



HE & PROFESSIONAL ADMISSIONS POLICY

Purpose of Policy/Document	To document the College's policy regarding admissions for students on Higher Education or Professional courses.
Target Audience (staff/students/visitors/contractors)	This policy applies to all applicants to Heart of Worcestershire College applying for all undergraduate courses, both full-time and part-time, and professional awards at Levels 4 and above, including postgraduate awards and L2/3 where relevant.
Particular Legal Requirements/Issues outside of EDD	<p>The policy is written in accordance with the requirements for HE providers set out in the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and subsequent guidance by the Competition and Markets Authority for HE providers.</p> <p>The College is registered with the ICO under the Data Protection Act. The College takes the privacy of data, and its responsibilities under GDPR extremely seriously. Privacy notices are available on the college website, which explain how we manage personal data, and what rights applicants and students have under GDPR. Questions and enquiries about how the College process personal data, should be sent to dataprotection@howcollege.ac.uk</p>
Links with Other Policies/Documents	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Fees Policy; Complaints Procedure HE; General Data Protection Regulations Policy
For completion by The Executive	
Policy/Document Reference No.	QUA05
Category	Quality
Owner (job title)	Vice Principal Higher Education, Adult & Curriculum Development
Issue Date	Jan 2025
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Postholder Responsible for Review (job title)	Vice Principal Higher Education, Adult & Curriculum Development
Authorised By: (ELT/Corporation)	ELT , HE Academic Board
Communicated via/Location: (Policy Acceptance software/website/portal etc)	Portal Website
Equality Impact Assessment Statement	The Equality Act 2010 does not require public authorities to carry out EIAs by law. The College does however, carefully consider the impact, when creating or amending its policies, on all concerned parties regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and records this at SLT meetings in order to demonstrate compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Introduction

Heart of Worcestershire College ('The College') is a college of Further and Higher Education that aims to promote future success through high quality education and training. Through its fair admissions process, it aims to widen participation in higher education by enabling fair access to learning for all. This policy has been written with reference to SPA Good Practice Statements, UCAS guidance, Consumer Markets Authority guidance for HEI's, and relating Quality Codes.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants to Heart of Worcestershire College applying for all undergraduate courses, both full-time and part-time, and professional awards. The policy applies to all such courses at the College, across its sites at Worcester, Redditch and Bromsgrove and through blended or distance delivery. It applies to courses which are awarded by partner universities (University of Worcester, and Wolverhampton University), professional bodies and external agencies. Where the terms of a university partnership agreement stipulate that the university's admissions policy is to be followed, then that policy supersedes this one. Where the terms of a partnership agreement stipulate that the two policies are to be jointly applied, then both policies will be applied in conjunction.

Principles

The College aims to operate a Higher Education admissions system that is fair, transparent and easily accessible, and that incorporates the values of widening participation and equal access.

Specific principles that underlie this policy include:

- Provision of an admissions system that is transparent and consumer focussed
- Commitment to consider all applications that arrive by relevant deadlines
- Careful consideration of all qualifications, including non-traditional qualifications, as well as references
- Careful consideration of skills and experience that have been gained outside of traditional educational settings
- Commitment to handling complaints, appeals and reviews of admissions decisions appropriately and professionally within the framework provided in this document
- Commitment to ensuring consistent application of this policy across the College.

Pre-entry Information and Guidance

The College will provide potential applicants with as much information as possible to enable them to make an informed and appropriate application. We will provide up-to-date information on all aspects of recruitment, selection and admissions including our entry requirements and course information. Primary sites of publication are the College website, College HE Prospectus and UCAS. Responsibility for providing up-to-date information lies with managers of curriculum and responsibility for publishing up-to-date information lies with the College Marketing Department..

Applications

The correct format for applications is dependent on the type of course and mode of delivery.

Full-time HE courses: Applications must be made through UCAS.

Part-time HE courses:	Applications are made online via the College website
Professional courses:	Applications are made online via the College website
Franchised courses:	Applications may be required through the University or college website

Details on where and how to apply are available on the College website.

Entry requirements

Entry requirements and the framework are set by ELT and any courses with entry criteria outside the framework will have ELT approval, or by the College in collaboration with a university partner or professional awarding body. The College makes use of the UCAS tariff in addition to other entry requirements.

The College has a commitment to widening participation in Higher Education and will therefore consider prior experiential learning, non-traditional qualifications and qualifications obtained outside of the United Kingdom.

Interviews

The College aims to ensure that the 'right student – right course' principle is fulfilled. To this end, interviews will be conducted, to ensure that students enrol on a course that achieves their needs and interests, and which is appropriate to their skills and qualifications.

Where applicants are invited to attend interview, they will be given detailed information in advance of the interview as to any documentation or evidence to bring with them, the day, time and precise location of the interview. The interview will be conducted by trained and experienced staff who will follow and complete an interview checklist form, or where relevant sector or awarding body documentation and other relevant documentation. All interviews are conducted within the College's equal opportunities policy.

Where attendance at a College venue is impractical (e.g., on a blended or distance learning course) alternative arrangements can be made (e.g. via a teams or telephone interview).

Applicants who accept an offer, will be asked to attend a College Induction session.

Declaration of criminal convictions

The College is committed to inclusion and equality of opportunity. We recognise our duties under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and updated in 2014. However, as the College operates on sites where there are FE, School and vulnerable adult students, safeguarding the whole student body represents our primary duty.

All applicants will be asked to declare any convictions or cautions that would not normally be filtered by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (Applicants do not need to disclose reprimands, final warnings or youth cautions or anything that would be filtered by the DBS). If a conviction or caution is declared the applicant will be referred for further discussion with a member of the wellbeing team.

Where a course or programme requires enhanced DBS, such as Social Work, Early Years and Sport the College website and course information documents will make clear the requirement.

Decision-making

The College will reply to applications in a timely and expeditious manner. All HE and Professional course applications are received through the HE Admissions team and then forwarded to the relevant academic team for a decision. Acknowledgement of an application will be followed by a decision: unconditional offer, conditional offer, invitation to interview or unsuccessful. Where an application is unsuccessful, the College will endeavour to find an alternative suitable course for the applicant to undertake.

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Academic achievement or predicted achievement
- Relevant vocational experience and skills
- Personal statement
- References
- Submitted work, where requested
- Performance in any written assessment
- Performance at Interview, where required

Decisions are communicated to applicants via UCAS Track (full time applicants) or directly from the College. The offer letter will set out any conditions that the applicant must meet. Applicants who receive an offer should refer to the terms and conditions, sent with the offer and available on the College website. Where an application has been submitted directly to a university partner, the admission decision will come from that source. In all cases, the College strives to make decisions as quickly as possible after application.

The College does not provide feedback for unsuccessful applicants. However, unsuccessful applicants may request constructive feedback by contacting the:

HE Admissions team at: headmissions@howcollege.ac.uk

Conditional Offers

Conditional offers will be confirmed as soon as the required results have been provided. In all cases applicants are required to provide documentary evidence (e.g. certificates) to demonstrate they have achieved the entry requirements of their chosen course and met the conditions of their offer.

If an applicant is unable to provide the requested documentary evidence, the College reserves the right to cancel the application and withdraw the offer of a place on the course.

Applicants who wish to defer entry after their place has been confirmed will be considered on an individual basis but will only be considered if all the conditions of the original offer were met.

Applicants will normally only be allowed to defer their place once. In exceptional circumstances, a second deferral may be allowed, although a new application form will be required.

Plagiarism

If we receive notification from UCAS or internal application process that personal statements have been plagiarised or generated by Artificial intelligence, we reserve the right to decline the application or withdraw any offers made.

Dishonesty

If we receive notification from UCAS or internal application process of the detection of dishonesty in academic achievement, we reserve the right to decline the application or withdraw any offers made.

Applicants with health, disability or other additional learning support requirements

The College is committed to providing a learning environment which respects all individuals and celebrates diversity. In line with its Equality and Diversity Policy and the Equality Act 2010, the College will provide support in the admissions process for those with additional needs and will make reasonable adjustments to enable all who have the potential to succeed to access the College curriculum.

Applicants have an opportunity to declare their support requirements at the application stage, at the time of enrolment, or through the duration of the course.

For support at interview, applicants with additional needs should contact the hehub@howcollege.ac.uk with evidence of their disability and what support will be required at interview.

Students will be invited to discuss their disability prior to the start of the course, if declared at the interview stage, in order that the appropriate support is put into place through a DSA application.

For HEFCE funded courses applicants with disabilities or learning difficulties are advised to apply early for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) as assessment for support is not undertaken within the College but through an external agency. Further details can be obtained by contacting hehub@howcollege.ac.uk

International Students

The College welcomes applications from overseas applicants in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) (England) Regulations 2007 (Statutory Instrument 2007 No. 779), as amended. International fees will apply where learners do not meet the definition of 'Home and EU' (namely that learners have been ordinarily resident in the UK/EU for three years preceding the course start date). Please also note that we currently do not have a Student Sponsor Licence so are unable to offer a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to prospective international students, a virtual document required for those students wishing to study in the UK and apply for a Student Visa.

Enrolment

Details about enrolment will be sent out to all confirmed applicants prior to the course starting. The enrolment letter will include clear guidance on the next steps. All prior qualifications must be available and recorded prior to enrolment.

Prior to starting a course applicants will be invited to attend a mandatory Induction Programme which introduces College facilities and support, and where College policies and rules will be discussed in more detail.

Student Transfer

Applicants who change their minds about a course or where they want to study can contact the HE Admissions Team who will advise on the appropriate next steps. Applicants need to be aware of implications in changing courses including financial implications for both current and future studies.

The College recognises prior and experiential learning, so applicants may be able to transfer directly into year two or three, or may be exempt from specific modules. As we work with several universities, we follow the University regulations for implementing prior or experiential learning. Admission for the relevant course will require their approval.

Changes to and discontinuation of courses

It will be exceptional for a course to be cancelled, discontinued, or delivery model changed during an application cycle. Where there is any change to published information, the College will inform applicants as early as possible to minimise the potential disruption to the application process. If a course is cancelled the College will make efforts to ensure that applicants receive timely advice on other suitable courses and options available. Any decisions made by the College are carefully considered and made in the best interests of its applicants and students to enhance both their success and experience.

Appeals and Complaints

The College recognises that applicants may wish to appeal if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision or complain about an aspect of the admissions procedure. Appeals and complaints should be made in writing to the College Quality Department:

Quality Department,
Heart of Worcestershire College
All Saints' Building
Deansway,
Worcester WR1 2JF
E-mail: quality@howcollege.ac.uk

Appeals and complaints will be responded to within 10 working days.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review our internal HE complaints and appeals processes. Heart of Worcestershire College is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint or appeal you may be able to ask the OIA for a review. You may do this once all internal College processes have been completed. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and cannot look at and what it can do to put things right here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>