own, compensate for inadequate educational experiences in other contexts. To improve completion rates and support excellence, the University commits itself to linking its admissions policy to an increasing focus on teaching and learning practices, and on academic development programmes at Faculty and School level designed to significantly improve the study, writing, argumentation, and research skills of all students across all programmes.

Once a student is admitted to the University, the University undertakes to provide whatever educational support may be reasonably expected for him or her to have equal access to academic success. With this in mind, we will also attempt to foster a richly inclusive and welcoming institutional culture, and to conduct regular reviews of curricula, programmes, and pedagogy, to make sure that these too take account of the diversity we wish to foster.

Although we realise that adequate funding for a student is directly associated with likelihood of success, financial aid provision cannot meet demand. As the University wishes to ensure diversity and equity in the profile and performance of its students it will direct its resources, within budgetary limits, to supporting students who excel academically and who qualify for financial aid but are not able to fund their own studies in full. The University shall not admit students for whom it does not have adequate resources including space, library material, computing facilities, or special academic support when needed.

In the case of resource-intensive programmes, the University will make explicit the number of disadvantaged or special needs students it can accommodate. Where there are limitations on financial aid availability for qualifying students these will also be made explicit.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date	Summary	Changed by
1	14 June 2017	Admissions Policy	Nicoleen Potgieter