

Title: Admissions Policy (Higher Education)

Type: Policy

Purpose: To explain the HE admission procedure to applicants and staff

Scope: This policy applies to all applicants, applying to do a Higher Education programme at Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College.

Responsibility: The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy. The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

Legal Context: Equality Act (2010)

1. Policy Statement

This policy applies to all students applying to undertake a Higher Education programme at Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College (hereafter referred to as the College) including Higher National programmes.

It does not apply to franchised courses from partner institutions including Oxford Brookes University, Coventry University, Newman University and the University of Northampton. Students studying a course from a partner institution will need to follow that institution's admissions policy. Students can seek advice and support from Student Services in relation to this.

The College is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all who are able to demonstrate potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and benefit from study at undergraduate level.

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, religion or belief. 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.

2. Equal Opportunity

The College is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all of its activities and to encouraging access to the College from all groups, irrespective of race, gender, age, disability, faith or sexual orientation. The College is working to create an environment in which diversity and individual difference are positively valued in an atmosphere free from harassment and discrimination. The College takes its legal and moral obligations with respect to equal opportunities seriously. The College welcomes dialogue with groups and individuals on ways in which its equal opportunities policies and practice can be enhanced.

The College will not tolerate any form of behaviour or activity that discriminates on the

grounds of gender, marital status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, colour, race, nationality, religious belief, ethnicity, disability, age and unrelated criminal convictions.

3. Marketing and Recruitment

The College's marketing and recruitment communications are disseminated through promotional materials and activities which we aim to ensure are accurate, current, and accessible.

Marketing and recruitment activities include:

- participation at education exhibitions
- collaboration with partner institutions
- College Open Days

Marketing and recruitment information is communicated through a variety of different media and includes:

- the College websites:
www.solihull.ac.uk
www.stratford.ac.uk
and partner websites
- social media
- external advertising (Newspapers, billboards) etc.

4. Admissions

The College operates a centralised undergraduate admissions process for applications received via UCAS (full time applications) and the College websites. Applications are processed by the HE Admissions Officers who act as the main contact for applicants throughout the admissions process. However, selection decisions are made by members of the academic team.

5. Role of applicants in the admissions process

Applicants are expected to:

- provide complete and honest information in applications submitted to the College
- respond in a timely manner to requests for further information from the College, communicate any changes to the information supplied in their application as soon as possible
- be courteous and respectful in their communications with College staff

6. Entry Criteria

Academic requirements

The College welcomes applications from suitably qualified students with NQF/QCF/RQF Level 3 qualifications including A Levels, BTEC Diplomas, International Baccalaureate, Level 3 Advanced Diplomas, Access courses (approved by the Quality Assurance Agency), T-Levels, Open University qualifications and a range of professional qualifications. A range of EU and other international qualifications are also considered. Course entry requirements will be detailed in the course leaflet.

Some courses will have specific requirements for GCSE English or Maths or a Science or equivalent qualifications such as Functional Skills Level 2.

Each course will have specific entry criteria which are clearly set out on the College websites and UCAS website.

Mature students without full entry qualifications but with relevant career experience may also be admitted to some courses. Please refer to the course leaflet for guidance.

Application

Applications to full time Higher Education courses will be through UCAS. Any student applying direct to the College for a full-time course will be advised and supported to apply through UCAS.

Applications to part time courses will be through completion of the online application form available on the College websites and then processed by the HE Admissions Officers.

Interviews

The interview process is considered a key element of entry and as such a successful interview is considered part of the entry requirement for the course. This provides an opportunity for applicants to meet members of the academic team in order to provide a co-operative assessment of their suitability for the course.

Once the application has been received as above, an interview will be arranged with the Programme Leader or designated representative of the programme team. All applicants are expected to attend their interview unless there are valid circumstances such as the applicant lives a considerable distance away and would find it difficult to attend. Under such circumstances a telephone or Skype interview may be conducted.

During UCAS clearing telephone and/or virtual interviews may be offered to applicants to ensure that offers are made to applicants in a timely manner.

Communication of offer

Decisions made following interviews are communicated to applicants via UCAS Track (full time applicants) and by letter emailed from the College. The offer letter will set out any conditions that the applicant must meet.

Should the interview be unsuccessful a reject decision is relayed via UCAS Track (full time applicants) and via the interview process for part time applicants.

The HE Admissions Officers within Student Services are responsible for all communications with UCAS regarding the admissions process, including the transmission of admissions decisions.

Support for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

The College welcomes applications from students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and aims to ensure that their experience is as positive as that of other students.

Applicants who disclose a disability may be supported at interview by a member of the Additional Needs Team. All applicants must meet the entry requirements.

For those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities a further assessment of need may be necessary following the initial interview to ensure that the College is able to offer the support required. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should apply for DSA (Disabled Students Allowance).

Applicants are strongly advised to inform the college of any support needs on application, to enable the appropriate assessment of support to be conducted in a timely manner.

Assessment of applicant fee status

Applicants are required to declare their fee status when they complete their UCAS application or via the online application form for part time applicants, selecting from a number of options including UK home, EU or overseas (international) fee status. The HE Admissions Officers check information in the application relating to fee status including the nationality, country of residence, address and declared fee status.

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. 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.

Fraudulent applications, including similarity detection in personal statements

Applications submitted via UCAS are subject to the anti-fraud procedures and checks carried out by UCAS.

Declaration of criminal convictions

Applicants for specific courses, such as Health and Social Care and Early Years may be required to declare spent criminal convictions in certain circumstances and will be notified of this where appropriate.

7. Confirmation

Consideration of applicant results

The College considers the results of all applicants who are holding a Conditional Firm (CF) or Conditional Insurance (CI) place before deciding whether to confirm an applicant's place. In the case of results not provided by UCAS, it is the applicant's responsibility to provide 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 by the published deadline.

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.

Deferrals

Once confirmation of results has been received, applicants can choose to defer the entry of their application until the following year. This must be agreed with the Course Leader and then the applicant must confirm in writing or email (verbal confirmation is not accepted) to the Admissions Officers who will then confirm with the Course Leader and defer the application through UCAS.

8. Student Transfer

Applicants who change their minds about a course or where they want to study can contact the HE Admissions Officers who will advise on the appropriate next steps. Applicants need to be aware of implications in changing courses including financial implications for both current and future studies.

The College recognises prior and experiential learning, so applicants may be able to transfer directly into year two or three, or may be exempt from specific modules. As we work with a number of Universities, we follow the University regulations for implementing prior or experiential learning. Admission for the relevant course will require their approval. For Higher National admission we follow Edexcel regulations.

If you are on an Oxford Brookes course but studying at Solihull College and University Centre and want to change your programme, then Oxford Brookes regulations will apply.

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/credit-transfer/>

9. Appeals Process

The College ensures that applicants will have the right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of the College. Applicants should note that published entry criteria must be met. Any appeals should be made in writing to the Quality Team. This must be done within 20 days of an initial admissions decision being made. Applicants wishing to appeal should refer to the Higher Education Admissions Appeal Procedure.

10. Further Information

For further information on Higher Education procedures please contact the Frontline Services & Admissions team on HE.Admissions@solihull.ac.uk or 0121 678 7000.

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