

HE Admissions Policy

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Approved by	HESB
Policy Owner	Director of Student Services
Policy Author	Director of Student Services/DHEAS
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1. Purpose

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This policy ensures a consistent approach to College Higher Education (HE) Admissions processes within and explains how that will be achieved with links to other relevant policies.

Higher Education in this context means programmes at Level 4 and above that are eligible for funding by the Student Loans Company:

- a Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- a Higher National Diploma (HND)
- an Initial Teacher Training course (L5 DET)

2. Aims

2.1 The college aims to recruit with integrity and provide a high-quality educational experience for students. This policy is consistent with the college Equality & Diversity Policy and its **HE Access and Participation** Statement.

2.2 The first important steps in ensuring student success are ensuring students are on the right course and clear communication of the policies that affect them. This policy sets out the college commitment to this for Higher Education courses. Linked policies also include the Fees Policy, the HE Student Contract, the Student Protection Plan and the Closure, Suspension or Changing of HE Provision policy.

2.3 The policy complies with relevant legislation and considers the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access¹; any relevant accrediting professional bodies and the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) good practice guidance and principles².

The College HE Admission and Recruitment aims are:

- To minimise barriers to access for prospective students.
- To prepare students for successful participation in their chosen careers.
- To recruit students who have the potential and motivation to succeed on their chosen course.
- To ensure fairness, transparency, and equal opportunity to all applicants.
- To provide accurate information and advice to all prospective students concerning all Higher Education opportunities to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their choices.

2.4 The college will achieve these aims in accordance with its **HE Access and Participation Statement** by:

- Encouraging applications from all students regardless of backgrounds.
- Ensuring that each application is assessed equally and in line with college, and/or any partner university policies and procedures.

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Scope

Recruitment and Admissions activities are done in partnership between departments within the college.

The **HE Strategy Board (HESB)** is responsible, on behalf of the college, for approving Higher Education Admissions Policies.

Heads of School in partnership with course leaders, senior managers and awarding organisation requirements, determine selection criteria, set up reliable initial assessment measures and interviews in order to select students for programmes.

The **Learner Services Department** is responsible for the administrative process including, planning and operation of the application process and interviewing cycles, documentation and forms, enrolment, communication with prospective learners leading to enrolment and providing information and support with careers information, HE loans and fees.

The Higher Education Strategy Board (HESB) oversees the HE **deliberative committee** system. The HESB ensures that HE policies and procedures are aligned with the college's strategic aims and objectives, and compliant with relevant legislation and sector guidance.

The HESB delegates to the **Academic Curriculum & Quality Committee** oversight of the operation, monitoring and review of this policy.

Admissions Cycle

The admissions cycle is the process by which applicants are recruited to courses, compliant with the principles described in this strategy. Once the cycle is complete and the applicant enrolls, they become a student.

3. Key Principles

3.1 Information for Applicants and Enquiries

The college is committed to providing pre-entry information and support to enable prospective students to make informed decisions regarding any application they make to the college.

3.2 All Higher Education Admissions Policies, Procedures and selection criteria for each programme will be clearly displayed in both printed publications and on the college website, enabling easy access for applicants, partners, agents, and staff.

3.3 Advice will also be made available on the website on how to contact the college for specific queries regarding applications.

3.4 Each individual programme will publish course information to be displayed on UCAS (for full-time courses) and the college's own publications.

3.5 Contracting

The **HE Student Contract** sets out the contractual arrangements in more detail.

3.6 The college will make every effort to ensure that published information is accurate. Many of the publications provided are done more than 12 months before the start of a course. Prospective students should therefore also refer to the website for the most up-to-date information.

3.7 The college reserves the right to make changes to courses during the application cycle. Where changes to courses do occur following receipt of applications, the change will be communicated to applicants at the first opportunity. This includes the units or modules delivered as part of the course;

if this occurs after a course has started, students will be consulted, and their agreement sought prior to the introduction of the change.

3.8 Any such changes are also approved through the college HE deliberative committee system before their introduction. Please see **Closure or Changing of HE Courses Policy**.

3.9 In certain circumstances a course may have to be closed during the admissions cycle. This could be because there are insufficient applications and/or confirmed acceptances of offers by applicants so that the students choosing to enrol, once the course has started, have an appropriate educational experience. The college will communicate with applicants if this is the case. The college will endeavour to support the affected applicants in finding a suitable alternative. Please see the **Student Protection Plan** and the Closure, Suspension or Changing of HE Provision policy for more details.

3.10 Selection & admission

Applications will be assessed against academic and non-academic selection criteria specific to the course for which they have applied.

3.11 The college will publish, annually, its selection criteria for all programmes and applicants are advised to check the college's publications and website for course specific selection criteria. Entry criteria for all courses are reviewed annually.

For many courses, entry criteria will exceed the minimum institutional requirements which are:

- Applicants should demonstrate acceptable levels of literacy and numeracy, equivalent to at least GCSE grade C/4 in English and Mathematics. For technical qualifications maths grade requirements may be higher
- Applicants whose first language is not English should be able to demonstrate English Language proficiency in Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening to the standards required by either the college or any partner university and to the course for which the applicant has applied.
- Selection criteria represent the usual level of academic attainment an applicant is expected to attain before being admitted to a Higher Education course. The selection criteria are not intended to provide a guarantee that all applicants who meet these basic selection criteria will be offered a place. This is usually specified in UCAS points.

3.12 Fitness to Practice

Some courses lead to both academic qualifications and licences to practice. If there is a stipulation about fitness to practice for professional registration, then that will be included in the entry criteria as a mandatory requirement for entry to the course.

3.13 Please note that you may not be offered a place on a course if your history or personal circumstances mean you would not be able to progress into a specific industry/sector or job role. Some courses will require occupational health checks or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as part of their conditions of entry. This could be because there are external requirements regarding placements.

3.14 The college reserves the right to deny admission to such programmes to applicants who are unable to supply a satisfactory Occupational Health or DBS check. Where a student has been refused entry based on an Occupational Health or DBS check, the college will give feedback on the reasons for this decision.

3.15 All information provided to the college on an Occupational Health or DBS check remain confidential between the course leader for the specific course and the applicant.

3.16 The college reserve the right to charge students for their DBS. Following enrolment, if a further disclosure or other information becomes available that was not disclosed and considered during the admissions process the student's enrolment may be reassessed and cancelled because of the added information.

3.17 All aspects of the admissions process are included within the college procedures for safeguarding learners available: [Safeguarding & Prevent \(waltham.ac.uk\)](http://waltham.ac.uk)

3.18 The enrolment form requires applicants to declare if they have any unspent criminal convictions. Where a positive declaration is made, the applicant is referred to a safeguarding officer to complete a risk assessment prior to being permitted to enrol. The college retains the right to reject any applicant where the nature of their conviction could impact other learners. The college reserves the right to conduct a risk assessment on any learner at any time. The college reserves the right to withdraw a learner if it is found that an applicant has provided incorrect information during the application and enrolment process.

3.20 Fitness to Study

The college has a Fitness to Study policy intended to protect individual students and the college community. If it becomes clear to the college that an applicant may be unfit to study, as defined by the policy, then discussion with the applicant will take place. The outcome may be that the application is subsequently deferred or rejected.

3.21 Assessing Applications

The college may receive more applications than it has places for, and therefore the admissions process is competitive. All applications are assessed against the same entry criteria individually. Where places are limited, we offer places to those applications who the admissions staff consider to best evidence their potential to benefit from their chosen programme. Methods of assessing applications vary between courses but may include:

- Prior and predicted academic achievement. Many of our courses utilise UCAS tariff points but where this is not the case it will be made clear on the course specific pages of the course website.

- References.
- Personal or supporting statements.
- Interviews.
- Aptitude tests/initial assessments (where required).
- Previous relevant employment and experience.
- Previous non-academic achievement.

3.22 We understand that, on occasion, the standard procedure for assessing an applicant's suitability for a course may not provide the admissions staff with an accurate understanding of an applicant's suitability and, in such cases, we may require applicants to submit additional evidence in support of their application. Applicants will be contacted directly by the admissions staff with clear guidance on what is required.

3.23 The college reserves the right not to admit:

- Learners who have any outstanding debts with the college.
- Applicants/learners who have previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution.

- Individuals who previously attended the college but failed to make sufficient effort towards successfully completing their studies.
- Learners where there is evidence that they could be a threat or danger to others.
- Learners whose behaviour has been considered to be “vexatious” towards the college.

3.24 The college will accept students from a range of different qualification backgrounds and will consider any applicant presenting a relevant academic qualification. Individual courses reserve the right to judge the relevance and acceptability of any qualification presented for entry. Where any qualifications or subjects are less favoured this will be made clear within the published criteria on the course specific pages.

3.25 To be officially enrolled a learner must have completed an ‘enrolment form;’ had the enrolment form signed by an appropriate member of staff and committed to the appropriate fee. This is an important contractual stage in the admissions process.

3.26 Recognition of Prior Learning

The college welcomes applications from mature students. Admissions staff will ensure that these applicants are not disadvantaged in the selection process. The applications will be considered against the advertised course specific selection criteria.

3.27 The college is aware that for mature applicants the selection process may not always evidence their full suitability for the chosen course. Where appropriate, curriculum staff will seek and consider alternative evidence to ensure that applicants are given equal consideration. Where this additional evidence is deemed to meet entry criteria fully, an applicant may not be required to meet the standard academic entry criteria.

3.28 Applicants without formal qualifications may be considered through the **APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning)** which may be based on prior experiences and/or qualifications. Students seeking entry through the APL route will be assessed against specific learning outcomes on specifically designed assessments.

4. Students with Additional Support Needs

4.1 The college welcomes applications from prospective students with disabilities or Additional Support Needs. All applications from students are considered against the set selection criteria for each course, with consideration being given during this process to any impact this may have on attainment. Upon receipt of an application where a disability, health condition or learning difficulty has been declared, the admissions staff will request additional information from the applicant to ensure that full consideration to the applicant’s needs has been considered during the selection process.

4.2 Where it is apparent that an applicant will require reasonable adjustments to enable them to undertake the course, and are considered academically suitable for the course, the admissions staff will discuss the applicants needs during the interview process so that support measures can be put in place for the start of the programme.

4.3 Where the applicant's needs are complex, the college may issue an offer based on academic and other eligibility criteria which remain subject to investigation as to whether the college can make such adjustments. If the college cannot provide the support required for the applicant, it will discuss this with them directly to advise and, where possible, support them in making further decisions relating to this.

4.4 Students with Additional Support Needs are welcome to contact the college before an application to discuss their requirements. There is a separate policy for **HE Student Support** including financial support available online.

5. Deferred Entry

5.1 The college allows applicants to be considered for deferred entry and this is only usually granted for one year. Deferred applications will be considered against the published entry criteria at the point of application and will, as a result, be treated equally to all other applications up to the point of confirmation.

5.2 Students wishing to defer their application halfway through an admissions cycle will still be required to obtain all their conditions of entry within the admissions cycle in which they have applied. Where this concerns a Disclosure and Barring Service check, or Occupational Health check, students will be required to repeat this process within six months of the course start date to ensure that the checks are as up to date as possible. For Disclosure and Barring Service checks, students registered to the update service may not need to reapply.

5.3 Students are advised to contact the Admissions Office to discuss. Deferred students who fail to meet their conditions of offer will not be able to defer their application and will instead need to re-apply in the next application cycle to be considered.

6. Fraudulent & Misleading Information

6.1 It is expected that all applicants will provide full, honest, reliable, and accurate information in their applications and supporting evidence when seeking admission to one of the college's Higher Education programmes. Where there is reason to suspect that this may not be the case the college reserves the right to investigate the matter fully. If, because of such investigations, the college finds that the applicant has been fraudulent or has provided misleading information the college reserves the right to reject the application without further consideration, or where an offer of a place has been granted, withdraw the offer.

7. Decisions

7.1 Applicants will receive final decisions on their applications via UCAS or by letter/email direct from the college.

7.2 For unsuccessful applicants, the college feels it is important for students to receive feedback on the reasons for the decision. Feedback can be requested in writing by contacting the Admissions Office. They will forward your query to the HE Programme Leader who will aim to respond to any requests for feedback within 10 working days of receipt of the request.

7.3 Following feedback, if an applicant feels that they have any grounds for a formal review of the admissions decision, they can formally appeal by writing to the relevant Curriculum Director or Director for HE & Academic Standards who will respond in writing with a reviewed decision within 10 working days during term time. This decision is final.

8. Communicating with applicants and timescales

8.1 The college recognises the importance of keeping applicants informed and will provide effective updates throughout the admissions process. Communications will only be sent directly to the applicant or nominated representative as stated on the application form.

Most of our communications are sent electronically via email.

We send a range of information out throughout the cycle including:

- i. Acknowledgement of application – within 5 working days of receipt of your application.
- ii. Requests for further information – within two weeks of receiving an application.
- iii. Invitations to submit portfolio or attend interview – within six weeks of receiving an application.
- iv. Confirmation that a decision has been made on an application – within two weeks of receiving all required information, or five days following interview selection method confirmed by academic area.
- v. Confirmation of meeting entry conditions – usually within 5 days of receiving exam results.
- vi. Joining/enrolment information – usually in August after confirmation of results.

8.2 In addition to the above the college may also send out various supplementary communications about your chosen course area or the college in general. Please see **HE Student Communications Policy** for further information.

3.3 Enrolment on to the chosen course will take place at the conclusion of the admissions cycle. Only students who have satisfied the full selection criteria will be able to enrol onto the course.

3.4 You will be asked to read and sign a copy of the **Higher Education Student Contract** as part of the enrolment process.

3.5 The college complies with the GDPR Guidelines in its use of applicant data. Full information can be found on the college website.

9. Fees

9.1 The college expects applicants applying to their chosen course(s) to evidence that they have considered how they will finance their course.

9.2 The college will provide further information regarding funding and payment options on our website, or alternatively applicants can contact our Admissions Office directly.

9.3 Where students are accessing loans via the Student Loans Company, it is the student's responsibility to ensure these are in place within 8 weeks of enrolling on their chosen course. Failure to do so could result in removal from the course or alternative arrangements for payment of fees made. Admissions staff are available to support this. If a student is experiencing difficulties, they should speak to a member of staff as soon as possible.

Please consult the **HE Fees Policy** for tuition fees payment terms and conditions.

If you decide to pay the tuition fees yourself, we may be able to offer you an instalment plan subject to our Fees Policy. You will need to discuss this with the Fee Assessment Team.

10. Course Closures

10.1 The college follows the **Closure, Suspension or Changing of HE Provision** policy that ensures that course closures are formally approved within the HE committee system and that follow-up activities and communications take place.

10.2 Where a programme is discontinued, applicants holding offers will be informed as soon as possible and offered advice and guidance to find suitable alternative provision by the Admissions and IAG Team. The college has a responsibility to ensure that continuing students can complete their studies and that academic standards are maintained.

This policy should be read and considered in conjunction with the following:

- **HE Suite of policies listed throughout**
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**
- **Safeguarding & Prevent Policy**
- **ICT Acceptable Usage Policy**

Document Change Record

Version	Description of Change	Changes Made By	Date	SLT App Date
V.1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">			