

Admissions Policy

Issue 1

February 2015

Summary of Policy

Tyne Metropolitan College welcomes applications from all prospective students. This policy sets out how the College will ensure applications are dealt with on an individual basis and ensure equality of opportunity for all individuals.

Senior Manager Responsible:

Director of Planning and Performance

1.0 STATEMENT OF POLICY AND COMMITMENT

- 1.1 This policy covers admissions for Further Education courses and Higher Education programmes, taught both full and part time. This policy does not cover the recruitment of apprenticeship learners or learners coming through training providers or employers.
- 1.2 The College provides a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum offer that provides wide choice and flexibility. Applications to the College will be welcomed from any applicant who has the ability and motivation to succeed. Applicants are considered on an equal basis, taking into account their academic qualifications, references, background in the subject area and possible potential.
- 1.3 The College is committed to providing accurate and appropriate information, advice and guidance in order to support applicants to ensure they are making informed decisions about their progression.
- 1.4 The following principles underpin this Admissions Policy and associated procedures:
- The policies and procedures are clearly documented, transparent and easily accessible.
 - Entry criteria are reliable, valid and transparent.
 - Recruitment selection decisions are made in line with the entry criteria.
 - Barriers to participation are minimised through inclusive practice.
 - Applicants are communicated with effectively throughout the admissions process.
 - Unsuccessful applicants are provided with feedback and are signposted for further guidance either within or external to the organisation.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

- 2.1 All staff have a responsibility to ensure the policy is understood and adhered to.
- 2.2 The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the operation of the policy, with the Director of Funding and Planning taking overall responsibility for its implementation.
- 2.3 As part of the Single Equality Policy, Governors are responsible for ensuring that they support an ethos within the College to promote transparency and openness in relation to the admissions process.
- 2.4 The Head of Service, Gateway is responsible for:
- Overseeing the admissions process across all campuses.
 - Ensuring that the Admissions Policy and procedures are relevant and up to date and meet with appropriate legislation.
 - Supporting curriculum teams to comply with the policy and procedures.
 - Providing training when appropriate
- 2.4 Managers are responsible for ensuring that:
- Their staff are made aware of the existence and content of the policy.
 - Practices and systems within their area of responsibility follow the College policy and procedures.
 - The Gateway team are provided with a list of designated staff who can interview for particular courses, along with their interview availability.
 - They provide feedback on the admissions procedures in order for the College to review its practices.

2.5 Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- They familiarise themselves with the Admission Policy and supporting processes.
- Carry out the interview process in a fair and transparent manner using the course/programme entry criteria to make decisions relating to admissions.
- They fully complete paperwork associated with the admissions process.
- They provide feedback on the admissions procedures in order for the College to review its practices.

2.6 Learners will assist in the implementation of this policy by supporting the College in its implementation whenever it is appropriate to do so and providing feedback on the admissions procedures in order for the College to review and improve its practices.

3.0 LEGAL DUTIES

The following legislation has been considered in relation to this policy:

- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995, amended 2005)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Race Relations Act (1976, amended 2000)
- Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
- Terrorism Act (2006)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (2014)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)

4.0 LEARNER RECRUITMENT

4.1 Applications

- 4.1.1 Applicants for all Further Education (FE) courses should complete a College application form and submit it to the Gateway team. Applications can be made in person, by post or online.
- 4.1.2 Applications for full time Higher Education (HE) programmes should be made through the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS). Applications for part time HE programmes should be made directly to the College.
- 4.1.3 All applications received by UCAS prior to the January deadline will be given equal consideration. Any forms received after this date, but prior to the June deadline, will be considered as post January and will be considered for programmes with vacancies. Applications received after the June deadline will be considered under the Clearing system.
- 4.1.4 Applications will be accepted up until the start date of the course/programme of study. In some circumstances applications will be accepted after the start date of the course/programme at the discretion of the relevant Curriculum Head of Department.
- 4.1.5 It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide accurate information on which to base admissions decisions. If a learner is found to have provided false information they are at risk of having an offer withdrawn or being asked to leave the course/programme.
- 4.1.6 The Gateway team will assess applications against entry criteria and applicants will be invited in to discuss the most appropriate level of course/programme for them.

4.2 Entry Requirements

- 4.2.1 Entry requirements for specific courses/programmes are advertised on the College website, in the College prospectuses and on www.ucas.com, for full time HE programmes.
- 4.2.2 Applications from mature applicants may be accepted without meeting the academic entry requirements if they have relevant knowledge or background in the subject area.
- 4.2.3 Some courses/programmes may require a DBS check to be carried out. The outcome of this process will be taken into consideration when making a decision on admission to College.
- 4.2.4 Applicants who disclose a criminal conviction will be referred to our Safeguarding team and their application will be assessed in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (2014). Failure to declare a relevant conviction may result in the application being refused.
- 4.2.5 Some courses/programmes may require references to be taken up. The outcome of the references will be taken into consideration when making a decision on admission to College.
- 4.2.6 University of Sunderland courses, offered on a franchise model at the College, have the entry criteria set by the University of Sunderland.
- 4.2.7 All applicants for University of Sunderland courses who have non-standard qualifications will be referred to the University of Sunderland.
- 4.2.8 In addition to academic qualifications the College will consider the applicants' motivation to successfully complete their chosen course/programme.

4.3 Interviews

- 4.3.1 All applicants will be invited in to attend an interview/information session.
- 4.3.2 The Senior Student Advisor will carry out impartial IAG interviews with applicants who are unsure of the course/programme they wish to study.
- 4.3.3 The Curriculum Teams/Course Leaders carry out course specific interviews and make the decision whether an offer of a place will be given to the applicant.
- 4.3.4 The interview process may vary depending upon the course that is applied for.
- 4.3.5 The interviewer will complete an interview record to note the discussions which have taken place, action plan and outline next steps. The applicant will receive a copy of these notes at the end of their interview.
- 4.3.6 Applicants who do not attend interview will be contacted via telephone and/or e-mail to see if they are still interested in the course/programme they have applied for. If there is no response to the contact, a further interview appointment will be arranged.
- 4.3.7 If an applicant does not make contact and does not attend two interviews, their application will be withdrawn. The applicant will be informed of this in writing.

4.4 Outcome of Interview

- 4.4.1 Wherever possible, applicants will be notified of the outcome at the end of the interview. Where this is not possible, applicants will be notified in writing as soon as possible.

- 4.4.2 Offers given to applicants can be conditional or unconditional. If an applicant receives a conditional offer, the conditions will be noted on their interview record. Should conditions not be met, a second option will also be noted on the interview record.
- 4.4.3 Applicants must meet the conditions of the offer in order to enrol on to their chosen course/programme.
- 4.4.4 All applicants will receive a written offer or rejection letter. If an applicant is not offered a place on their chosen course/programme, further guidance will be offered in order to support the applicant to progress.
- 4.4.5 If an offer is made on a full time direct funded HE programme, the Senior Student Advisor will inform UCAS of the offer decision.
- 4.4.6 If an offer is made on a University of Sunderland franchise programme, the Senior Student Advisor will e-mail the admissions team at University of Sunderland with the decision including any conditions made, who will inform UCAS directly.
- 4.4.7 HE applicants will be asked to return acceptance of their offer. Full time learners will do this via UCAS and part time learners will inform the College directly.
- 4.4.8 Unsuccessful applicants can ask for feedback. This can be written or verbal feedback.

4.5 Appeals

- 4.5.1 If an applicant is unhappy with the decision made at interview, they can appeal the decision by following the College's Complaints and Compliments Procedures
- 4.5.2 If the original decision is upheld, then the applicant will be notified in writing as per the Complaints and Compliments Procedures.
- 4.5.3 If the original decision is overturned, the applicant will receive notification in writing and will then receive an offer letter.

4.6 Keeping in Touch

The College will keep in touch with applicants informing them of upcoming events or giving course specific information between initial application and the course start date.

4.7 Funding and Finance

- 4.7.1 Applicants will be given standard funding information at the time of interview. Applicants who want further funding information can discuss this with the Gateway team at any point via e-mail, online enquiry, telephone or in person. In addition, the College website has links to funding and finance information for all applicants.
- 4.7.2 HE applicants will be sent the Higher Education Funding and Finance leaflet with their course offer letter.
- 4.7.3 HE applicants studying a franchise programme through University of Sunderland will be given information in relation to the financial support that they can access via Sunderland.
- 4.7.4 FE applicants will be sent a further education financial support application form and guidance leaflet with their enrolment instructions.

4.8 Support

- 4.8.1 Applicants will be given as many opportunities as possible to disclose if they have a support need (at application stage, interview stage, enrolment stage and on programme).
- 4.8.2 If an applicant to a FE course discloses a learning difficulty/disability on their application, a member of the ALS team will be invited to attend their interview in order to discuss support that is available for them.
- 4.8.3 If an applicant to an FE course discloses a learning difficulty/disability at interview, an ALS Support Form will be completed by the Interviewer/Gateway team and forwarded to the ALS team who will contact the applicant to discuss support.
- 4.8.4 Applicants to an FE course who disclose a learning difficulty/disability at enrolment stage will be able to discuss this with a member of the ALS team and the required support put in place.
- 4.8.5 HE learners will be made aware of Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) at interview stage. The Gateway team or ALS team can support the learner to apply for DSA. Where DSA is not in place for the start of the learner's programme, the Colleges ALS team may be able to provide the support initially to ensure the learner can start and stay on programme.
- 4.8.6 Further information about DSA can be found on the College's website or in the Higher Education Funding and Finance leaflet.

4.9 Progressing and Continuing Learners

- 4.9.1 Full time and substantial part time learners will be given the opportunity to have an IAG discussion with a Student Advisor in relation to progression either within College or externally. Learners outside of these cohorts can access one to one IAG via the Gateway.
- 4.9.2 Curriculum Departments will have set progression days where learners will be given the opportunity to discuss the possibility of moving to the next level of course/programme or moving to a new curriculum area.
- 4.9.3 External organisations, such as National Careers Service and the University of Sunderland, will be invited to attend the progression days so that learners can access a full range of IAG support and look at progression options outside of College.
- 4.9.4 If a learner is progressing to the next level of course/programme with the same curriculum area, all relevant paperwork will be completed by the course team during the progression days, prior to the learner completing their programme.
- 4.9.5 If a learner is progressing to the 2nd year of a course/programme, all relevant paperwork will be completed by the course team during the progression days, prior to the learner completing their programme.
- 4.9.6 If a learner wishes to progress to a course/programme in a different curriculum area, an application will be completed by the learner during the progression days and an interview will be arranged with the receiving curriculum team.

4.10 Enrolment

- 4.10.1 Full time FE September start enrolment commences the week following the release of the GCSE examination results.

- 4.10.2 Full time FE enrolment for subsequent start dates will be organised on an individual basis.
- 4.10.3 All full time FE learners complete an initial skills assessment in maths and English as part of the enrolment process. Part time learners will complete this whilst on programme.
- 4.10.4 HE learners will be invited to enrol with the College during July and August for September intake. Enrolment for subsequent start dates will be organised on an individual basis.
- 4.10.5 HE learners studying courses through the University of Sunderland will enrol with the University during the first two weeks of the autumn term.
- 4.10.6 Part time FE learners can enrol for the following academic year, following interview, once the part time prospectus is published and continually throughout the year. The part time prospectus is published in June each year.
- 4.10.7 Application and enrolment processes are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure accurate learner data collection at enrolment in order to ensure maximisation of funding.
- 4.10.8 All learners will sign a learning agreement and will be issued with an ID Badge as part of the enrolment process. Learners are required to wear their ID Badge at all times whilst on campus.

5.0 GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

5.1 Publicising our Policy and Progress

We will publicise our policy and make it available to:

- **The public** - The Admissions Policy will be published on the College's website.
- **Staff** - The Admissions Policy and associated procedures are published on the College Toolkit.
- **Learners**
 - The Admissions Policy will be published on the College's website.
 - The Gateway team will make learners aware of the admissions process through regular communications throughout the process.

5.2 Monitoring and Positive Action for Implementing the Policy

- 5.2.1 The Admissions Policy and associated processes will be monitored by the Head of Gateway to ensure the aims of the policy are achieved.
- 5.2.2 The Head of Gateway will carry out periodic checks of interview paperwork to ensure all requirements are being met. The Head of Gateway will carry out automated checks of EBS records to ensure the consistency of the policy's implementation.
- 5.2.3 The admissions process will be reviewed on an annual basis via Process Improvement Groups' meetings to ensure the College is meeting the needs of applicants, the College and funding bodies.
- 5.2.4 Feedback from applicants and learners will feed into the review of the admissions process and will be collected using various formats, for example through surveys and focus groups. Learners will be informed of changes made as a result of their feedback.

6.0 CONTROL OF THIS DOCUMENT

The senior member of staff with lead responsibility for admissions will review this policy for effectiveness and the need for change. The policy will normally be approved on a three-year cycle, unless there is a need for prior change. Recommendations for change will be made to the Senior Leadership Team. The latest version of the document will be maintained on the College’s website and Toolkit.

Prepared by: **Director of Planning and Performance**

Validation & tracking by: **Executive Officer**

Senior Leadership Team Approval: **Jon Vincent**
Signed:.....

9 February 2015

Date:.....

February 2018

To be reviewed: **Date:.....**