

# Welcome to Aston University and The Hub

## Welcome from Professor Alec Cameron, Vice-Chancellor & Chief Executive



### Dear applicant

The HE sector is currently experiencing an unprecedented scale and pace of change, combined with a high degree of ambiguity and uncertainty. Those universities able to adapt swiftly to a changing and increasingly competitive market will thrive. As a mid-sized, focused university Aston has the advantages of agility, innovation and team working that some other institutions do not. Our integrated placement year, our applicable, exploitable research, and our commitment to widening participation all help to make Aston distinct.

The 2014 Research Excellence Framework results recognised the quality and impact of Aston research. This research directly influences medical breakthroughs, advancements in engineering, innovation, policy and practice in government, and the strategies and performance of local and international business. The Times Higher Education REF rankings placed Aston University 35th in the UK and 78% of our submissions were judged to be World Leading or Internationally Excellent.

Teaching quality and the student experience are an important focus at Aston. We are committed to doing all we can to address the needs of students and to assisting them to achieve their career ambitions on graduation.

We very much look forward to receiving your application and learning more about how you would contribute to Aston's continuing success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alec Cameron." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

**Professor Alec Cameron**

# About Aston University

Founded in 1895 and a University since 1966, Aston is a long established research-led University known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links to business and the professions.

## Outstanding graduate employability

Aston has been a leading university for graduate employment success. With placements integrated into our degree programmes, students develop essential work skills and build industry connections and a professional profile. The majority of Aston graduates go on to graduate level jobs or further study within six months. We have strong relationships with national and international graduate employers, as well as smaller and local employers. These relationships are extremely important and make a real contribution to graduate employability.

## Career focused programmes

Aston's close and established links with business, the public sector and the professions ensure that our career focused degree programmes are inspiring, challenging and constantly updated to equip students with essential work-related skills and experiences.

## Excellence in teaching and research

We are committed to high quality teaching and academic excellence, ensuring we provide the highest standard of education to our students. Awarded TEF Gold in June 2017, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) found that students from all backgrounds achieve 'consistently outstanding outcomes'.



Aston has an excellent reputation for research which shapes and improves lives. We are proud of the quality of our research and the real world applications developed as a result – it makes a substantial and beneficial difference to people, organisations and society.

## International

Aston University is a popular choice for international students. We recognise and welcome the important academic contribution and cultural diversity international students bring to our university environment. Students from over 120 countries study at Aston University each year.

## Birmingham – one of Europe's liveliest cities

Birmingham has a rich history which makes the city a unique and inspiring place to visit.

It is internationally recognised as a leader in leisure, entertainment, shopping and sport and is an international centre for business, commerce and industry, housing numerous UK and overseas banks and law firms. Birmingham is home to world-class companies, innovative entrepreneurs and has one of the youngest populations in Europe. It is a dynamic, thriving and business-focused region and one that is well connected and centrally located in the UK.

## A green, sustainable campus

Located in the centre of Birmingham our green, 40 acre campus houses all the University's academic, social and accommodation facilities for our 15,783 students. All staff have the opportunity to contribute to our sustainability agenda and practices.

# University values

All staff are expected to demonstrate/promote the University's values and expectations, which are an integral part of our strategy and underpin the culture of the University.

In addition, our leaders are expected to be accountable, help to execute strategic visions of the University and share and set clear expectations that inspire those around them.

Our mission is to be the UK's leading university for students aspiring to succeed in business and the professions, where original research, enterprise and inspiring teaching deliver local and global impact.

In 2022 Aston University will have an international reputation for delivery of outstanding graduate outcomes and equipping business and communities with the skills for future success.

## Staff expectations

All staff are expected to:

- Be committed to delivering high performance
- Recognise and praise the high performance of others
- Remain open to new ideas and seek to act quickly for positive change
- Develop themselves, and support the development of others
- Be ambitious, for themselves, their teams and the university
- Engage with others, listen, observe and communicate
- Focus on excellent customer service, finding solutions and saying "yes"
- Make reasoned decisions without fear of blame
- Engender trust through their own actions
- Be fair in all matters

## Our beneficiaries

The University's beneficiaries are identified as three groups:

### **Students**

The first and primary beneficiary of Aston University are the individuals who form our student body and who progress to become our alumni. Aston places students at the heart of our academic and professional endeavour.

### **Business and Industry**

Our new strategy also has an emphasis on the businesses and other external organisations who engage with the University. Aston University is a market leader in industry-engaged research, as well as graduate employability. Our industry partners benefit from Aston's work both through our leading research and knowledge exchange, and from the quality of graduates we produce. Each student at Aston is offered the opportunity for a year-long work placement; these placements not only cement our relationships with industry but ensure businesses have access to work-ready graduates.

### **Region and Society**

We are committed to having a positive and transformative impact on Birmingham and the West Midlands. Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe and Aston University plays an important civic role by educating the leaders of the future. By emphasising research that has a regional impact, engaging with local businesses to develop a strong economy and educating top graduates, we are helping to shape our society around us.

# The Hub, Counselling and Disability Support

This job is based in the Hub, whose role is to enrich the student experience at Aston by providing outstanding student support in a friendly, welcoming environment where students can feel at ease. The Hub provides students with an information, advice and assistance service which is accurate and comprehensive.

Whilst each team member has clear areas of responsibilities, the team works closely together in order to deliver the maximum benefit to the institution. This is a reflection of the Aston First philosophy, empowering staff, making changes and encouraging inter-departmental communication to the benefit of Aston's students.

Highlights from the most recent Annual Report include:

## Hub Reception

- Circa 30,000 enquiries dealt with by the Hub reception staff
- The busiest week at the Hub reception was Freshers' Week with 1,620 enquiries

## Advice Zone

- The Advice Zone advised 3,041 individual students, a 49% increase from the previous year
- The Advice Zone assisted with 3,943 cases, a 6% increase from the previous year
- 11,043 case notes were written, a 4% increase on the previous year
- Visa advice was ranked 8th in the UK and 1st against our benchmarked competitors.
- 96% satisfaction level with the International Student Advisers.

## Counselling Service

- 18% increase in the number of students using the Counselling Service
- The Counselling Service's Student Survey which resulted in key changes being introduced

## Disability Team

- 15% increase in the number of students registered with the Disability Team
- 26% increase in the number of Disability Team interactions
- 12% rise in the number of students accessing specialist study skills tuition and specialist mentoring
- 59% rise in the total number of hours of specialist support accessed by disabled students

## Hub Visa Compliance

- The successful renewal of the University's Highly Trusted Sponsor Licence
- A visit from the Home Office's Higher Education Assurance Team