

Information for Parents and Guardians of Students Under 18

The University of Edinburgh welcomes applications from students of all ages. While most students start at 17 or 18, some join earlier, including those who are legally considered children. In Scotland, a person gains legal capacity at 16, although some safeguarding legislation continues to apply to anyone under the age of 18. As the University is primarily an adult learning environment, there are a few extra steps in place to support under-16s and under-18s to make sure their safety and well-being are looked after.

This guidance explains what parent(s) and guardian(s) can expect from the University, and what responsibilities remain with you.

Who does this information apply to?

This guidance applies only to applicants who will be under 16 on the first day of their studies. Applicants aged 16–17 follow the standard admissions process. References to obligations for under-18s safety in this guidance relate only to wider Scottish safeguarding and legal duties, not to a separate admissions route.

Academic entry

- Under-16s applications are assessed on the same academic criteria as all other applicants.
- If your child meets the entry requirements, they will be assessed and may be selected for an offer **on academic merit alone**.
- Age is not part of the selection decision; however, it must be considered prior to the offer being confirmed and the student starting at the University to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.
- Any safeguarding conditions will be discussed with you and included as part of the offer when it is confirmed (see [Risk and Safeguarding Assessment](#)).

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) responsibility

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) must tell the University by [email](#) at the point of application if their child will be under 16 when the programme begins.
- If this is not disclosed at the application stage, the University may withdraw the offer once the true age is identified.

Risk and Safeguarding Assessment

Once your child has met the academic entry requirements, and before an offer can be confirmed, the University will carry out a formal risk and safeguarding assessment.

This assessment ensures that:

- The learning environment is safe and appropriate for a student under 16.
- Any activities with legal or age-based restrictions (e.g. labs, studios, workshops, placements, professional components) are reviewed.
- [PVG Scheme](#) requirements for relevant staff or students are identified.
- Any safeguarding adjustments or restrictions are proportionate and workable.
- Accommodation and travel arrangements will meet safety requirements (see [Accommodation](#)).

Who carries it out?

The assessment is led by the School or Programme your child is applying to. They will seek advice from relevant services where required, for example, Student Wellbeing, HR (for PVG matters).

Outcome

Any conditions needed to support safe participation will be shared with you and the admissions team. These may include agreed travel arrangements, supervised access to specific spaces, or programme adjustments where possible.

Care Management Plan

If the risk assessment confirms that the programme can safely admit an under-16 student, the School or Programme will work with you to create a Care Management Plan.

Who leads the plan?

The School/Programme leads and finalises the plan, consulting:

- parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Student Adviser
- relevant academic leads (for example, Director of Learning or Cohort/Year Lead)
- Student Wellbeing

What the Care Management Plan includes

- Emergency contacts and crisis procedures
- Named support staff, including the Student Adviser
- Safeguarding arrangements and any restrictions
- Accommodation arrangements, if applicable (see [Accommodation](#))
- Expected travel arrangements
- Health information (if appropriate)
- Academic and pastoral support

- How communication will be maintained
- Responsibilities that remain with parents/guardians

When the Care Management Plan must be completed

The Care Management Plan must be agreed to and signed by you before the University can confirm an offer of admission. Your child cannot enrol unless the plan has been completed.

Monitoring

The Student Adviser will review the plan each semester, updating you and the School if changes are needed.

If the plan is not followed

If the Care Management Plan is not followed by the student or parent/guardian, the University may need to review your child's place and, in serious cases, may withdraw the offer or terminate enrolment.

Legal Responsibilities and Guardianship

Parents and guardians **remain legally responsible** for their child's welfare until age 16.

The University **does not assume legal guardianship under any circumstances** (except for students who fall under separate corporate-parenting duties).

The University cannot act *in loco parentis* or provide daily supervision.

Under the Disclosures (Scotland) Act 2020, additional safeguarding obligations apply to anyone under 18, and we take these into account when admitting an under-16 student.

Life at the University

The University is an adult learning environment. Students are expected to manage their time, engage independently, and socialise with peers of all ages.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should be aware that:

- Classes may involve mature themes or discussions.
- Some classes or events may run into the early evening.
- There are no curfews, and the University does not provide parental supervision.
- Students under 18 are subject to the same legal restrictions as any young person (e.g. alcohol, tobacco), including, for example, consumption of alcohol at student social events.

International Students and Visas

The University **cannot sponsor** an applicant under 16 for a Student visa. In practice, international applicants normally need to be at least 16 on the first day of study to enrol.

Applicants aged 16-17 who require a visa must submit a parental-consent letter to the Student Immigration Service, but this does not apply to under-16 applicants because sponsorship cannot be issued.

Accommodation

The University **cannot provide accommodation** to students under 16, as our residences are not designed or licensed for this age group.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Finding and overseeing suitable private accommodation
- Entering into and managing any contracts (students under 16 cannot normally enter into legal contracts, including tenancies)
- Ensuring appropriate supervision outside University-led activities

Accommodation Services can offer advice and signposting, but the University has no responsibility for sourcing or supervising private accommodation. All arrangements must be agreed upon as part of the Care Management Plan.

Health and Wellbeing

Students should register with a GP promptly on arrival.

The University will contact emergency services first if needed (i.e. in circumstances where there is an immediate risk to life, serious harm, or where delay would materially worsen the outcome), then the named emergency contact.

Wellbeing, disability and study-support services are available to students; however, some age-based restrictions may apply.

Data Protection and Communication with Parents

The University cannot release personal information about a student (e.g. attendance, academic progress, residence details) without the student's consent, except in emergencies or where required by law.

Information you provide (e.g. emergency contacts) will be stored securely and used only for safeguarding and support.

We encourage families to discuss and agree on what information may be shared.

How Parent(s) and Guardian(s) Can Help

- Talk with your child about independence and when to seek help.
- Agree on who will be the trusted contact.
- Plan finances and accommodation early.
- Register with a GP on arrival.
- Read the code of student conduct together.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my child be taught separately from older students? No. Teaching is shared with the wider cohort. Any necessary adjustments will be set out in the Care Management Plan.

Can I receive regular updates about my child? Only with the student's consent, unless there is an emergency or a serious safeguarding concern.

Will staff be PVG-checked? Staff carrying out regulated work with under-18s must hold PVG membership. Many interactions will be incidental to staff roles, but all staff have safeguarding responsibilities.

What if my child struggles? They can contact their Student Adviser in the first instance, who will escalate to Wellbeing Services for urgent and serious concerns.

What about alcohol or tobacco? Scottish law applies. The University does not allow the purchase of alcohol or tobacco on its premises by anyone under 18. Consumption of alcohol or tobacco is prohibited to under-18s (e.g. at student social events).

Who should I contact?

Admissions: sra.adteam@ed.ac.uk

Accommodation: housingenquiries@ed.ac.uk