

ACCESS & ADMISSIONS POLICY

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ACCESS AND ADMISSIONS POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the principles and procedures applied by Waltham Forest College to select and admit learners on college programmes.

The Admissions Policy also supports the delivery of the College's strategic aims and ensures that all learners have equal access to a college programme, which includes apprenticeships and work-based training and have access to high quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team responsible for approving policy and regulations relating to admissions.

A separate Admissions Policy is in place for higher education.

2. Overview

Waltham Forest College believes in the transformative nature of Further Education and the wide-ranging impact education can have on individuals and the wider community through widening participation. The College encourages applications from all students irrespective of socio-economic status or background who have the potential to benefit from further education courses and to succeed at college.

We are committed to:

- Equal opportunity of access to further education
- Encouraging and welcoming diversity and equality, ensuring that our processes and procedures are reasonable and equitable
- Supporting applicants throughout the application process through reasonable adjustments based on need
- Using standardised selection methods in order to admit learners based on their current achievement and potential to succeed
- Applying admissions practices that are consistent, fair and transparent
- Constant improvement and review of our processes

3. Responsibility for implementation

The admissions policy applies to all staff that are involved in providing high quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance to all students throughout the different stages of recruitment and student journey.

4. Selection Process

In considering individual applicants for admissions to a course, the College requires evidence of prior learning, or appropriate alternative evidence of personal, professional and educational experience demonstrating academic potential and the ability to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the course.

Admissions decisions are made through a standardised comparison between set entry criteria and the applicant's past and predicted academic performance. Applicants will be

required to provide evidence of all educational attainment through the provision of transcripts and certificates in all cases.

In cases where an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) consultation is required with the relevant local authority, the College will assess its capacity to meet the students's individual needs. Admission decisions will be made accordingly and communicated to the applicant in a timely manner.

Each course may have individual requirements such as interview, assessments or DBS checks. Applicants are encouraged to view the individual entry criteria on the relevant course information page on our website or prospectus before submitting an application.

5. Mitigating Circumstances and Contextual Data

Waltham Forest College will consider mitigating circumstances such as illness or personal bereavement where there is clear evidence that these have negatively affected an applicant's previous performance. Applicants who wish to have such circumstances considered should contact the Learner Services team. Where appropriate, the College may offer a place if there is confidence in the applicant's ability to catch up and succeed on their chosen programme.

6. Accuracy of applicant information

Offers of a place at Waltham Forest College are made based on the information provided by the applicant throughout the application process. The College reserves the right to withdraw an offer or remove a student from a programme of study if it is found that the application included false, misleading, or incomplete information at the time of enrolment.

Where an application lacks sufficient information to make an informed decision, applicants will be given the opportunity to submit additional supporting details, within a reasonable timeframe and in line with course start dates.

7. Applicants

Waltham Forest College is committed to ensuring a fair, efficient, and supportive admissions process. As part of this commitment, the College will ensure that:

- Applications are promptly acknowledged and processed in a timely manner
- Appropriate arrangements are made for interviews and initial assessments where required
- Applicants are informed of interview arrangements
- All relevant information, including risk assessments and transition plans for those in receipt of any form of care, supervision or who have high needs e.g., visual impairment, must submit an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) prior to progressing to enrolment. This allows the College to ensure if support is in place before the start of the course All applicants aged 16-18 are aware of the requirement to study English and maths until a grade A*-C or 9-4 at GCSE is achieved
- All applicants for full time courses will be interviewed. Most interviews will be conducted at scheduled interview events
- Learner Services is responsible for coordinating interview times, initial assessments, and issuing invitations to prospective students

- Applicants who wish to explore career options or seek impartial advice will be offered an interview with a Careers Guidance Adviser or a Learner Services Adviser

To ensure applicants are enrolled on the most suitable courses, Waltham Forest College will take the following into account:

- Academic ability, as determined by initial assessments and predicted grades. Upon enrolment, actual qualifications will be confirmed via the Government's Learner Record Service (LRS) or evidence of qualifications achieved
- Career and Higher Education aspirations, to ensure course alignment with the applicant's long-term goals
- The learning and support needs including any declared special educational needs, to ensure the appropriate provision is in place.
- The skills, experience and interests, as relevant to the chosen course and career pathway
- The previous performance and conduct on any college-run courses, including attendance, behaviour, and academic achievement
- Risk assessments, transition plans, and support documentation, particularly for applicants with EHCPs or those receiving care or supervision
- Time of application, considering the stage in the academic year and the applicant's realistic ability to complete the programme and achieve progression outcomes
- Fee payment eligibility, including the applicant's ability to pay fees if not eligible for funding under current funding guidelines

Waltham Forest College will make every effort to ensure that:

- The career aspirations of the applicant are met in a way that is consistent with the College's curriculum offer and within available funding sources
- Applicants are given full information about the College, the courses for which they have applied and progression opportunities which include routes to employment, apprenticeships and university
- Applicants are selected in accordance with the entry requirements for the course for which they have applied
- Applicants in receipt of care services will be considered fairly, appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken, and support plans will be put in place.
- The application process and the selection of applicants is conducted in compliance with the College's Equality Scheme
- The results of an interview will usually be communicated in the form of a conditional/unconditional offer at the end of the interview or, in writing to the applicant as soon as is reasonably possible after the interview has taken place
- All learners offered places will be invited to the College to formally enrol and attend their induction session
- Financial information will be offered in relation to fees and entitlement to fee remission or sources of support e.g. Bursaries and loans
- Information will be available on support that may be available from the College such as with travel, childcare and other related course costs
- All students will be offered the opportunity of further careers information, advice and guidance should they wish to reconsider their course choice

In addition to the general admissions criteria, Waltham Forest College ensures that specific entry requirements are met for particular courses and applicant groups:

- Some accredited programmes require interviews with specialist tutors. These interviews may include initial assessments and a review of prior qualifications and/or relevant experience as part of the entry criteria. Supported learning students and those with special needs will be advised on appropriate courses to meet their needs and aspirations by specialist staff
- Applicants for part-time English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are required to complete a short test and interview. This ensures their language proficiency is appropriately assessed and they are placed on a course suited to their level.
- Certain courses or applicants with no prior qualifications may need to undertake specific diagnostic assessments to determine suitability and readiness for the programme. Employers expressing interest in training for their staff will be offered a consultation to discuss their needs, followed by a training needs analysis to identify appropriate provision.

8. Applicants with criminal convictions

Waltham Forest College will carefully consider applications from candidates with criminal convictions. Applicants may be required, upon request, to disclose full details of any unspent convictions or pending court hearings.

The College reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant whose conviction may pose a risk to the safety and security of learners and staff, or where professional body requirements or course-specific regulations prohibit admission.

9. Conditions of Entry

Entry requirements are in place for all courses to ensure that the applicants are supported to make fully informed choices. The College is committed to offering fair, transparent and consistent conditions of entry. Entry criteria are clearly published in all course information sheets, the prospectus and the College website.

In cases where achievement of specific grades is required to secure a place, this will be discussed in detail during the interview and enrolment stage. In cases where awarding bodies or other stakeholders have entry requirements in addition to college criteria, this will also be clearly stated on the course information sheet.

10. Applicants with disabilities or additional support needs

Waltham Forest College welcomes applications from learners with disabilities, long-term medical conditions, or learning differences. All applicants are assessed against the same entry criteria to ensure fairness and consistency.

Applicants are encouraged to declare any disability on their application form and are invited to contact the Admissions Office if they require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the selection process.

While reasonable adjustments will be made to support applicants through the admissions process, all applicants must still meet the required entry standards for their chosen course. Decisions to offer a place are made solely based on the College's admissions criteria and are not influenced by information relating to an applicant's disability.

Once enrolled, the Additional Learning Support team will work with students to identify and provide any further support they may need during their studies. Information on how to contact the Additional Learning Support and related teams is included in offer letters and is also available on the College website.

11. Applicant data

Waltham Forest College processes applicant data in accordance with its GDPR Data Protection Policy. Personal information provided during the application process is used solely for processing applications and, upon admission, becomes part of the student's official record.

12. Appeals

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the any aspect of the admissions process are encouraged to submit a formal complaint in accordance with the College's Complaints Procedure.

APPENDIX A: Waltham Forest College: Provider Access Policy

Introduction

This policy statement sets out the College's arrangements for managing the access of providers to the College for the purpose of giving them information about the provider's education or training offer. This complies with the College's legal obligations under Section 42B of the Education Act 1997.

Learner Entitlement

All learners from Waltham Forest College are entitled to:

- Hear from a range of providers about the opportunities they offer, including higher education, technical education courses offered by further education and specialist training providers. Linking their aspirations to a career pathway.
- Meet with employers and apprenticeship providers to find out about careers opportunities that lead to meaningful careers progression and employability.
- Get support and develop their skills to make an application for academic courses as well as employment opportunities offered by a range of providers.
- Comprehensive high-quality information, advice and guidance.

Opportunity for Access

Providers, parents and carers will have the opportunity to speak to our learners during one of our events, which is integrated into the College careers programme. The range of careers events offered by the Waltham Forest College include:

- Open events
- Fresher's Fair
- Induction Talks
- HE Fair
- Apprenticeship week events, including Job Fair
- National Careers Week events
- HE Finance and aspiration to HE
- Employer Fair in collaboration with JCP
- Skill development workshops
- SEND Job Fair in collaboration with Local London Careers Hub
- Adhoc workshop link to subject specific

Meaningful Provider Encounters

Waltham Forest College organise a number of events including the HE Fair, Employer Fair, Aspiration to HE and universities workshops, which all intended to help our learners explore future education options and employment opportunities relevant to their career pathway. Learners had one-to-one discussions with providers and gained information and impartial advice on the appropriate career route they will need to undertake.

Employer and Careers Activities by Type

Learners participated in a range of activities, including employer talks, Higher Education and employers' fairs, motivational speakers, university insight days and workplace visits. These activities were developed by the careers team and with greater emphasis on employer engagement with the view of building long-term well-established relationships.

Opportunity for Access

We offer a number of events which are integrated into the College careers programme that will offer providers an opportunity to come into college and speak with our learners and/or their parents. Please speak to our Careers Leader to identify the most suitable opportunity for you.

Premises and Facilities

The College can offer appropriate space relevant to each of the activities including spaces that hold a large audience for careers workshops or classrooms which will be appropriate for small group discussions.

The College will also make available projectors and other specialist equipment to support provider presentations. This will all be discussed and agreed upon in advance of the visit with the Careers Leader or members of the Learner Services Team.

Management of Provider Access Request

A provider wishing to request access to learners at Waltham Forest College should contact:

Ali Yusuf

Head of Learner Services & Careers / Careers Leader

Email: Ali.yusuf@waltham.ac.uk or myfuture@waltham.ac.uk

Tel: 020 8501 8114