



Admissions & Appeals Policy & Procedure Higher Education & Skills

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide prospective students and staff with a guide to the admission of Higher Education (HE) students and Adult Skills students at Ashton Sixth Form College. The policy has been drawn up following examination of sector best practice guidance from Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and aims to provide an efficient, fair and transparent admission function for Ashton Sixth Form College.
- 1.2 This policy covers admissions to all full time and part time HE courses and part time Adult Skills courses at the college. For further information regarding admissions to courses awarded by our partner institutions, please see either the Staffordshire University admissions policy: http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/admissions/index.jsp or the Salford University admissions policy: http://www.governance.salford.ac.uk/cms/resources/uploads/File/AQA/Admissions_and_Retention_Policy.pdf

2. Principles of Fair Admissions

- 2.1. The HE & Skills Department is committed to providing a fair admissions system which provides equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of background, to gain admission to a course suited to their ability and aspirations. We uphold the principals of fair admission through being transparent, fair, honest, consistent, accessible, personalised and timely [Schwartz Report (2004)].
- 2.2. The aims of the department are to ensure that:

- 2.2.1. Applicants are provided with as much information as possible to enable them to make informed choices and appropriate applications. We will provide high quality information and advice on all aspects of recruitment, selection and admissions including our entry requirements, course information, duration and fees through our Senior Admissions Officer, Marketing Officer, specialist teaching staff, external advertising, course leaflets, open evenings/days, information and application packs and employer events.
- 2.2.2. Applicants are treated fairly and equitably in their application to the college.
- 2.2.3. Applicants can achieve success on the appropriate level of course, in light of previous experience, qualifications and career plans
- 2.2.4. Applicants are dealt with in a timely and professional manner.
- 2.2.5. Students receive a high quality service.
- 2.2.6. Applicants are given clear details about entry criteria and application procedures for admission.
- 2.2.7. Applicants are provided with an initial guidance interview/discussion.

3. Learner Eligibility

- 3.1. Detailed guidance is followed in line with the latest version of the SFA Funding Rules and HEFCE guidance. The College will use these documents to support enrolment and funding decisions during admissions.
- 3.2. On admission, the following checks will be made:
 - 3.2.1. Is the learner a UK National or EEA National? If NO, a copy of their passport will be requested and nationality established. A passport or birth certificate is required at enrolment for all learners.
 - 3.2.2. Has the learner been ordinarily resident in the UK or EEA for the past 3 years? If NO further assessments will be made regarding eligibility to be in the UK and/or be funded. Even where a learner indicates YES, if the enroller believes a status check is required, this will be pursued.
 - 3.2.3. The following documentation may be requested:
 - Passport
 - Visa details (or parent/spouse details)
 - Exam Certificates
 - Home Office documents
 - 3.2.4. Where a student has a visa that allows them to be in the UK and to undertake funded or unfunded learning, a check will be made to ensure that the visa expiry date is after the course end date.
 - 3.2.5. Where the student does not meet the criteria set out by the SFA funding eligibility guidance then fees will be charged for tuition/examination costs subject to confirmation of rights to live and study in the UK.
 - 3.2.6. This Admissions Policy does not cover International Student Admissions. Please see separate policies.

4. Admissions Procedures

- 4.1. Admission to courses is continuous throughout the year. The process of applying varies depending on the course and level of study. Pages on our website provide a step-by-step guide to the application process for our Higher Education and Adult Skills courses. The college acts fairly towards applicants for admission and exercises equal treatment without unlawful discrimination in line with the recommendations by the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code of Practice, chapter B2. We are committed to providing transparent recruitment and admissions activities ensuring all applicants are considered and evaluated on an individual basis. The college is committed to fair access and admissions encouraging and welcoming applications from all social and educational backgrounds.

- 4.2. All students are interviewed or have an admission discussion with specialist staff to assess suitability for the course. The main purpose of this is to provide advice and guidance about the courses applied for and any alternatives that could or should be considered. Interviews and admission discussions also provide an opportunity for applicants to find out more about the College.
- 4.3. Information regarding learning difficulties, disabilities, health, study needs, attendance or other issues which may affect a learner's progress will be discussed, as well as being requested from the student at the point of application and enrolment. The objective is to discuss the needs of such students so that the college can put in to place a suitable package of support.
- 4.4. The decision about whether to accept a learner onto the course for which they have applied, rests with those with authority during the enrolment period, the final decision rests with the Assistant Principal, H.E., Skills and International. Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:
- Previous qualifications or predicted achievement – do they meet the entry requirements?
 - Previous experience.
 - Potential to succeed and progress from the course.
 - Personal statements (if applicable)
 - Portfolios (if applicable)
 - Interview (HE students)
 - Additional needs
 - Ability to support the safety of others.
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance where appropriate.
- 4.5. We promote equality of opportunity for all, which includes those who may possess a criminal conviction. When considering applicants with relevant criminal convictions, the college applies the legislation relating to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants to some H.E. courses require mandatory DBS checks and this is discussed at the interview stage.
- 4.6. Every effort will be made to find a course appropriate for all applicants. However, despite all reasonable adjustments being made, in some circumstances, enrolment may not be possible. Reasons for this include, but are not limited to:
- Not meeting academic standards,
 - Physical requirements are unable to be catered for (e.g. unable to complete assessments for physical reasons).
 - Failing DBS check where this is a requirement.
 - Failure to achieve pass mark in any required pre-entry tests.
- 4.7. Learners are required to disclose any support needs and medical conditions on their application/enrolment form. The college will take all reasonable steps to provide additional learning support or other support needs if a need is declared.
- 4.8. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we promote equality of access to education, training and development. No applicant judged to be academically suitable will be refused admission on grounds of disability without compelling reasons. It is important that students tell us on the application form of any impairment so that, wherever possible, we can ensure that we provide the facilities and support they require.
- 4.9. We welcome applications and support students who are leaving care. Applicants under the age of 18 may be admitted to study and we have a responsibility to safeguard that student's welfare. We welcome applicants of all ages and backgrounds. Applications will be considered from mature students who may not have qualifications which fit into our standard entry criteria and each application will be assessed taking into account any relevant experience and skills.

- 4.10 If an application is received from a learner who is related to a member of teaching staff or has a close personal involvement, this results in a circumstance which may cause a conflict of interest. The student will be made aware on application that an alternate tutor or dual observations/second marking will be put in place for the duration of the course.
- 4.11 Decisions re applications will be made at enrolment or communicated to applicants as quickly as possible. Where we are unable to make an offer for an applicant's original choice of course, we may offer an alternative course for the applicant to consider.
- 4.12 Where interviews are part of the assessment process, full details of the process will be sent prior to the interview. Any course specific additional information required for interview will be sent with the interview invitation.
- 4.13 Decisions reached following interviews will be communicated to the applicant directly from the college by letter and via UCAS (if applicable).
- 4.14 When a particular course has too few applications from learners to proceed, the college will advise applicants as soon as possible of alternative courses available in the event of the original course being closed.
- 4.15 In this circumstance a course closure process is followed and the H.E. & Skills Course Closure Form is to be completed and signed off by the Assistant Principal H.E, Skills & International (please see Appendix C). Initial discussions take place between course closure proposer and the Assistant Principal, H.E. Skills & International. The Assistant Principal H.E., Skills & International discusses the course closure at SLT. If approved, the process at course level will begin. The Curriculum Leader or Head of Area completes the H.E. & Skills Course Closure form. The Assistant Principal H.E., Skills & International signs the form. The Senior Admissions Officer informs the MIS department and partner organisation (if applicable).
- 4.16 We recognise that it is important that unsuccessful applicants have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application. Applicants will automatically receive feedback regarding unsuccessful application decisions.
- 4.17 The college is fully responsible for admissions related decisions for all our courses and H.E. programmes run in partnership with Staffordshire University/Salford University.
- 4.18 Support and training is provided for admissions staff who will continue to attend SPA (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions) and Student Loan Company training events as required for CPD. They will also attend meetings at partner universities to ensure compliance with university policies.

5. Appeals Process

- 5.1 Unsuccessful applicants have the right of appeal. Applicants are requested to write in the first instance to the relevant Head of Area, via H.E. & Skills Admissions, using the Admissions Appeal Process. Please see Appendix B for more details. The applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal and given an explanation for the decision which has been reached.

6. References

6.1 This policy is informed by the college's internal Equality and Diversity Policy, H.E. Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy, Fee Policy, CEIAG Strategy, Enterprise and Employability Strategy, Staffordshire University's Admissions Policy, UK Quality Code for Higher Education (chapter B2) and by the following external Acts:

- Children's Act 1989
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Education Act 2000
- Race Relations Act
- Religious Beliefs Legislation
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Sexual Orientation Legislation
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Equality Act 2010,

The College will review this Admissions Policy annually.

Appendix A Entry Requirements 2014/15

This information is published on the college's web pages, in printed materials and on external websites such as UCAS and is shared with all relevant staff, and added to this policy annually.

Subject	Entry Criteria
<u>Skills for Life Literacy</u> Entry 2 Level 1 Level 2	Demonstrate the ability to read, write and speak at Entry 2 Demonstrate the ability to read, write and speak at Entry 3. Has a Level 1 qualification.
<u>Numeracy</u> Entry 3 Level 1 Level 2	Demonstrate the skills at Entry 2. Demonstrate the skills at Level 1. Has a Level 1 qualification.
<u>Business Administration</u> <u>Level 2/3</u>	Must be working either paid or voluntary in an administration role. Will be required to complete an initial assessment. For the Level 3 Diploma must be working in a supervisory role.
<u>Customer Service Level</u> <u>2/3</u>	Must be working either paid or voluntary in a customer service role. Will be required to complete an initial assessment. For the Level 3 Diploma must be working in a supervisory role.
<u>STALIS Level 2</u>	Must have an adult literacy qualification Level 2 and/or English GCSE grade C or above. Must have previous qualification/experience and have been in employment (paid or voluntary) for a minimum of 6 weeks. Employment in a school must be for a minimum of 10 hours per week working with children aged 5 and above.
<u>STALIS Level 3</u>	Must have an Adult Literacy qualification Level 2 and/or English GCSE grade C or above. Should hold a Level 2 STALIS qualification. Must be in paid or voluntary employment both supervising and being responsible for children for a minimum of 10 hours per week. A Numeracy Level 1 qualification is preferred however this can be gained alongside the course.
<u>EYE Level 2</u>	Must have an adult literacy qualification Level 2 and/or English GCSE Grade C or above, employment (paid or voluntary) for a minimum of 10 hours per week and must be in paid or voluntary employment in an early years setting for at least 6 weeks.
<u>EYE Level 3</u>	Level 3 candidates need to be working without direct supervision and hold an English GCSE grade C or above and a Maths GCSE grade C or above. Should hold a Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's workforce.

<p><u>Playwork Level 2/3</u></p>	<p>Must be in paid or voluntary employment both supervising and being responsible for children for a minimum of 10 hours per week.</p> <p>Must have an adult literacy qualification Level 2 and/or English GCSE grade C or above, employment (paid or voluntary) for a minimum of 10 hours a week and must be in an early years setting for at least 6 weeks. Level 3 candidates need to be working without direct supervision and hold a A*-C in GCSE Maths and A*-C in GCSE English.</p> <p>Minimum age of 16 for Level 2 and 18 for Level 3. Must have an adult literacy qualification Level 2 and/or English GCSE grade C or above.</p>
<p><u>Setting up a Childminding Business</u></p>	<p>Required to attend a pre-registration briefing session prior to enrolling on the course.</p>
<p><u>Forest School Taster Day</u></p>	<p>No entry criteria.</p>
<p><u>Level 3 Forest School Leader</u></p>	<p>Be over 21 years old. If working with children, a Level 3 childcare/playwork qualification and experience of working with the young is essential. For teenagers and adults, a relevant Level 3 qualification is required or equivalent experience. If working with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, have a relevant qualification and experience of these groups.</p>
<p><u>GCSE Maths</u></p>	<p>Must attend an assessment session prior to the start of the course and must achieve a satisfactory score.</p>
<p><u>GCSE English</u></p>	<p>Learner will need to complete a short piece of diagnostic writing.</p>
<p><u>GCSE Science</u></p>	<p>A suitable knowledge in science, preferably a grade in GCSE Science. GCSE Maths grade C or above. GCSE English grade C or above.</p>
<p><u>Access to H.E. Diploma- Biological Sciences</u></p>	<p>GCSE Maths at grade C or above, GCSE English at grade C or above, GCSE Science at grade C or above.</p>
<p><u>Higher Education</u> Level 4</p>	<p>The relevant university or awarding body's guidelines will be followed. In general, most applicants are expected to hold some level 3 qualifications or have relevant work experience prior to course entry. An interview will be held to assess suitability.</p>
<p>Level 6</p>	<p>The University's guidelines will be followed. The learner is expected to already hold level 4 or 5 qualifications.</p>

Appendix B

Admissions Appeal Procedure

All applications are considered on their individual merits and treated in a fair and equal way based on all information provided to the College through the application process. The responsibility of making offers for available places is with the Admissions Team and Head of Subject areas.

We reserve the right to refuse admission to applicants who do not meet entry requirements or who the College believes, for specific reasons, would not be fit to be a student at the College.

Our approach to the admission of mature applicants and applicants from non-traditional or non-standard academic routes is flexible. Each application is considered individually. The College recognises that previous experience gained in work or other areas of life may have prepared mature applicants for a course of study.

Applicants should only be rejected:

- If the Head of the subject area has informed admissions to stop recruiting for the programme (i.e. the course is full).
- The student cannot possibly meet the standard entry requirements in the time frame –e.g. the student has a level 3 but not in a relevant subject and cannot demonstrate suitable subject knowledge.
- An applicant who cannot be assessed against standard entry criteria cannot demonstrate capacity to study for example at level 4 and/or relevant subject knowledge.
- Two interviews have been missed with no explanation for absence.

A reason must be provided when an applicant is rejected, particularly where the applicant cannot be assessed against standard entry criteria. For Staffordshire University programmes a reject code must be selected.

The College recognises that it is important that unsuccessful applicants have the opportunity to receive feedback on their application. UCAS applicants will automatically receive minimum feedback via UCAS Track, however we are happy to provide further feedback if possible. Any unsuccessful decision for non-UCAS applicants will be made by letter from the College.

The College recognises that on occasion an applicant may wish to appeal against a selection decision or to make a complaint for a specific concern related to a procedural irregularity in the admissions procedures.

1. If an applicant considers that they may have cause for an appeal or complaint, they are requested to write in the first instance to the relevant Head of the subject area, via H.E. & Skills Admissions, using the Admissions Appeal Form, and this must be received in writing within 10 working days of the decision to which the appeal relates.
2. The College will provide a response to the appeal within 10 working days inviting the applicant to a meeting with the Assistant Principal H.E., Skills and International and the Head of the subject area to discuss whether the appeal is upheld or rejected and the reasons for the decision.
3. The applicant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal and given an explanation for the decision which has been reached.

4. The decision is final and there is no further right of appeal.
5. No applicants will be discriminated against in any future application on the basis of appealing a previous admissions decision.

Admissions will collate annual statistics relating to the number of formal appeals received and the outcomes.

In accordance with principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, appeals will only be accepted from the individual who applied to the programme of study. Appeals will not be accepted from parents, carers, friends, teachers or any other third person unless the applicant has provided written confirmation that we may correspond with a named alternative contact.

Complaints

Complaints relating to admissions will be managed in accordance with the college's complaints procedure which can be found at:

<http://www.asfc.ac.uk/about/comments-compliments-and-complaints>

This procedure should be used when an applicant is dissatisfied with the service they have received from the college with regard to an application.

Admissions Appeal Form

Applicant's full name:	
Programme:	
Postal address:	
Email address:	
Date decision received – appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the unsuccessful decision. Late appeals will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances and reasons for the delay should be stated here.	
Please provide a statement below giving further details of the grounds on which you appeal. Any available evidence which the applicant wishes the College to consider must be submitted with this form.	
Sign name:	Date:

Please return this form to:

Head of Subject Area
H.E.& Skills Admissions
Ashton Sixth Form College
Darnton Road
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 9RL

Appendix C
Higher Education & Skills Course Closure Form

This form is to be completed for any HE or Adult Skills course that is to be closed. This includes any partner franchised course, and any course validated by a partner HEI. All sections should be completed. A signed copy of the form should be forwarded to the Assistant Principal H.E. & Skills & International.

1. Title of Course:
2. If Edexcel or WJEC course, then please state:
3. Name of partner organisation if course is being closed:
4. Course Codes for all modes applying for closure (e.g. full time, part time):
5. Mode(s) of Study it is proposed to close:.....
6. Mode(s) of Study (if any) remaining:
7. Last academic year there is to be a first year intake:.....
8. Last academic year it is estimated that there will be any continuing students on the course:.....
9. Provide details of plans for any continuing students:.....
10. If there are current applicants, please explain what arrangements will be made to advise them of alternative courses:.....
.....
11. Reasons for Closure of the Programme:

Print name of proposer of course closure:

Print name of Head of Area:

This form should be sent to the Assistant Principal H.E. Skills & International

Signature of Assistant Principal H.E., Skills & International.....

Date:

The relevant form should be sent to the partner organisation, (if applicable).