

Admissions Policy for FE Courses 2021-2022

Policy review area	Students
Lead manager	DCOO
Approval level	Board
Start date	July 2021
Review cycle	1 year
Next review	July 2022

Background

The guiding principles for the College's approach are:

- To provide accurate and timely information, advice and guidance to new applicants to enable them to make the right choices for their future
- To build a college community which celebrates inclusivity, diversity and the contributions of a wide range of students and apprentices
- To operate open, transparent and consistent admissions procedures
- The operation of procedures guided by a sense of 'fairness' and the aspiration that applicants are placed on a programme that meets their long term career aims and interests

1. Aims

- 1.1 This policy applies to all FE applicants including full time, part time and apprenticeship programmes of all ages, who are seeking admission onto a College programme including those who are already at the College and wish to progress from one programme to another.
- 1.2 The College will ensure that applicants receive information and advice from the Student Support Teams and Curriculum Teams in order to help them decide on the course of study to best suit their needs.
- 1.3 The College will work with other agencies such as Schools, Universities, employers and specialist support services to develop appropriate information sharing and referral processes and ensure that the information and advice provided to potential students and apprentices is accurate.
- 1.4 The College will offer applicants the opportunity to view the College and its facilities prior to the commencement of a course by holding open days, taster events or by arranged visits.
- 1.5 Applicants with additional support needs can access appropriate support from the College's Additional Learning Support team and will be given the opportunity to disclose their support needs at application, application review and at enrolment so that their needs can be met from the earliest stages in the student journey.

2. Scope

This policy outlines the Further Education Admissions procedures applicable to all applicants. As a result of the UK leaving the EU, EU (or EEA) nationals will be required to provide evidence of their status in the UK

3. Equality and Diversity Opportunities

The College's Single Equality Policy demonstrates the College's vision of culture and society where human difference is anticipated and diversity celebrated routinely. The College meets its Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups of people.

4. FE Admissions

The admissions process for FE students is overseen by the Customer Advisor Team who work closely with Curriculum Teams to ensure that each applicant is supported in a timely manner to meet their

individual requirements and provide them with experience that supports their admission into the College.

5. Apprenticeship Admissions

All applications for Apprenticeships are facilitated through the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team who will undertake initial screening interviews and assist with securing suitable employment opportunities.

6. Recruitment, Promotional and Marketing Materials

- 6.1 The College is committed to ensuring that applicants and potential applicants have access to high quality information, access to view facilities and the opportunity to speak directly with Curriculum Teams.
- 6.2 The College has a Schools Liaison Coordinator who works in partnership with local schools to ensure that young people understand the wide range of options available to them at Key Stage 5. Supporting school staff responsible for transition and careers is also a key part of this area of work.
- 6.3 The College works to ensure it meets the requirements of the Matrix framework and are committed to providing impartial information, advice and guidance.
- 6.4 The College is committed to ensuring that course prospectuses, the College website, and other publicity materials contain accurate, reliable, current and comprehensive information that are designed in a market-appropriate and accessible way.

7. Entry Criteria

- 7.1 The College publishes academic entry criteria for all full-time courses in the full time prospectus and on the website. The criteria is guided by a commitment to ensure progression through levels of learning and to ensure that applicants have the academic ability to achieve and succeed on their chosen course.
- 7.2 Exceptions to the stated criteria may be made for applicants who are identified as being home schooled or Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). In these instances, assessment of core competencies displayed at an application review meeting will be used.
- 7.3 Adjustments to the stated criteria may be made for applicants who are assessed as having a disability or learning difficulty.
- 7.4 Existing College students applying to undertake a further programme of study or progress onto an apprenticeship are required to fulfil the relevant entry criteria and follow the admissions procedure for internal applicants.
- 7.5 Applicants for whom English is a second language may be asked to complete an assessment of their reading, writing and comprehension as a condition of entry onto non ESOL courses.

8. Application Review Meetings

- 8.1 Application review meetings are a two way process to ensure that applicants can find out more about the specifics of their chosen course.
- 8.2 All full time applicants (and some part time applicants) will be invited to book an application review meeting to discuss their application and ensure that the course content, assessment, attendance requirements fit with applicants' expectations.

- 8.3 Applicants will have the opportunity to feedback on their experiences during the application review meeting and request further information should this be required.
- 8.4 Applicants who do not attend their application review meeting and who do not contact the College, will be given one further opportunity. If the applicant fails to attend on the second date or does not contact the College, their application will be withdrawn and this will be advised in their second review invite letter. The College will endeavour to take opportunities to contact the individual either directly or via their school to ascertain the reasons for withdrawing their application.

9. Internal Progression Applications

Priority will be given to applicants who are progressing internally, subject to their application being processed by the end of June and following successful completion of their current course. The College will aim for these applicants to be offered course places (subject to relevant conditions being met) before courses places are filled by new applicants who are not progressing from within the College.

10. Initial Assessment

Applicants may be asked to complete an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy prior to the start of their course. The information from this assessment will be used to indicate potential learner support needs.

11. Supporting Applicants with Additional Support Needs

- 11.1 The College welcomes applications from people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.
- 11.2 Where an applicant is identified as declaring a disability or a difficulty which may impact on her/his learning this will be followed up by the College's Additional Learning Support team. A disclosure form will be sent to the applicant asking for further details of the support or reasonable adjustments, which may be needed to be made by the Additional Learning Support Team.
- 11.3 The Additional Learning Support team will provide:
- Guidance and training for tutors and assessors on the disclosure of disabilities or learning difficulties at an application review meeting.
 - Support for applicants at application review meetings as required by the applicant
 - College Tutors with the information on the differentiation required for learning.
 - Support to ensure that applicants are able to access College Support Services such as Course Advice.
 - Any applicant with a disability who is not offered a place on a course will have this decision reviewed by a panel led by the ALS Manager to ensure that the appropriate consideration has been given to the application.
 - Offers of places to disabled applicants (or to applicants who may need learning support) will also be reviewed by the ALS Manager to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made to college services.
 - Due regard will be given the SEND Code of Conduct 2014 to ensure that best endeavours have been made to provide for applicants with SEND.

12. Risk Assessment & Safeguarding Duty

- 12.1 The College has a duty to ensure all students, apprentices and staff feel safe and protected

whilst at the College and will work with statutory and other local agencies to ensure the safety of its students, apprentices and staff.

- 12.2 The College will undertake risk assessments on applicants who disclose potential risks.
- 12.3 Where there is an identified risk, the College reserves the right to share information regarding the risk with statutory and other agencies in order to ensure the safety of its students and staff.
- 12.4 The College reserves the right to refuse entry to the College, if following the risk assessment process and panel assessment led by the Principal, the College feels the risks attached to an applicant are too high.
- 12.5 Students and apprentices have the right to appeal and complain against a decision.

13. DBS Checks

The College requires applicants who apply for specific courses to undertake DBS checks prior to starting the course. This will normally be completed as part of the application review meeting process. This process relates to courses where there is a work placement which requires the DBS check. All offers for courses where there is a DBS check requirement will be conditional to the successful DBS clearance.

14. Fees Assessment

If an applicant declares that they are not a UK National or that they have not lived within the UK for the last 3 years, they will need to attend a Fees Assessment. The Fees Assessment will determine the fees a student should pay.

15. Criminal Convictions

The College recognises the contribution that people with criminal records can make and welcomes applications from them. A person's criminal record will not, in itself, prevent that person from being offered a place on the chosen course. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Suitable applicants will not be refused a place on a course because of offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them at or make them a risk in, the course for which they are applying.

Applying for courses that are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

For applications to courses covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the College requires applicants to disclose any 'unspent' convictions and 'unspent' conditional cautions. The college is also required to know if the applicant is currently subject to a criminal investigation, facing a pending prosecution and also if an applicant is currently being supervised by the youth offending team or probation. This information is provided by applicants completing a criminal records disclosure form issued by the admissions team. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose and risk assessments will be undertaken.

If applicants are unsure about how to provide the information requested, support can be provided by contacting Nacro's Criminal Record Support Service on 0300 123 1999 or helpline@nacro.org.uk. All enquiries to this service are confidential and applicants will not be asked for any personal details (unless information or advice is requested to be sent)

For further information on how long it takes for convictions and conditional cautions to be spent, please refer to Nacro's guide on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act by visiting <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/rehabilitation-offenders-act/>

Applying for courses that are 'exempt' from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Courses exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 usually require the completion of a work placement in order to achieve the qualification. Work placements in childcare, working with vulnerable adults, health care, teaching, accounting and the legal system require a criminal record check appropriate to the role / course applied for. Criminal records checks take place through the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau). Some work placements may require an enhanced DBS check.

For applications to courses that are 'exempt' from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the College requires applicants to disclose any 'spent' / 'unspent' convictions and adult cautions that are not protected (i.e. that are not filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2020). This information is provided by applicants completing a criminal records disclosure form issued by the admissions team. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose and risk assessments will be undertaken.

If applicants are unsure about how to provide the information requested, support can be provided by contacting Nacro's Criminal Record Support Service on 0300 123 1999 or helpline@nacro.org.uk. All enquiries to this service are confidential and applicants are not asked for any personal details (unless information or advice is requested to be sent).

For further information and clarity on 'filtering' please visit <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/disclosing-criminal-records-applying-college>

When applications with criminal convictions are made a safeguarding panel review the application (chaired by the MET principal) to assess risk rating. Once the application is reviewed at the panel, the college will decide if an offer to the course can be made

16. Course Offers

- 16.1 Course offers may have conditions in addition to the standard academic entry criteria.
- 16.2 Course offers will be made in writing via the Customer Advisor Team normally within 10 working days of the application review meeting subject to relevant support information and references being received.
- 16.3 If a course is not thought to be suitable, or the applicant does not meet the required course entry criteria, they will be invited in to see a member of the Customer Advisor Team for support in looking at alternative courses.
- 16.4 Reasons not to offer an applicant a place would normally include:
 - Applicant not having the (predicted) academic requirements to meet the published entry criteria.
 - Applicant being supplied with a poor reference from their previous school or college. In some instances an applicant may be asked to complete a Code of Conduct as a condition of entry if a reference causes concerns about an applicant's behaviour. Alternative provision or support may well be recommended.
 - Applicants not displaying the core competencies expected for a programme of learning at the College at the application review meeting.
 - Concern that the applicant could not meet the specific work placement requirements of the course.

17. Course Closure and Change of Location

Where a course is under-subscribed or there is a significant change to how a course is funded, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course. In such cases, applicants will be offered advice on

the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other local education providers. However, the offer of a place on alternative courses cannot be guaranteed.

The college reserves the right to change the location of courses but will only do this in exceptional circumstances.

18. Course Acceptance

Applicants must accept or decline their place at College by visiting the online Prospect portal through the 'My application' link on the website or by telephoning the Customer Advisor Team within the stated timescale as stated on the offer letter otherwise their place may be at risk.

19. The College reserves the right to:

- Request references and/or school reports for applicants.
- Require DBS checks prior to entry on courses that lead to careers where this is a requirement or where work experience providers have this as a requirement. Certain convictions may lead to a refused course offer.
- Refuse admission to an applicant who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution. Previous exclusions do not automatically lead to an application being rejected. In such circumstances and providing all other entry criteria have been met, the applicant will be invited to a review meeting with a member of the College Senior Management Team (usually the Principal). This meeting will be used to assess a candidate's suitability to study on the course and in a college environment. A decision will be reached in full consultation with the applicant and their parent / guardian / carer (if aged under 18). Full consideration will be given to the welfare of the applicant and to that of other students, apprentices and staff.
- Conduct risk assessments, review and refuse admission for applicants where there is evidence that they could be a threat or danger to themselves or others. This relates to the college's duty of care to students, apprentices and staff.
- Review and refuse admission to an applicant/learner who has any outstanding debt to the College. Further information about this can be found in the College Fees policy.
- Require that students and apprentices are funded by a government body, themselves or another body in order that the College receives payment for the cost of studying.

20. Joining the college

Every effort will be made to ensure that joining the college is a positive experience for applicants. All applicants starting a course will be sent information (or a link to it on the website) about joining the college during July/August (for apprentices at time of appointment) and literature on financial support, services available for students and any other relevant information about life at the college. Enrolment is normally undertaken via a mixture of online and face to face activities. The college is committed to making that experience as simple and easy as is possible.

21. Appeals and Complaints

If an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made by the College with respect to an application to study at the College, they should contact the Student Recruitment Manager (SRM) in the first instance. The SRM will then liaise with the Head of Learning (HoL) responsible for that particular course. The HoL will investigate each appeal and provide a full response, including their decision, in writing. The SRM will support the applicant throughout the process and continue to offer guidance on finding the most suitable course for them.

Any dissatisfaction with any administrative or service delivery aspect of the admissions process can be addressed using the College's published Complaints Procedures.

Link to College Policies

- Single Equality & Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Accessibility Statement
- Risk Assessment Process for Criminal Conviction Disclosure
- Care, Support and Medicine Policy

22. Data protection

We collect personal information about applicants in order to process course applications. Primarily, personal data is used for:

- Administrative services, such as course registration and arranging interviews.
- The provision of student support services and other student guidance.

When we do collect personal data, we are regulated under the provisions of the UK Data Protection Legislation and / or, if the context so requires, any European Union legislation relating to personal data. We are responsible as 'controller' of that personal information for the purposes of those laws. A full Privacy Notice outlining the categories of student information that we collect, hold and share; why we collect and use this information; the lawful basis on which we use this information and why we share student information is provided to all applicants and enrolling students.