

## HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS POLICY

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## SCOPE

The policy relates to admission onto HNC/HND courses offered by the college, including those within Higher Apprenticeships. Admission to teacher training courses and Foundation Degree programmes is subject to the regulations stipulated by the partner HE institutions who validate these programmes.

## PURPOSE

The selection of appropriate students to Higher Education courses is an important process. While Dudley College of Technology fully supports the national 'Widening Participation' strategy, we have a responsibility to ensure that academic standards are not compromised, enrolment with integrity underpinning our recruitment. This Admissions Policy is intended to outline the process involved in the selection of prospective students.

The college welcomes applications from all people. It endeavours to ensure that there will be no discrimination for reasons of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, gender, re-assignment or socio-economic.

## PRINCIPLES GOVERNING HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS

The college recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity. It aims to provide an environment in which applicants are treated with dignity and respect and solely on the basis of their abilities, merits and potential.

The college is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and to benefit from study at undergraduate or postgraduate level. Individual applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction. The college's admissions policies and procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards.

The college acknowledges the principles and precepts governing good admissions practice set out by the Schwartz Report<sup>1</sup> and in Chapter B2 of the Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education<sup>2</sup>. The college welcomes the recognition by Schwartz and the QAA of the autonomy enjoyed by higher education institutions in making admissions decisions and of the need to exercise judgement in making such decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice ('The Schwartz Report') Admissions to Higher Education Review, September 2004 <http://www.admissions-review.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/quality-code-B2.aspx>

Against this background the college's Higher Education Admissions Policy is intended to provide a policy and procedural framework within which admissions decision-making is characterised by transparency, fairness and consistency.

The college strives to observe the good practice and to comply with all relevant legislation in relation to its undergraduate and postgraduate admissions activity.

## **MARKETING**

The college is committed to the provision of comprehensive, open and consistent messages in its marketing information, and to the management of activity which leads to the admission of students to the college in ways that are fair, clear and explicit and implemented consistently.

Ensuring consistency is important especially in relation to the very wide range of different countries, in the EU and beyond, in which the college undertakes marketing activities.

The college's marketing messages are promulgated through promotional materials and activities which we aim to ensure are accurate, relevant, current, and accessible in order to provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options.

Marketing activities include:

- Participation at education exhibitions.
- Collaboration with partner institutions.
- On-campus Open and Visit Days.
- Regular communications with applicants during the admissions process.

Marketing information is communicated via a number of different media and includes:

- Printed prospectus.
- The college website ([www.dudleycol.ac.uk](http://www.dudleycol.ac.uk)) and the IoT website (<https://www.blackcountryandmarchesiote.ac.uk/>).
- Social and new media.
- Documentation sent to applicants throughout the process.
- Admissions staff maintain a strong working relationship in order to ensure a holistic approach that is informed by the principles set out in the Admissions Policy.

## **Entrance Criteria**

- a) Entry requirements - All higher education applicants are required to meet the college's published entry requirements. Course-specific entry requirements are published annually in

the HE prospectus and on the college website. Entry requirements are reviewed annually and are determined by departments following consultation with the Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards with responsibility for Higher Education.

- b) Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not been educated in an English-speaking environment (country and/or institution) are required to achieve a minimum overall score of IELTS 6.0 in each band or equivalent.
- c) Entry requirements are normally determined before the proposed point of admission and published in the printed prospectus. The college reserves the right to amend its entry requirements (subject to approval by its validating institution) up to 12 months before the proposed point of admission.
- d) The college accepts a wide range of qualifications from UK applicants, including A level, International Baccalaureate, BTEC qualifications, Level 3 Advanced Diplomas, Access to HE Diploma courses (approved by the Quality Assurance Agency), Open University qualifications and a range of professional qualifications.
- e) EU and other international qualifications are also accepted. The equivalence of such qualifications to a Level 3 UK award will be evaluated in accordance with independent national guidance provided by UK NARIC, UCAS and other recognised sources.
- f) The college will normally verify the result of any qualification through the Awarding Bodies Linkage (ABL). Applicants may be required to submit evidence of results before they are permitted to enrol at the college.
- g) Where an applicant requires a Tier 4 Visa to study in the UK, an offer of a place will be subject to compliance relevant aspects of Tier 4 policy.

### **Selection – Admission**

- a) Applicants to full time HNC/HND courses and Foundation degrees will apply via UCAS and should hold a level 3 related subject qualification from a UK awarding body, an equivalent professional qualification or a qualification from an EU member state or overseas institution whose equivalence has been verified; applicants with non-standard qualifications will also be considered where they have significant professional experience within their chosen subject area.

- b) Applicants to part time HE courses will apply directly to the college and be interviewed by the Admissions tutor for the relevant course. They will normally hold a level 3 related subject qualification from a UK awarding body, an equivalent professional qualification or a qualification from an EU member state or overseas institution whose equivalence has been verified; other applicants will be considered if, for example, they have significant experience of working within their chosen profession or subject area. The interview programme will normally include:
- A brief outline of the relevant course – detailing structure and content, assessment methods, possible timetable, location of teaching room, date of first lesson.
  - An opportunity for applicants to ask questions and seek clarification.
  - A review of qualifications and experience
  - Evidence of numeracy and literacy initial assessment results and subject qualifications in the form of actual certificates; photocopies will be required to add to their file.
  - Checking of references
- c) All applicants may be required to undertake an Initial Assessment of their current Literacy and Numeracy levels. Successful applicants will normally obtain a minimum of Level 2 Literacy. Level 2 Numeracy may be required in certain subjects. Applicants for Foundation degrees need to hold GCSE English and Maths at grade 4 or above, or equivalent qualifications, as entry requirements.
- d) All applicants who declare a criminal conviction will be referred to the Chief Executive and Principal, or his representative. The Chief Executive and Principal or his representative will ask the applicant to disclose the nature of the conviction so that the college is able to carry out a safeguarding risk assessment. Refusal to disclose the nature of the conviction may result in the applicant not being admitted to college. This involves a risk assessment process which is designed to safeguard the welfare of all students and staff at the college whilst leaving scope for those with criminal convictions to seek admission to a college course.

The college reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who, after the risk assessment process, are viewed as unsuitable.

### **Offer-making**

Where the college decides to make the applicant an offer, this is communicated to applicants via email. The offer letter will set out any conditions that the applicant must meet.

### **Conditions of offer**

The offer letter sets out the specific entry requirements that the applicant must achieve in order for his/her place to be confirmed. The offer will be expressed in terms of UK Qualifications or the equivalent for applicants who are taking alternative qualifications and GCSE maths and English requirements. Where appropriate the offer will include the English language requirement that the applicant must achieve in order for his/her

place to be confirmed.

The college normally makes the Standard Conditional Offer (SCO) for the course. The offer letter may also set out non-academic conditions that the applicant must meet before admission to the course can be confirmed. Such conditions may relate to:

- successful completion of academic qualifications;
- successful attainment of Literacy and/or numeracy skills;
- proof of the relevant certification and documentation;
- provision of appropriate references;
- successful applicants who declare a medical condition or disability, such as dyslexia, will need to complete a support referral to ensure that appropriate action will be taken.

### **Applications made an alternative offer**

In cases where the applicant is deemed unlikely to achieve the entry requirements for the course for which s/he has applied but where an alternative course is available, a 'change of course offer' may be made.

### **Unsuccessful applicants and feedback**

Where the college decides that an offer cannot be made, this is communicated to applicants via email. The Curriculum Manager/Course Tutor are required to record the reason(s) for not making an offer in each individual case. Unsuccessful applicants have right to appeal to the Assistant Principal responsible for Higher Education or through the 'How Are We Performing?' (complaints system) if the applicant is not satisfied.

### **Discontinuation or suspension of course**

The college reserves the right to discontinue or suspend a course for which offers have already been issued but undertakes to do this in exceptional circumstances only. Where a course is discontinued, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible, and where possible and appropriate, are offered a place on an alternative course offered by the college or alternatively supported by our Information Advice and Guidance team to secure a place elsewhere with another provider.

## **CONSIDERATION OR ADDITIONAL DATA IN SELECTION AND OFFER-MAKING**

### **Applicants with disabilities**

Applicants who declare a disability in their application are referred to the college's Student Support team, which may issue advice and guidance or, where appropriate, make an assessment of the applicant's reasonable adjustment needs and what arrangements may be necessary to enable students to meet the course requirements. In individual cases Student Support may invite applicants for an interview to support the assessment

process. The Student Support assessment of applications from students who declare a disability takes place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit.

### **Mature applications**

All applications from mature students, are welcomed and will be given equal consideration with all other applications.

### **Applications who will be under 18 at the time of entry to the college**

In accordance with college's regulations, applicants who will be under 18 at the time of entry will be required to comply with college's safeguarding policy and procedures. Such applicants will be required to complete the relevant under 18s information on the college enrolment form, providing parental/guardian approval and details of a UK-based emergency contact who is over the age of 18, before their place is confirmed.

### **Applicants requesting re-admission**

Applicants who have previously withdrawn from study at the college, and who wish to be re- admitted, will be considered by the Curriculum Manager in the relevant curriculum area.

### **Applicants admitted under specific education outreach programmes**

The college may admit applicants under specific programmes designed to encourage applications from students who have experienced educational disadvantage. Such programmes include specification of additional consideration that may be given to applicants during the admissions process.

### **Applicants admitted under specific link agreements**

The college may admit applicants to specific degree courses under link agreements with overseas institutions. Link agreements may include specification of the entry requirements for admission to the relevant year of the relevant degree course.

### **Assessment of applicant fee status**

Applicants are required to declare their fee status when they complete their application, selecting from a number of options including UK home, EU or overseas (non-EU) fee status. The central Admissions team check information in the application relating to fee status, including the nationality, country of residence, address and declared fee status of each applicant. Where the combination of information provided suggests that the fee status declared by the applicant may be incorrect or insufficient information is provided the college carries out a fee status assessment. Fee status assessments are carried out by trained members admissions staff in accordance with UK fees and awards regulations and guidance provided by the UK Council for International Student Affairs ([www.ukcisa.org](http://www.ukcisa.org)). The college does not exercise discretion when determining applicants' fee status.

The college reserves the right to amend an applicant's fee status after the formal offer has

been issued.

The tuition fees for the first year of the course of study, together with the applicant's fee status, are included in the offer letter issued to the applicant.

### **Fraudulent applications, including similarity detection in personal statements**

Any applications submitted are subject to the anti-fraud procedures.

### **Declaration of criminal convictions**

Applicants are required to declare criminal convictions that are not spent at the time of application. Formal offers of admission will only be made following consideration of the conviction and application in accordance with the procedures. Application of the procedure takes place independently of the academic selection process, which is based entirely on academic merit and takes place in accordance with standard policy.

Applicants for specific courses may be required to declare spent criminal convictions and will be notified of this where appropriate.

### **Consideration of applicant results**

The college considers the results of all applicants who are holding a Conditional Offer place before deciding whether to confirm an applicant's place. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide the Admissions team with evidence of the results of academic and English language qualifications. The college reserves the right not to confirm an applicant's place if they do not provide evidence of having met the conditions of their offer.

### **Verification of results**

The college reserves the right to verify all results by receiving and checking original certificates prior to confirming an applicant's place and/or permitting enrolment with the college. English language test results will be verified with the qualification awarding body (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL).

### **Applicants holding CF offers**

On receipt of the applicant's results the Admissions team check to see if the conditions of the offer have been met. Where they have, the place is confirmed and the applicant's status is now Unconditional Offer.

### **Communication of Confirmation Decisions**

All applicants holding CF offers are informed of the college's confirmation decision via email (full time & part time applications), regardless of whether they have successfully secured a place or not. All decisions are communicated within 3 working days once all conditions have been met and evidenced.



## **Complaints and Appeals**

Applicants do not have a right of appeal against the *academic judgment* of the college. However, if following receipt of feedback (as detailed above), an applicant feels that an error has occurred, they have the right to request a formal review of the selection decision and should refer to the Appeals procedure.

Complaints are different to requests for feedback or appeals. A complaint does not necessarily have to be in connection with a decision to turn down an applicant. A complaint is a concern about a particular procedure, or process in the administration of an application.

Complaints may cover any aspect of the admissions process and will normally focus on a specific issue or situation (which could include the feedback request). A complaint does not necessarily question the decision of the college but raises a concern about how the selection process has been managed.

## **DATA PROTECTION AND COMMUNICATION WITH THIRD PARTIES**

The Data and Performance team aims to operate in compliance with data protection legislation and good records management practice. Applicants' data is treated as confidential by all staff involved in the admissions process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. In accordance with college policy, staff involved in admissions communicate only with applicants themselves, unless the applicant has given express permission for a third party to communicate on his/her behalf. Third parties may be parents, teachers, advisers, or agents acting on behalf of applicants.

## **Enrolment and Induction**

The college aims to provide a comprehensive academic and pastoral induction programme in order to support the transition of applicants to registered students at the end of the admissions process. Before arrival at the college applicants are provided with information about registration and enrolment with the college and induction activities.

This will normally include information about events provided by departments and the Student Union; services provided by Student Support; and general study skills provision, as well as information about good practice in academic writing, such as effective referencing and advice on how to avoid plagiarism.

Prior to enrolment applicants receive information relating to arrangements for enrolment and induction.

## **Evaluation and Review**

An evaluative review will be undertaken by the HE Board of Studies Committee following each HE admissions cycle to identify, share and incorporate good practice from the latest HE admissions cycle and consider improvements. The findings of the evaluative review

will be presented to the Standards Committee and, where appropriate, the Higher Education Admissions Policy will be updated accordingly.

### **Associated Documents can be obtained on request**

- POL-010 - Learner Involvement
- Accreditation of Prior & Experiential Learning for HE Students
- Appeal Against the Outcome of a Selection Decision
- Application for External HE Contracts via UCAS
- Assessment of HE Programmes
- Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration in Relation to HE Programmes
- Closure of an HE Course
- HE Course Approval
- HE Website Material
- HE Closure Form
- HE Enhancement Strategy

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier should it become necessary by the Assistant Principal with responsibility for higher education.