

Title: Contextualised Admissions Policy (Higher Education)

TYPE: Policy

PURPOSE: To explain to staff and applicants how contextualised admissions can be applied to entry for higher education courses

SCOPE: Staff and applicants

RESPONSIBILITY: Claudine Barnes (Head of Higher Education)

Legal Context Equality Act 2010

1. Scope

This policy relates to contextualised admissions of Higher Education programmes (Foundation Degrees, Higher Nationals and Top-Up Degrees) at Solihull College & University Centre, and is supplementary to the main Admission (Higher Education) Policy.

2. Introduction

Solihull College & University Centre is committed to widening participation and ensuring fair access to higher education for all learners, regardless of their background. We are committed to recruiting a student body from a diverse background with a wide range of lived experiences, to create a rich learning environment. This policy outlines our approach to contextualised admissions, designed to recognise the potential of applicants whose academic achievements may not reflect their true ability due to personal, social, or educational disadvantage. This policy will allow SCUC to consider applications holistically, rather than simply whether they have met course entry criteria.

3. Policy Objectives

- To increase access to HE for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.
- To support applicants who have experienced barriers to educational achievement.
- To ensure a fair, transparent, and inclusive admissions process.

4. Contextual Admissions Criteria

Applicants may be eligible for a contextual offer if they meet all of the following baseline criteria:

- Have Home-UK fee status.
- Their current or most recent school is not an independent (fee-paying) school.

In addition, applicants must meet one or more of the following indicators of disadvantage or underrepresentation:

- Live in an area of low higher education participation (POLAR4 Quintile 1 or 2, or TUNDRA Quintiles 1 or 2).
- Live in an area of multiple deprivation (IMD Quintile 1 or 2)
- Attend or have recently attended a school or college with below-average attainment (a Progress 8 score of 'below average' or 'well below average')
- Are the first in their family to attend university.
- Have been eligible for free school meals or pupil premium.
- Aged 25 or under and have spent time in local authority care or are care leavers.
- Have refugee or asylum seeker status from the Home Office.
- Are a registered carer or have parenting responsibilities – including caring for children or other family members (e.g., parents, spouse, or siblings).
- Have parents currently serving as armed forces personnel.

5. Contextual Offers

Where appropriate, applicants meeting contextual criteria may receive:

- A reduced academic offer equivalent to a one-grade reduction from the standard entry requirements. This typically equates to 16 UCAS Tariff points for BSc, BA, Foundation Degree, and Higher National courses. Examples are provided below.
- Additional consideration during the admissions process (e.g., interview or portfolio review).
- Access to pre-entry support and transition programmes.

Example Contextual Offers

	A-levels	Pearson Level 3 National Extended Diploma	Access to HE
HNC Policing	Standard Entry criteria: 112 UCAS points Reduced entry criteria: 96 UCAS points Example: CCD instead of BBC	Standard Entry criteria: 112 UCAS points Reduced entry criteria: 96 UCAS points Example: MMM instead of DMM	Standard Entry criteria: 112 UCAS points Reduced entry criteria: 96 UCAS points Example: D15, M15, P15 instead of D27, M6, P12
HNC Leadership	Standard Entry criteria:	Standard Entry criteria:	Standard Entry criteria:

& Management	80 UCAS points Reduced entry criteria: 64 UCAS points Example: DDE instead of DDD	80 UCAS points Reduced entry criteria: 64 UCAS points Example: MPP instead of MMP	80 UCAS points Reduced entry criteria: 64 UCAS points Example: D0, M18, P27 instead of D0, M30, P15
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6. Application Process

Applicants do not need to apply separately for contextual consideration. Eligibility will be assessed automatically based on information provided in the UCAS application or direct application form. Applicants may be asked to provide additional evidence where necessary.

7. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually. Data on contextual admissions will be monitored to ensure fairness, transparency, and impact on widening participation goals.

Author	Created	Approved by	Last Reviewed	Next Review Date
Claudine Barnes	June 2025	EMT or Corporation	September 2025	September 2026

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