



Birmingham  
Newman  
University

# CONTEXTUAL ADMISSIONS POLICY

**Approved by:** RSG Nov 2024  
**Version No.** 1.0  
**Owner:** Registry

**Date updated:** Oct-2024  
**Review Date:** Oct-2025

## Contents

<b>Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>What Contextual Data is Used? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Principles .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Exemptions .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How Does Birmingham Newman Use Contextual Data? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Applicant Questions and Further Details .....</b>	<b>4</b>

## Background

- 1 As a result of the recommendations from multiple professional bodies, including [Universities UK](#)<sup>1</sup> (UUK), UCAS and the Office for Students (OFS), Birmingham Newman University has developed a new contextual admissions policy (2023).
- 2 The University's Admissions Unit utilises contextual admissions information and data obtained during the UCAS Apply system as described within [Birmingham Newman University's Admissions Policy](#)<sup>2</sup>
- 3 This contextual admissions information facilitates the University's ongoing commitment to providing a transparent and high-quality application experience, ensuring inclusivity and equality principles are maintained.
- 4 Birmingham Newman University remains committed to fair admissions processes, promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity principles, ultimately enabling fair access and widening participation to Higher Education.

## What Contextual Data is Used?

- 5 Birmingham Newman University will utilise information and data disclosed during the online UCAS application process deemed as relevant which is detailed below.
- 6 Personal data including the care experienced or care leaver status of an applicant, the location of the applicant's stated address as per the most recently available Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) information and applicant performance versus the national average of the school/college in which they undertook their GCSEs or A Levels, will all be utilised.
- 7 Applicants are able to independently view details of their POLAR quintile online through the [OFS website](#)<sup>3</sup>, in addition to details of their Index of Multiple Deprivation decile on the [Government website](#)<sup>4</sup>.
- 8 Birmingham Newman University will utilise a contextual Admissions decision, in which a reduced confirmation tariff (i.e., 8 UCAS tariff points) will be applicable in any of the following scenarios as seen in the table below. If more than one criteria are met, candidates will be eligible for a maximum reduction of two grades (i.e., 16 UCAS tariff points).

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/fair-admissions-review.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/our-admissions-policy/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/imd/2019>

An applicant lives in a POLAR4 Q1 or SIMD Deciles 1 or 2 postcode area.
An applicant attends an English school/college that is in the bottom 40% of Key Stage 4 or 5 results nationally (for at least two out of three previous years) or where fewer than 50% of pupils receive 5 GCSE's 9-4.
An applicant has spent any time in Care or as a Carer.

## Principles

- 9 The following principles, in relation to contextual admissions data underpin the offer making process:
- a) Data utilised as the basis of a contextual offer must be relevant to the aims of the application process in the interest of fairness and will not extend beyond the criteria detailed in this policy.
  - b) The University must be fully and openly transparent when detailing the criteria utilised for contextual admissions.
  - c) The criteria which underpin contextual decision making will regularly undergo review to ensure they remain appropriate and relevant to the purpose of widening access to Higher Education at Birmingham Newman University.
  - d) Contextual criteria will be applied in an individualised, per case approach in order to consider each individual their own merit. There are no specified targets in regard to those admitted through contextual admissions, however it is an expectation that adopting contextual admissions will contribute to the University's ongoing strategic commitment to widening access and participation in Higher Education as outlined in the University's [Access and Participation Plan](#)<sup>5</sup>.

## Exemptions

- 10 Due to the limitation of contextual information and data only being available through completed applications via the UCAS Apply System (i.e., UK students); Birmingham Newman University reserves the right to not be held to contextual principles whereby relevant information is omitted as part of their UCAS application.
- 11 School performance indicators are based upon the most recently available performance data and therefore cannot be validly applied to those who have been away from education for a number of years.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/access-and-participation-plan/>

- 12 In the scenario whereby an applicant has a considerable gap in full time education, individuals will be encouraged to utilise the University's [Recognition Of Prior Certificated Learning](#) application route<sup>6</sup>.
- 13 If an individual is unsure as to whether any specific course is eligible for a contextual admissions decision, please contact Birmingham Newman University's Admissions Unit ([admissions@newman.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@newman.ac.uk)).

## How Does the University Use Contextual Data?

- 14 An individual's contextual data will be utilised to assess eligibility within the confirmation process. As mentioned in point 8, in the case of one contextual condition being met, one grade below the published typical offer level for the course(s) will be applied (equivalent to 8 UCAS tariff points). In the case whereby two or more contextual flags are met, two grades below the published typical offer level (equivalent to 16 UCAS tariff points) will be applied.
- 15 If the application has been considered using one or more of the contextual admissions flags indicated in the table under point 8, the individual will be notified of this prior to the confirmation.

## Applicant Questions and Further Details

- 16 If you have any questions about the Birmingham Newman University's use of contextual admissions data, please contact [admissions@newman.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@newman.ac.uk).
- 17 Further information is also available on the University's website at [www.newman.ac.uk](http://www.newman.ac.uk)

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/transfers-top-ups-and-recognition-of-prior-certificated-learning-rpcl-and-or-prior-experiential-learning-rpel-policy/>