

<b>Policy Name</b>	Further Education & Apprenticeships Admissions Policy
<b>Directorate</b>	Marketing & Student Recruitment
<b>Created by (Job Title)</b>	Executive Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	September 2021
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	August 2022
<b>E &amp; D Policy Disclaimer</b>	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 age, disability, gender (legal sex) 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 Enquiries & Admissions team under the leadership of the Head of Enquiries & Admissions, and by the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team under the leadership of the Head of Sales Support 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 apprenticeships are the responsibility of the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team.

Supporting full-time applicants with additional learning support needs is the responsibility of Additional Learning Support department. Curriculum areas are responsible for referring apprentices with additional learning support needs to the Additional Learning Support department. If an applicant is identified as having ESOL needs which would prevent them from progression onto a course they will be referred or enrolled onto a full-time ESOL course.

## **6. General principles**

### **6.1 Information, advice and guidance**

The College will ensure that prospective students receive information, advice and guidance from the Enquiries & Admissions 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 Enquiries & Admissions team and Apprenticeship Recruitment team hold, or are working towards, professional IAG qualifications, and the College's Enquiries & Admissions, 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 Policy. 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 31<sup>st</sup> August of the year the course starts).

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. Those full-time applicants under the age of 19 who have achieved a grade 9-4 will be required to continue studying English and maths. It could be GCSE or Functional Skills dependent on their entry grade.

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 their application form that they have an EHCP, the application will be placed on hold until the Additional Learning Support department confirms that the EHCP is valid and the College can support the applicant's needs. The application will then be taken off hold and processed as normal.

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 Learning Support department 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 Learning Support department, who will then get in touch.

### **6.4 Selection process**

For the majority of full-time programmes, substantial part-time courses and apprenticeships, applicants will be invited to attend a guidance interview or applicant's review meeting.

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

The interview/meeting provides an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions and obtain more detailed information about the course and college. 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 Learning Support department may be invited to attend the interview.

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

For full-time programmes where a guidance interview isn't required, applicants will be offered a place based on meeting the entry qualifications for the programme.

### **6.5 Offering a place on a course**

Where applicants attend a guidance interview for a full-time programme or part-time courses, a verbal offer will usually be made as part of the interview. A formal offer will usually be made within one week of the interview.

Where a guidance interview isn't required for a full-time programme, a formal offer will usually be made within one week of receiving the application.

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 applicant's formal offer communication.

For apprenticeships, the applicant has a pre screening interview and if deemed job ready their application will be passed to the 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 programme, course or apprenticeship, the applicant will be offered another course, careers interview and/or referred to another provider where practicable.

## **6.6 Preparing to start College**

In addition, 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 be invited to enrol in August/early September. They will then be invited to attend an induction in September where they will also receive their study programme timetable.

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

Applicants accepted on to an apprenticeship will be enrolled once all sign up documentation has been completed. 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 and a waiting list will be maintained. Should more places become available, we will notify students on the waiting list.

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 Convictions Policy on our website for more details.

### **6.9 Applicants who have been subject to the College's disciplinary procedure**

Where an applicant has been through the College's disciplinary processes Stage 3 or 4 this is recorded on Radius/AppReview in order that the relevant Course Manager / Course Lead is aware and can follow up accordingly.

### **6.10 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 Learning Support department.

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

The Additional Learning Support department 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.

### **6.11 Non-EEA students (or EEA students that have not been resident in the EEA for three years or more)**

- The College does not currently hold a Tier 4 Border Agency Licence and therefore only accepts applications from EEA residents or those who have lived in the EEA for more than three years. Applicants will be asked to provide supporting evidence regarding proof of residency which allows them to be eligible for funding.

### **6.12 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 <https://bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk/have-your-say/>

Our Have Your Say 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 [Bedford College Group | The Bedford College Group | Further and Higher Education](#)



, by emailing [haveyoursay@bedford.ac.uk](mailto: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 Enquiries & Admissions 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	Executive Director of Sales & Marketing
Dealing with Disclosure of Unspent Convictions Policy	Head of Enquiries & Admissions
Equality & Diversity Policy	EDI Manager
Fitness to Study Policy	Director of Student Services
Student Progression (Full-Time FE) Policy	Director of the Arts
Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy	Director of Student Services
Data Privacy Policy	Data Protection Officer