

# Sotheby's INSTITUTE OF ART

## ADMISSIONS POLICY 2024-25

**This policy and procedure is applicable to all applicants to Sotheby's Institute of Art – London Master's Programmes**

### 1. SECTION A: POLICY AIMS

1.1. The Admissions policy underpins the admissions framework around which the processes that we use, and the decisions that we make to attract, recruit, select, admit, and enrol applicants are consistent, fair and transparent. The policy is informed by the UK QAA Revised Quality Code 2018, guidance on Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access, the UK Office for Students, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE or OIA) Good Practice Frameworks, and recommendations from the UK Competition and Markets Authority. Further admissions-related information can be found on the website for Sotheby's Institute of Art at <https://sothebysinstitute.com/admissions/london-requirements/>.

1.2. The Admissions Policy aims to ensure that:

- there are clear procedures for the applications process which are transparent and accessible by all.
- information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.
- selection criteria are fair, reliable, and appropriate assessment methods are used which enable the selection of students with the potential to complete their course successfully.
- entry decisions are made by assessing applicants consistently against the published programme entry criteria.
- unnecessary barriers for prospective students are reduced or removed and all applicants are treated inclusively regardless of gender, sexuality, race, ethnic origin, age, disability, learning difficulties, religious beliefs, views on politics or Trade Union membership, family responsibilities, or socio-economic background.
- we encourage applications from people with disabilities, learning differences and particular learning needs. Sotheby's Institute of Art will endeavour to make reasonable efforts to make provision for applicants with particular learning and support requirements during the admissions process.
- we widen access and diversity into all our programmes.
- all those who access and engage with our Admissions Service receive the highest quality of customer service from appropriately trained and resourced staff.

### 2. SECTION B: SCOPE

2.1 The Admissions Policy governs all activities, processes and information related to the admission of students to Sotheby's Institute of Art's Master's programmes, specifically covering:

- admissions information
- communication with applicants
- selection and assessment of applicants
- conduct of interviews
- decision making
- key responsibilities
- applications from disabled students
- applications from international candidates
- English as a second language
- equality of opportunity
- criminal convictions
- confidentiality
- changes to programmes
- feedback, appeals and complaints
- monitoring, evaluation and review

2.2 The policy informs all aspects of student admissions including the marketing and promotions to prospective students, their parents, employers and advisers, and specific initiatives within Sotheby's Institute of Art leading to student recruitment.

2.3 Similarly, the policy links to post-selection activities including the enrolment of students onto a programme of study and induction and orientation of new students.

2.4 The policy covers applications to all Master's programmes, regardless of application route and the nationality of the prospective student.

2.5 The policy should be read in conjunction with the Institute's Terms and Conditions, Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure, and the documentation comprising the Institute's Visa Compliance Framework (documents A, B and C). All of these are accessible on the Institute's website [here](#).

### **3. SECTION C: ADMISSIONS FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Admissions information**

3.1.1 Admissions information published electronically and in hard copy will be reviewed annually by the Institute's Director, in consultation with Admissions, Marketing and Quality department leads (focusing on compliance with validated documentation), to ensure that it is accurate and up to date.

3.1.2 Sotheby's Institute will publish on its website clear information about how the admissions process is managed, including deadlines and other important dates, eligibility criteria, documentation that prospective applicants will need to include with their application, tuition information, details about scholarship provision, visa considerations, and contact details for Sotheby's Institute's Admissions team, should applicants wish to get in touch with any other questions or concerns they might have.

#### **3.2 Application routes**

3.2.1 Applications to Master's programmes are made directly to Sotheby's Institute.

3.2.2 Application deadlines will be published on Sotheby's Institute's website.

#### **3.3 Selection process**

3.3.1 Every application submitted by the advertised deadline will be considered individually in accordance with Sotheby's Institute's entry requirements. Applications submitted

after the deadline will only be considered if the programme is open. Where a programme is closed, applications received after the deadline will automatically be waitlisted.

- 3.3.2 Sotheby's Institute will screen applications received on time before deciding whether to invite a candidate to interview.
- 3.3.3 Sotheby's Institute will use several methods to assess an applicant's suitability for their programme of choice. Primarily applicants are selected based on:
  - the applicant's prior academic achievement and qualifications
  - an assessment of the applicant's ability and aptitude to succeed on the programme for which they have applied.

### **3.4 Initial screening**

- 3.4.1 Applications will initially be screened to determine which candidates will go forward to academic interview.
- 3.4.2 Applications will be screened based on the personal statement, writing sample, references and qualifications (actual or predicted), taking into account:
  - academic achievement
  - commitment to and understanding of the subject area
  - UKVI immigration regulations
  - awareness of particular features of Sotheby's Institute programmes and relevance of the programme to the candidate's stated interests
  - the referees' assessment of a candidate's potential

Applicants will not be eligible to progress to the academic interview until the personal statement, writing sample and qualifications (actual or predicted) have been reviewed and approved by the Admissions team, but in particular cases may be progressed if a letter of recommendation or English language test result (where applicable) is pending.

- 3.4.3 Initial screening will normally take place within ten working days of receipt of a complete application.
- 3.4.4 Following the initial screening, candidates may be requested to attend an interview with a member of the Admissions team before their application is progressed.
- 3.4.5 If a candidate is requested to attend an interview with a member of the Admissions team and does not attend, the Admissions team will send a second invitation and try to contact the applicant by phone. If the Admissions team is unable to contact the applicant, the application will be withdrawn, and the applicant will be notified.
- 3.4.6 Applicants who are determined to be unsuitable for progression to the academic interview will be informed that the application has been unsuccessful by email following the Admissions interview. Sotheby's Institute may offer advice about alternative programmes at the institution which may be suitable.

### **3.5 Originality of Work**

- 3.5.1 All applicants are required to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. This includes a strict prohibition against the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in completing the application (including required documentation) or any related academic activities.
- 3.5.2 Furthermore, plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. Applicants must ensure that all submitted work is entirely their own and not derived from any unauthorized sources,

including but not limited to, published works, the internet, or work produced by AI. Failure to comply with these guidelines will lead to rejection of the application.

### 3.6 Academic Interviews

- 3.6.1 The Admissions Team will schedule interviews, working closely with the faculty for each programme. Where appropriate, interviews will be scheduled in accordance with a recommended programme interview timetable and conducted between normal working hours in the UK (9am to 5pm). When scheduling interviews, the Admissions team will consider the applicant's time-zone and, where possible, avoid bookings before 8am or after 7pm local time.
- 3.6.2 The standard Sotheby's Institute interview documentation must be completed by the individual conducting the interview.
- 3.6.3 Interviews may be conducted in-person or via web-conferencing depending on the individual situation and needs of the student at the time. Generally, interviews will be conducted online over Microsoft Teams.
- 3.6.4 At interview the academic will evaluate the applicant's suitability for the programme of study. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate:
- the ability to communicate clearly
  - enthusiasm, interest and commitment to the subject area
  - critical thinking skills and intellectual curiosity
  - readiness for postgraduate level study
- 3.6.5 Any programme specific selection criteria as detailed in the validated programme specification will be identified on Sotheby's Institute's website.

### 3.7 Interview arrangements for disabled applicants

- 3.7.1 Prior to interview, applicants can contact Admissions if any reasonable adjustments are required to the interview process. Admissions will co-ordinate any requirements with the Programme Director. Examples of reasonable adjustments might be:
- Extra time for the interview and breaks where appropriate
  - Provision of communication support
  - Arrangements for companions or support workers to attend interviews with the applicant
- 3.7.2 Disabled applicants may also choose to meet with Student Services separately from the academic interview should they wish to discuss in more detail how Sotheby's Institute will be able to support their particular requirements on programme.

### 3.8 Offers and the Decision-Making Process

- 3.8.1 Overall, the decision to recruit a student shall lie with the Institute's Director and the Associate Director of Global Enrolment.
- 3.8.2 Admissions staff will not normally make offers at the admissions screening interview.
- 3.8.3 Applicants who apply directly to Sotheby's Institute will be informed of their application outcome by email from the Admissions Team advising them of one of the following:
- a conditional offer of a place on a specified programme and the conditions of that offer
  - an unconditional offer of a place on a specified programme

- notification the application has been unsuccessful

Applicants who apply through an agent will also be advised of one of the outcomes listed above.

3.8.4 Where a conditional offer has been made, students must provide the required documents prior to registration. Students who require a Student Route Visa are required to meet any conditions listed in their offer prior to the issuance of CAS statement in support of the application to UK Visas and Immigration.

### 3.9 Confirmation of offer

3.9.1 Where an applicant is made an offer of a place to study with Sotheby's Institute, conclusion of the application process follows the 3-step process below:

1) Offer of a place to study is made to applicant, including the following pre-contract information:

- Offer letter
- Terms and Conditions
- Tuition Fees Schedule
- Programme Summary

2) Applicant must confirm acceptance of the offer by completing the online Acceptance and Deposit form, accepting the Terms and Conditions, and paying the non-refundable deposit;

3) Email confirmation that the Student Acceptance and Deposit Form has been received will be sent automatically to the applicant on payment of the deposit. In exceptional circumstances, where an offer is made less than 2 months before the programme start date, applicants will be moved through an expedited billing process. On receipt of a Student Acceptance Form, the Finance team will issue a bill for the deposit payment and tuition at the same time.

### 3.10 Right to withdraw

3.10.1 Applicants have the right to withdraw in writing within 14 days, starting on the day following the acceptance of offer. In such event, the Institute will issue a full refund of the fees paid, including the deposit.

3.10.2 The Institute will refund programme fees in full, minus the non-refundable deposit fee, if the notice of withdrawal is received in writing at least six weeks prior to the first day of the applicant's Programme. The Institute will not normally refund programme fees after this time.

### 3.11 Deferred admissions

3.11.1 Sotheby's Institute allows deferrals of one year. An applicant who wishes to defer their enrolment offer to the next academic year must first accept the offer of a place to the intake they applied to by completing the Student Acceptance and Deposit Form and paying the non-refundable deposit.

3.11.2 Following receipt of the Deposit payment, a deferral request can be submitted through the Deferral Request Form. This form will be provided by Admissions to applicants who have completed the Student Acceptance and Deposit Form, and paid the non-refundable deposit, on request.

3.11.3 On submission of the Deferral Request Form the Admissions team will send a link to the Deferral Fee Form through which a second non-refundable payment must be made. The Deferral Fee payment must be received before April 30<sup>th</sup> in the following year to formalise the change in entry point and secure the place on the programme. If the Deferral Fee payment is not received by this date, the place will be lost, and the Deposit will be retained by the Institute.

3.11.4 The Deferral Fee, along with the Deposit, will be held and deducted from the balance of tuition fees in the following intake only. Deferral of a place over more than one academic year is not permitted – if an applicant is unable to take up the place in the following intake to that which they applied, the Institute will retain both the Deposit and Deferral Fee payments, and they will need to submit a new application to be considered for entry.

3.11.5 Please note that deferred applicants will have to pay any increase in tuition fees for the year in which they will join the programme. Any conditions listed in the offer must have been met before payment of the Deferral Fee.

### **3.12 Irregularities and fraudulent applications**

3.12.1 Applicants who are found to have falsified any part of their application or submitted a fraudulent application will automatically have any offer of a place withdrawn.

### **3.13 Responsibilities within the Admissions Process**

3.13.1 The Programme Director is responsible for agreeing to the structure of the interview experience with the Admissions Team.

3.13.2 The Programme Director is also responsible for identifying staff who will be available to undertake interviews on specific dates within the Sotheby's Institute recommended interview timetable and for ensuring that those on the interview panel are appropriately briefed and trained in Sotheby's Institute's admissions processes. Interviews will not normally be cancelled and if the academic is unable to attend the agreed interview schedule, they are responsible for finding an alternative academic from the original pool as identified by the Programme Director, who is able to conduct the interviews appropriately.

### **3.14 Code of Conduct**

3.14.1 Admissions staff are expected to support candidates positively in all communications and facilitate a positive experience for candidates at interview.

3.14.2 Equally, applicants are expected to always behave courteously towards Sotheby's Institute staff and students. Any applicant whose conduct is deemed by Sotheby's Institute as offensive or threatening may have their offer of a place removed.

### **3.15 Applications from international candidates**

3.15.1 Recruitment of international students will be carried out in accordance with Sotheby's Institute's Admissions Policy.

3.15.2 The offer of a place implies that Sotheby's Institute is confident that the student is capable of successfully completing the specific programme of study.

3.15.3 Any offer of a place may therefore only be made once the Admissions Officer has verified that they are confident that applicant has satisfied or will satisfy prior to commencing the programme, Sotheby's Institute's minimum entry qualifications for the programme to which the applicant is applying. This will include evidence of the appropriate level of attainment of English language. Applicants also have

responsibility for determining whether they can realistically achieve the conditions set out in the conditional offer before accepting the place and making the non-refundable deposit payment. Where an applicant has any concerns about their ability to meet the listed conditions, or their ability to fund study and provide the necessary financial evidence documents to UKVI as part of a Student Route Visa application, these concerns should be communicated to the Admissions team prior to accepting the offer.

- 3.15.4 A Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) will only be issued to students who have firmly accepted the offer of an unconditional place, paid the first semester (or full) tuition fee, and demonstrated to the satisfaction of Sotheby's Institute's that all UKVI immigration services requirements for the issue of a student visa have been met.
- 3.15.5 An international student will only be registered on the programme of study if they hold a valid immigration permission for the duration of the programme.

### **3.16 English as a Second Language**

- 3.16.1 In the case of applicants for whom English is a second language and a valid language certificate which meets the posted requirement has not been provided at the time of applying, the Admissions Officer must assure themselves of the applicant's ability in conversational English through the interview itself, even where that is by telephone or e-mail. All international candidates who do not meet the UKVI exemption conditions are required to provide certificated evidence of the relevant level of language attainment for the programme. Nevertheless, applicants should be aware that UKVI may refuse a visa or entry to the country if they are unconvinced that the applicant's language ability matches their certification.
- 3.16.2 Where an applicant's first language is not English, proof of competence in English will be required. This will normally take the form of an approved English language test in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference and UKVI exemptions.
- 3.16.3 Applicants are expected to demonstrate proficiency to the level of IELTS 7.0 or equivalent, with a score of at least 6.5 in writing.
- 3.16.4 Any external test for proficiency in English must have been achieved within 24 months preceding the date of entry. Applicants will be expected to participate in discussions with other applicants and take part in presentations as well as follow lectures from the beginning of the programme.
- 3.16.5 An English test may be required where an applicant completed undergraduate study in English more than 3 years prior to applying and has subsequently lived in a non-native English language speaking country.

### **3.17 Equality of Opportunities**

- 3.17.1 Sotheby's Institute positively encourages applications from candidates from a diverse range of backgrounds, experience and ages, including those with disabilities.
- 3.17.2 In line with government legislation, Admissions will ensure that applicants participate in a fair and equal process for selection, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, age, disability, religious beliefs or socio-economic background.

### **3.18 Criminal Convictions**

- 3.18.1 A criminal conviction will not necessarily bar entry on to a programme. However, Sotheby's Institute has a duty of care to its staff and students and, for crimes of a

serious nature where the applicant might pose a threat, Sotheby's Institute reserves the right to deny the applicant admission to the programme.

- 3.18.2 Applicants will only be required to declare a criminal record, including unfiltered spent convictions, at application if they require a student visa to study in the UK. Applicants who need a study visa to study in the UK will be required to disclose a criminal record, including spent convictions, at the time of applying for their Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS).
- 3.18.3 International students who require a new CAS to extend their stay to complete their programme will also be asked to disclose a criminal record, including spent convictions, at the time of reapplying.
- 3.18.4 An applicant who declares a criminal conviction on their CAS request application form may be required to submit further details about that conviction. The Admissions staff will ask the applicant to provide details about the nature of the offence, the sentence and the date of conviction.
- 3.18.5 Once the information has been submitted, the Associate Director of Global Enrolment will convene a panel to consider the information provided by the applicant. The panel will comprise the Director of the Institute, the Quality Manager, the Registrar and the Associate Director of Global Enrolment.
- 3.18.6 The panel will consider the nature of the offence, the date it occurred and if this is a repeat offence. The panel may additionally request recent Probation Service reports.
- 3.18.7 Where the panel decides to reject an application based on their conviction, the applicant will be formally notified with the reason for that decision.

### **3.19 Confidentiality**

- 3.19.1 All information about a candidate's application, including the outcome of the application, is confidential and will not be released to any unauthorised third party, including parents or teachers. The applicant must provide express written permission for their details to be released to a third party.
- 3.19.2 If a student chooses to disclose a disability at any stage of the admissions process, the information will remain confidential and will only be shared with relevant admissions staff with the individual's consent.

### **3.20 Changes to Programmes**

- 3.20.1 From time to time, Sotheby's Institute may need to significantly change a programme between when a candidate applies for a programme and their enrolment (for instance because of revalidation). Changes might include a change of name for the programme.
- 3.20.2 Discontinuation of a programme will occur if the programme fails to recruit sufficient candidates to a programme. Sotheby's Institute will attempt to avoid the withdrawal of a programme after offers have been made, but if necessary, will assist applicants in alternative choices. Whenever possible, an applicant to a discontinued programme will be contacted and offered the opportunity to apply to an alternative programme at Sotheby's Institute.
- 3.20.3 The prospectus states that Sotheby's Institute makes no guarantee of the availability of a programme. It also states that Sotheby's Institute has the right to make changes to the programme because of funding, staffing or any other reasonable cause and will give reasonable notice of any change.



3.20.4 Where a programme is discontinued, despite having been included in the prospectus, or website, Sotheby's Institute will update any supplementary materials to reflect the change. Applicants will be fully informed of any changes as they occur.

3.20.5 In the event that a programme is withdrawn and an applicant does not wish to choose an alternative at the Institute, or changes are made to a programme whereby it no longer meets an applicant's requirements, the Institute will enable the applicant, if they choose, to withdraw their application, without financial penalty.

### 3.21 Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

3.21.1 Applicants are advised to raise any issues or concerns they may have about the admissions process via an informal query with the Admissions Team in the first instance. If it is impossible to resolve the complaint informally, or if an applicant wishes to appeal against the admissions decision, applicants will be referred to [Sotheby's Institute's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure](#) for grounds under which complaints and/or appeals may be made, and for the relevant procedural steps in submitting a formal complaint and/or appeal.

### 3.22 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

3.22.1 Applicant and enrolment statistics will be monitored annually in relation to gender, ethnicity, age and disability for each programme, as part of Sotheby's Institute's statutory monitoring.

3.22.2 The Admissions policy and selection criteria will be reviewed annually to ensure that individuals are selected and treated solely based on their relevant merits and abilities.

<b>Title</b>	Admissions Policy
<b>Date first implemented</b>	March 2022
<b>Approving body</b>	Academic Board
<b>Version</b>	May 2024
<b>Effective</b>	For 2024-25 recruitment cycle
<b>Supersedes</b>	May 2023
<b>Next review date</b>	Summer 2025
<b>Frequency of review</b>	Annually
<b>Policy owner</b>	Global Enrolment and Marketing (GEM)/Quality Team