

Policy Name	Further Education & Apprenticeships Admissions Policy
Directorate	Sales & Marketing
Created by (Job Title)	Director of Sales & Marketing
Date Reviewed	December 2018
Date of Next Review	December 2020
Pathway	
E & D Policy Disclaimer	This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

Admissions Policy

1. Introduction

This policy details the Group's approach to and arrangements for the admission of students on to further education courses and programmes, and apprenticeships.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all colleges within The Bedford College Group: Bedford College, National College for Motorsport, Shuttleworth College, The Bedford Sixth Form and Tresham College.

3. Policy statement

The Bedford College Group is committed to providing its local community with a wide range of learning opportunities at different levels to facilitate access and progression.

It is our policy to operate an admissions service that guides prospective students on to appropriate programmes of study and courses from which they are likely to benefit and which will enable them to succeed and progress. This is achieved through the Group's values of being student-focused, high performing and demonstrating openness, respect and honesty.

4. Policy aims

It is the aim of The Bedford College Group to ensure the admissions procedures are designed to:

- Provide impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) to help prospective students make realistic and informed decisions about their choice of learning opportunities
- Make available clear, accessible and accurate information for each course or programme, which includes entry criteria, qualification aims, costs, study requirements, progression routes and assessment methods
- Manage applications and enrolments in a timely and efficient manner, with high levels of customer service
- Ensure that the admissions procedures do not disadvantage applicants by discriminating on any grounds, such as disability, age, gender and gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.
- Make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to learning programmes for people with disabilities
- Provide information and advice on college facilities and support services
- Undertake best endeavours to maintain a safe college environment for all our students, staff and visitors
- Ensure applicants are notified of the reason where admission to their chosen course is declined
- Provide applicants with information on alternative opportunities, including those offered by other providers, where we are unable to meet their needs
- Treat applicants with courtesy and respect at all times

- Provide information, advice and guidance services which continue to meet the standards of the Matrix quality mark.

5. Responsibilities

The Director of Sales & Marketing has overall responsibility for the Admissions Policy. It is implemented by the Student Recruitment team under the leadership of the Head of Student Recruitment, and by the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team under the leadership of the Head of Business Development and Director of Business Development.

Interviews for full-time and substantive/ specified part-time courses are the responsibility of the relevant Course Manager / Course Lead. Interviews for The Bedford Sixth Form are the responsibility of the Student Recruitment Team at the Sixth Form. Interviews for apprenticeships are the responsibility of the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team.

Supporting full-time applicants with additional learning support needs is the responsibility of Additional Support Team. Curriculum areas are responsible for referring apprentices with additional learning support needs to the Additional Support Team.

6. General principles

6.1 Information, advice and guidance

The College will ensure that prospective students receive information, advice and guidance from the Student Recruitment team, Apprenticeship Recruitment team and/or Course Tutors in order to help them decide on the course of study or apprenticeship programme that best meets their needs and aspirations.

The College is committed to providing the highest quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG). Staff within the Student Recruitment team and Apprenticeship Recruitment team hold, or are working towards, professional IAG qualifications, and the College's Student Recruitment, Apprenticeship Recruitment and Student Services teams have been accredited the Matrix standard in recognition of our commitment to providing high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance.

6.2 Entry criteria and condition of entry

Information about each course and apprenticeship, along with its entry requirements, can be found on each college's website and in its course prospectus (where available).

Existing college students wishing to apply for the next level full-time course can do so under the College's Progression Guarantee. See Student Progression (Full-Time FE) Policy for more details on our website.

The minimum age for entry on to our courses is 16 years old (as of 31st August of the year the course starts). Applicants who turn 16 after 31st August but prior to the closing date of their course may be considered, subject to meeting

the entry criteria, safeguarding arrangements being place and the admission being authorised in writing by a Vice Principal prior to enrolment.

Full-time applicants under the age of 19 who have not achieved a grade 9-4 (C) in their GCSE English and maths examinations will be required to retake their GCSEs. This is a mandatory requirement and a condition of study.

Apprenticeship applicants who have not achieved a grade 9-4 (C) in their GCSE English and maths examinations prior to starting their apprenticeship will be required to sit Functional Skills Level 2 exams in both subjects. This is a mandatory requirement and a condition of their apprenticeship programme.

6.3 Making an application

Applicants can apply online via each college's website. In order to make an application, applicants will need to set up an account on the applicant portal if it is the first time they have applied to one of the Group's colleges. Applicants will be able to see in the portal copies of applications made and copies of all key communication relating to the application.

Applications made online will be acknowledged by return. We will communicate primarily by email using the email address used to set up an account in the applicant portal. We will also use text messaging to remind applicants about important dates and events.

If applicants are aged under 19, we will also communicate with the parent/carer regarding the application, using the information provided in the emergency contact section of the application form.

If an applicant for a full-time programme declares on the application form that they have a learning difficulty, disability or support need, applicants will receive an email from our Additional Support team to introduce our additional support services and explain how to contact them for support and advice.

For apprenticeship applicants, the curriculum area will refer an applicant who declares a learning difficulty, disability or support need to the Additional Support team, who will then get in touch.

6.4 The guidance interviews

For all full-time courses, some substantial part-time courses and apprenticeships, applicants will be invited to attend a guidance interview.

Applicants usually receive an invitation to the guidance interview within one week of the application being received. The interview usually takes place within four weeks of the application being received.

The guidance interview provides an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions and obtain more detailed information about the course and college to ensure it meets their expectations. It also helps staff assess the suitability of the applicant and at what level they should start at. Sometime applicants will need to take part in practical skills tests as part of the guidance interview, for

example auditions and presenting portfolio of works. The format varies according to the course applied for, and will be clearly detailed in the invitation communication.

If an applicant has declared a learning difficulty, disability or support need, a member of the Additional Support team may be invited to attend the interview.

If an applicant does not attend their guidance interview and doesn't notify the College, we reserve the right to withdraw the application.

6.5 Course offers

For full-time and part-time courses, a verbal offer will usually be made as part of the guidance interview. A formal offer will usually be made within one week of the interview. Applicants will receive an email inviting them to go to the applicant portal to view a copy of their formal offer letter, which they will need to accept or decline within two weeks.

A course offer may be conditional, which means a place has been offered provided that the applicant can meet certain conditions. Conditions will normally relate to qualifications that the applicant is required to pass (including specific grades required). Any conditions relating to the offer will be detailed in the applicants formal offer communication.

For apprenticeships, once an applicant has had a guidance interview, their details will be passed on to relevant employers to consider. The applicant will be asked permission to pass their information to employers before it is sent.

If it is not possible to offer an applicant a place on their chosen course, an alternative course discussed during their guidance interview, or an apprenticeship, the applicant will be offered a careers interview and/or referred to another provider where practicable.

6.6 Preparing to start College

All new full-time students (excluding students apply for Access courses) are expected to attend our Welcome Day in June/July. The Day is designed to introduce them to the College, the course and their fellow students, and ease the transition to post-16 learning.

In early July, full-time applicants will receive information about their enrolment and other information they might need, such as fees payable. Applicants on full-time courses will need to attend an enrolment event at the end of August/early September, where they will also receive their induction timetable.

Applicants accepted on to a part-time courses can enrol at any time from May.

Applicants accepted on to an apprenticeship will be invited in to enrol before their programme starts. They will receive communication confirming their induction and start date of their programme.

6.7 Course closure

In the event that a course is oversubscribed and a limit on numbers has been approved by the Senior Management Team, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

In the unlikely event a course is not viable due to, for example, low numbers that would have an adverse effect on the student experience or where there has been a significant change to government funding, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course (including after an offer has been made or accepted). In such cases, applicants will be offered advice and guidance on the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other suitable alternative providers.

6.8 Disclosing a criminal convictions

We have a duty of care under our safeguarding procedures and Prevent strategy to make every effort to ensure that applicants who might pose a risk to other college users are not admitted on to our courses, and have procedures in place to do this. The procedures were developed in consultation with Nacro.

Applicants are asked on the application form to declare any unspent criminal convictions. They are also assured that this declaration will not necessarily be a bar to them joining the College. Convictions which would give rise to particular concern are those for offences against a person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, convictions involving unlawful supplying or possession of controlled drugs or substances, and theft. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and reformed under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012) do not need to be disclosed. However, applicants for courses involving working with children or vulnerable adults are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Applicants with unspent criminal convictions will need to attend a meeting with the Head of Enquiries & Admissions to undertake a risk assessment. The risk assessment is then reviewed by a panel, and the outcome communicated to the applicant.

See our Applicants Disclosing a Criminal Conviction Policy on our website for more details.

6.9 Applicants with additional learning support needs

The College welcomes applications from people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Where a full-time applicant is identified as declaring a disability or difficulty which may impact on his/her learning, they will be followed up by the College's Additional Support Team.

Apprentices will be contacted by the Additional Support Team where a referral has been made by the curriculum area.

The Additional Support team will provide:

- Support for applicants at guidance interviews as required by the applicant
- Support to ensure that applicants are able to access College support services.

The College will work closely with Local Education Authorities in order to meet legal requirements under the Children & Families Act 2014 in respect of:

- Duty to admit students if the institution is named in an EHCP plan and able to meet need
- Duty to co-operate with the local authority to identify and meet the needs of young people with SEN. This is a reciprocal duty, meaning that the local authority must also co-operate with colleges to ensure young people's needs are met.

6.10 Non-EU students (or EU students that have not been resident in the EU for three years or more)

The College does not currently hold a Tier 4 Border Agency Licence and therefore only accepts applications from EU and EEA residents or those who have lived in the EU or EEA for more than three years. Applicants may be asked to provide supporting evidence regarding residency.

6.11 Right to refuse admission to the College

Under certain circumstances the College may reserve the right to refuse an application or enrolment, or withdraw an offer. Applicants who fall into this category will be given full consideration before any such refusal or withdrawal.

The College reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant:

- Who has disclosed a criminal conviction which is either not spent or can never become spent and which the College believes represents an unacceptable risk to students and/or staff
- Who has previously been excluded from one of the Group's colleges or another educational institution. Before any such decision is made, reasonable effort will be made to obtain references from previous educational institution(s) and, where provided, references will support any decision
- Who has previously attended this or another education institution and not completed courses, including all external assessments, without good reason
- Who has previously been subject to the College's disciplinary procedure and has not followed the recommendations following the outcome of any such disciplinary
- Who is identified as being a threat or danger to themselves or others in the College environment in relation to the College's duty of care to staff and students. See our [Fitness to Study Policy](#).

- Where the College has been notified by the police that the applicant presents an unacceptable risk
- Has outstanding debts with the College
- Has provided false or misleading information on an application or enrolment form

The above list is indicative, and is neither exhaustive or exclusive. The College reserves the right to make the final decision on whether or not to accept an application or enrolment to the College. Any such decision will be made by a Vice Principal or the Director of Student Services.

7. Collecting information about applicants

Details on the information we collect about applicants can be found in our [Data Privacy Policy](#), which sets out what we do with applicants' information and what we do to keep it secure. It also explains where and how we collect applicants' personal information, as well as their rights over the personal information we hold about them.

8. Appeals and complaints

If an applicant feels that the process has not been followed, or the decision reached by the College is unfair or incorrect, they have the right to appeal or complain. This can be done by visiting www.bedford.ac.uk/haveyoursay or www.tresham.ac.uk/haveyoursay

Our [Have Your Say Policy](#) is designed to ensure that your complaint is dealt with promptly and effectively. A copy can be obtained from the downloads section of our websites, by emailing haveyoursay@bedford.ac.uk or by writing to the Quality Department, The Bedford College Group, Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AH.

After exhausting the Group's internal complaints procedure, if you are still dissatisfied with the outcome you can complain to the Skills Funding Agency (the government agency responsible for overseeing the performance of further education colleges). Further details on how to contact them can be found in our [Have Your Say Policy](#).

9. Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the admissions policy is monitored through:

- Assessment under the Matrix quality standard
- Customer feedback
- Service standards detailed in the admissions processes
- Analysis of performance recorded on student recruitment system
- Observation of admissions interviews and related activity
- College self-assessment process
- Equality impact analysis.

10. Supporting policies

The following College policies are relevant to the application of this policy:

Document	Owner
Customer Care Charter	Director of Sales & Marketing
Dealing with Disclosure of Unspent Convictions Policy	Director of Student Services
Equality & Diversity Policy	Diversity & Inclusion Advisor
Fitness to Study Policy	Director of Student Services
Student Progression (Full-Time FE) Policy	Director of Sales & Marketing
Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy	Director of Student Services
Data Privacy Policy	Director of Sales & Marketing