

alra Academy of Live & Recorded Arts

Admissions Policy

The Admissions Policy guides the admission of students to St Mary's University. It is designed to be an open and transparent policy that takes into account the QAA Quality Code, relevant equality legislation and other appropriate guidance.

In devising the Admissions Policy, note has been taken of the following General principles:

The Admissions Policy should reflect the nature of the University's Legal Objects and Mission as an Alternative Provider of Higher Education with a commitment to diversity and tolerance within the acting workplace.

In the newly conceived mission aims of ALRA we abide all admissions in line with the following principles:

1. Demonstrate awareness and appreciation of the cultural and political world around them.
2. Demonstrate tolerance and compassion for all in the work place.
3. Construct clear critical arguments based on diverse sources and theoretical frameworks.
4. Use digital media to develop innovative and persuasive arguments.
5. Demonstrate acquisition of high level communication skills in voice, body and imagination.
6. Apply these skills in high quality live and recorded performances.
7. Operate with honesty, professionalism and understanding in the workplace.
8. Embody the professional characteristics of willingness, empathy and curiosity.

All admissions will be made in accordance with ALRA's Equality and Diversity Statement and Code of Practice which aims to ensure that ALRA promotes equality and to prevent and eliminate discrimination for staff and students on the grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, social or national origin in a proactive manner in line with our duties under the law and our belief in the virtues of tolerance and diversity;

Applicants must satisfy the general admissions regulations of St Mary's University, Twickenham.

In addition applicants must be:

- A minimum of 18 years old.
- Have 200 UCAS tariff points OR exceptional ability and/or considerable life/work relevant to the course of study deemed to be appropriate by the admission panel*.
- Fluent English – if English is not an applicant's first language (B2 CEFR or 7.5 TEEP)

Selection is made by audition that takes place over one day and tests applicants on performance of text, vocal and physical suitability and individual interview. The audition panel is run by Course Leaders and Lead Tutors, final selection is completed by the Principal or Vice Principal and Registrar.

For learners over the age of 65 a letter from their GP is required outlining that they are in good health and able to take part in the physical aspects of the course and that they are likely to possess the mental and emotional strength such an intensive training requires.

Admissions Procedure

ALRA is committed to Audition and/ or Interview each person who applies for a place to join us. ALRA accepts students, regardless of all other considerations, who demonstrate excellence at audition, a desire to study and show the potential to complete the appropriate course of study at interview. ALRA will form an opinion on these matters at audition & interview and record the outcomes for scrutiny and feedback. The audition policy is supported by the Equal Opportunities Policy and nothing in either policy can be deemed to override the considerations of the other. Each applicant is asked to complete our online application form and select their chosen course and campus. Once the applicant have registered as a User of the ALRA Online Application they are able to complete the application in their own time as it is designed to allow them to return to the application to make changes at any point before the submission deadline (24hrs prior to their chosen Audition date).

Each applicant is asked to prepare 2 audition monologues each lasting no longer than 2 minutes:

- One from a contemporary play
- One Shakespearean/Jacobean

This forms stage 1 of ALRA's audition process.

If the applicant is successful in passing stage 1, they are then asked to participate in a movement and improvisation workshop and then possibly a Vocal assessment. If the applicant is successful they will then be invited to interview.

Following the audition, each applicant will either receive a firm offer of a place, be placed on a waiting list, or be rejected. Unsuccessful applicants have the right of appeal, which is documented in a separate Appeals Policy.

Students with non-academic route entry.

*Any students who have non-standard qualifications, or mature students who do not satisfy the general entrance requirement will be scrutinised by the Registrar, Vice Principal (Q&C) and the Course Leader to which the applicant has applied, where necessary, to ensure that they have they have evidence that they have the ability to undertake the programme.

Students for the BA who do not hold 200 UCAS points at entry or MA who do not hold an undergraduate degree, will need to complete a written/digital task and one two day workshop during the summer prior to starting on the course. This will be led by ALRA staff and contains skills in evaluation, reflection and academic referencing that may normally have been sustained by a level 3 or 6 entry point to the course they are applying for. Therefore all offers to students in this scenario are conditional upon satisfactory completion of this Non-Academic entry route. The details of this are contained within the Non-Academic Entry Route policy which falls in line with St. Mary's University Admission policy 5.2 and 8.

Protected Characteristics Entry

All learners who are from backgrounds with Protected Characteristics that deem it likely they will struggle with the full time nature of the course and extensive programme rules around behavior will be offered a Foundation Course lasting one year free of charge as part of their offer to train on the undergraduate degree or MA acting programmes.

Deferred Entry

ALRA is happy to consider applications for deferred entry for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Decisions on such applications will be made according to the usual criteria.

All other applicants should normally make their application in the year prior to which they wish to study. If they subsequently wish to defer they should make their request in writing to the Principal.

Applicants for Undergraduate programmes will be allowed to defer their application for one year only. If after that deferral period, the applicant wishes to postpone entry for a further year, they will be asked to re-audition.

Applicants under the age of 18

ALRA will not admit students who are under the age of 18.

Students with Additional Requirements

Disabled Students

Applicants are invited to declare any disability on the relevant application form. All students with access issues will be advised to accept a place at the North Campus as the South does not have access facilities.

Looked After Young People

Any looked after young people who apply will be given support and made an offer provided they meet or have the potential to meet the entrance requirements for the programme. Their applications will most likely receive one year of Foundation training prior to admission onto the degree or MA to allow a progressive adjustment to our intense training programme.

Criminal Convictions

All applicants for programmes are asked to declare whether they have any relevant criminal convictions. When considering such applicants it is important to bear in mind the policy to give all applicants who have the potential to benefit from the education an offer of a place. It is, however, important that this policy is undertaken without prejudice to the safety and well-being of other members of the University community. To this end all applicants who declare a conviction will be asked to provide details of it in writing. This will be considered by the Principal and Vice Principals who will take into account the severity of the offence. Where the offence is of a serious nature (i.e. there was a custodial sentence) more information may be required before a final decision is made.

Applications for Advanced Standing or Credit Transfer

This decision will be negotiated with the Admissions team in St. Marys as it is an exceptional circumstance.

Where appropriate, applicants may apply for admission to the second or third year of a programme, or for exemption from particular modules based on study undertaken at another institution. All such applications will be considered by the Registrar on the recommendation of the Vice Principal (Q&C).

Applications from Overseas students

All overseas students are required to pay a tuition fee deposit as a condition of their offer. They are required to secure a visa according to the applicable law and students will only be supplied with the necessary documents once their tuition fee deposit has been paid and both academic and other visa – related conditions have been met.

Feedback on Unsuccessful Applications:

All applicants get verbal feedback at audition if they are unsuccessful in the first round of auditions.

Further feedback will always be made available to students who progress further through the audition phase through the Principal or Course Leaders.

Data Protection

All data provided by applicants as part of the application process will be kept confidential to those involved in the admissions process according to ALRA's

Information for Prospective Students

Open days are held throughout the year for students to see the facilities and meet staff prior to audition.

A Shadow day is offered to all prospective students upon offer of a place.

A mentee system is in operation for all prospective students over the summer aligning them with current students to ask questions via their ALRA email accounts.

Data Protection Policy. No data, including information on offers and acceptances, will be released to a third party without the applicant's written permission.

Validating Partner Arrangements

As St. Marys University Twickenham are our validating partner, they maintain oversight of the academic admission of all students based on the recommendations of ALRA staff following admission. As a collaborative arrangement exists with this University ALRA is defined as having responsibility for recruiting, selecting, administering and enrolling students for the degree programme. This information is liaised with the University through our Registrar and Vice Principal (Operations and Student Experience).

ALRA is responsible for upholding St. Mary's policies, regulations and admissions procedure according to the binding clauses 2.8 and 2.9 of our Collaborative Partnership contract agreed 2014.

Deposits

Each prospective student who is offered a place at ALRA is asked to pay a deposit of £400 to secure their place. This deposit acts as payment for the University Fee: The £400.00 University Fee is payable annually to enrol each student with the degree awarding body of St. Mary's. Subsequent payments (Three Year Acting Course only) are included with invoices for Years 2 and 3.

Financial Support

ALRA courses are fundable in the following ways:

Private Funding (All Courses): Fees and Maintenance are paid privately by the student and / or their family.

DaDA Funding (3Y & PG): The DaDA scheme is merit-based and means-tested. Awards are offered to the candidates who show the most potential at audition, and the value of the award is determined by their circumstances and household income.

The work candidates present at audition is used to determine their ability in relation to other applicants, and eventually their likelihood of receiving a DaDA. There are only limited DaDAs available.

Student Loan Funding (3Y & SMTT): Students are responsible for applying for a Student Loan to assist them in the cost of tuition. As ALRA is a Alternative Provider the government places a cap on the amount of tuition fee loan available to students. This therefore leaves a balance of tuition fees to be paid from private means.

All students who are eligible to receive Student Loan funding are eligible to apply for a means-tested Maintenance Loan to help with living expenses; fortunately no restrictive cap is placed on this loan, so students at ALRA are entitled to as much maintenance as students at any other Higher Education institution. The amount of Maintenance Loan you are entitled to depends on your income (or that of your parents).

Post Graduate Loan Funding (PG): Students are responsible for applying for a Post Graduate Loan to assist them in the cost of Fees and Maintenance. As ALRA is a Alternative Provider the government places a cap on the amount of tuition fee loan available to students. Therefore, this leaves a balance of tuition fees to be paid from private means.

Our website holds various information in regard to the Student being able to raise any shortfall in tuition fees from private fundraising. Once the student is enrolled at ALRA each and every students is considered for various internal and external competitive scholarships, bursaries and awards. The students is supported by Administrative staff and Faculty throughout the application and in preparation of any performance or interview as required by the scholarship, bursary or award. ALRA is also one of the few Drama Schools whose training times (outside of public performances) are kept to a normal working week in order to allow all of our students the option to fund themselves further through part-time work.

If an ALRA student is able to show that they are in financial trouble and have exhausted all of the options above they are assisted in making applications for support from various trusts and funds that are available. If this stream of financial support is also unsuccessful ALRA offers each eligible student access to the Student Hardship Fund and is also prepared to offer a financial arrangement regarding any outstanding fees that are within the students and their families means.