

Policy Title

Student Admissions Policy 2023-24

Written by:	Equality Impact Assessment	Date of Policy/last reviewed	Date of next review
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1.0 Policy Statement

Bishop Auckland College and South West Durham Training (thereafter to be termed 'the Organisation') sets its own admissions policy in line with the strategic plan, vision and values of the Organisation, promoting a fair and transparent admissions process. As a strategic partner with the University of Sunderland and The Open University for the provision of Higher Education - Foundation Degree programmes, this policy is in conjunction with the admissions policies and UK Quality Code for Higher Education of the university. The Organisation ensures that this policy meets any funding requirements associated with the recruitment of learners including Education and Skills Funding Agency, Office for Students, Advanced Learning Loans, Higher Education Loans and other external funding received into the Organisation.

All admissions to the Organisation will be handled confidentially and as guided by the principles laid out in this document and the Organisation's associated procedures, service commitments and recruitment strategies. The Organisation is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, the Single Equality duty and its duty of care for students studying at the Organisation. All staff involved in admissions interviews and decision-making process are recognised as professional and appropriately trained.

The Organisation will:

- Recruit learners with integrity and to the most suitable course
Be guided by a sense of fairness and a transparent process
- Provide accurate and timely impartial information advice and guidance at all stages in the pre-entry learner journey
- Ensure that at all times the safeguarding of learners is embedded into admissions process

The Organisation accepts that it is not possible to plan for every situation that might arise in the admissions process but will strive to ensure that a fair and equitable service is provided to all potential students.

The Organisation requires that learners are funded by a government body, in receipt of an Advanced Learning Loan, Higher Education loan, have secured other funding, or are self-funding in order that payment for studying is received.

2.0 Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all applicants who are seeking admission to the Organisation. This includes new full time, part time, Apprenticeship and Higher Education learners. The policy also includes those learners who are already at the Organisation and wish to progress from one course of study to another.

This policy does not include flexible learning and learners studying with an Organisation working in partnership with the Organisation for which separate arrangements exist.

This policy does not include learners under 16 who may be admitted to the Organisation via a partnership with the school or other agencies. Individual requests for admission for potential students under 16 are required to be forwarded in writing to the Head of Durham Gateway.

The Organisation is not registered with the UK Border Agency and as such cannot support admissions from non-EU applicants for both further and higher education courses. However, individuals may be eligible for ESFA funding if the learning is taking place in England, and they fulfil the residency requirements refer to relevant Residency forms.

3.0 Related documents

- Strategic Plan 2021-2024
- University of Sunderland Admissions policy and procedures

- QAA UK Quality code for Higher Education Part B: B2 Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Criminal Convictions, Reprimands and Final Warnings procedure
- Recruitment Strategy and associated plans
- Fee policy
- Residency forms
- Customer Complaints procedure
- The Open University regulatory framework and associated policies and Higher Education Admissions Appeals Procedure for the Open University

Copies of the documents can be found on the Organisation website:
www.bishopaucklandcollege.ac.uk or www.swdt.co.uk or upon request direct to Quality@bacoll.ac.uk.

4.0 Context

4.1 Pre-entry

At enquiry stage all potential learners will receive accurate and up to date course information, including entry requirements, fees and funding information to enable informed choices to be made. This will be promoted to prospective learners, parents/carers employers and other organisations through:

- Organisation open evenings and recruitment events
- Full time, part time and higher education course guides
- Online course information
Website: www.bishopaucklandcollege.ac.uk or www.swdt.co.uk
- Access to pre-entry impartial information advice and guidance to make informed choices Published information (including policies) available in other languages, large font , audio etc., via the Accessibility icon (eye symbol) on the homepage college website.

4.2.1 New applicants

All courses need an application form completing to generate their course interview, this can be done on line via the Apply Now button on the course you are interested in.

Where an application is made for a Higher Education (Pearson or Open University) course, applicants are required to satisfy the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years of age on the published start date of the course
- Satisfy or be exempted from the General Entrance Requirements set out in the college course information or guides
- Be demonstrably proficient in spoken and written English to the satisfaction of the College before commencing the programme of study
- Satisfy or be exempted from additional entrance requirements where prescribed for individual programmes

All applications are assessed on an individual basis and admission to the College is based on an applicant's merits and abilities. The principal academic criterion for determining a candidate's suitability for admission is that there is a reasonable expectation that s/he will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course and achieve the standard required for the award. The College will look for evidence of academic achievement as well as personal and professional experiences, where relevant, that provide an indication of ability to meet the demands and professional requirements of the course.

Entry criteria for a given course are set by the Head of School responsible for the course and can be accessed through the College website. Where appropriate, programmes comply with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements for entry.

Bishop Auckland College welcomes applications from students who do not meet conventional entry requirements and will consider alternative qualifications or other experience. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a generic term for the process by which Higher Education Providers recognise and, where appropriate, award credit for learning that has taken place before entry onto a programme of study. Recognition of Prior or Experiential Learning (RPEL) and Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) provide opportunities for individuals to claim credit for knowledge and skills that they have obtained through experience, certified learning or uncertified learning, against courses of further study. Full details are provided in the document: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy, available here.

4.2.2 Apprenticeship programmes

Applications for Apprenticeship programmes have a differentiated approach depending up on the following:

- **If an individual has been recruited by a business with a view to doing an apprenticeship or is already working for an employer and they wish to access an apprenticeship:**
That individual or the employer must contact the Employment Services Team on 01388 743164 or at apprenticeships@bacoll.ac.uk. The individual or the employer will then be informed about the process and informed of the following steps leading to enrolment.
- **The individual has seen an advert for an apprenticeship that Bishop Auckland College are advertising and wants to apply.**
Applicants are encouraged to follow the guidance within the advert for information on how to apply for the vacancy. If an individual needs any further help/guidance they are encouraged to contact the Employment Services Team on 01388 743164 or at apprenticeships@bacoll.ac.uk.
- **An individual is currently in year 10/11 and is considering an apprenticeship for when they leave school.**
If an individual isn't sure about what apprenticeship they would like to do then we'd encourage them to speak to a Student Progressions Coach, either at their own school or at Bishop Auckland College. To keep informed of apprenticeship opportunities, the young person is encouraged to create an account on the Find an Apprenticeship website (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>) which will keep them informed of all local apprenticeship opportunities relevant to their interests – they can also submit applications via this website. They can also view any available apprenticeship opportunities via Bishop Auckland College's social media platforms and their apprenticeship vacancy page here: <https://bacoll.ac.uk/ApprenticeVacancies> - this page is updated on a regular basis.

The young person is encouraged to create a CV with the help of a Student Progressions Coach and send out to local businesses that could potentially support an apprenticeship for them. If an

individual is happy with the apprenticeship subject that they would like to work within, they are also advised to enrol on to a suitable full-time course as a back-up option, in the event that an employer isn't found to support an apprenticeship.

4.2.3 Existing students

- Full and part time learners (excluding HE programmes) wishing to progress from one course to another can move directly to enrolment upon the production of a student progression record signed by both outgoing and incoming tutor. Students not progressing will be referred to the Student Progressions team for guidance on other opportunities.
- For learners on certain HE programmes a 'pass to proceed' will be agreed facilitating progression to the next year.

4.3 Interview stage

- All applicants will be invited to attend an interview with the curriculum tutor or designate for their chosen course within the Organisation's recruitment process.
- All applications received for full time courses where more than one choice has been selected will be contacted by a Student Progressions Coach, in the first instance. Following which, an admissions interview will be arranged for the most suitable programme
- All admissions interviews will follow set criteria and are designed to ensure that a good match between the abilities of the applicant and the demands on the programme are achieved and students are selected who can reasonably be expected to complete their studies successfully
- Any applicant that discloses learning support needs may require additional discussions to establish the most appropriate action required to meet their individual needs to support successful achievement.
- A Student Disclosure form is completed with all students and then the Organisation will determine the level of support required in readiness for commencement of the programme. Applicants for Higher Education will be asked to give details of any disability or Specific Learning Disability so that the Organisation can advise them provisionally on the level of support available. Information provided will be to support the learner and will not be included in any assessment for admission to the Organisation.
- All applicants are requested to disclose any criminal convictions at the interview stage. These are then processed in line with the Organisations Criminal Convictions, Reprimands and Final Warnings quality procedure. The Organisation recognises its duty of care to learners and staff and reserves the right to refuse entry to the Organisation.
- Within recruitment processes for full time courses applicants will be required to undertake an assessment of English and maths to enable the Organisation to establish the most appropriate provision that meets learners needs.

4.4 Decisions

All decisions relating to admissions will be made by course tutors or designates and will be based upon:

- Meeting the set entry criteria
- Ability to complete and achieve the qualification
- Outcomes from initial assessments to determine level of English and maths.

- Other supporting information from external agencies
- Outcomes from panel meeting for criminal conviction disclosure
- Outcomes from DBS checks
- Availability of places
- Work related experience, if applicable
- Equality and Diversity
- Ability to secure appropriate funding

In making decisions with respect to Higher Education programmes the following criteria will also apply:

- Qualifications presented for consideration must be in approved subjects
- Where an applicant does not possess the required entry qualification the Organisation will seek evidence that the applicant can study at the required level and has achieved the specific learning outcomes, including professional competencies
- Proficiency of spoken and written English must be at a level required for admission to the programme
- The applicant has a broad general education
- Recognition of prior learning has been discussed and considered

4.5 Making an offer of a place

Offers made for courses may be conditional or unconditional depending on the above outcomes from the admissions interviews.

The Course Tutor/Programme Leader /is ultimately responsible for any offers made.

All applicants will be advised of the outcome of the admissions interview via email , followed up with a phone call and letter (where needed). If applicants are required to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan, information to support a loan application will be issued once this is agreed by Student Finance Organisation. The offer of a place will also include the Organisation terms and conditions set out for loan applications.

Places on courses can be limited due to funding. If courses are full the applicant will be informed and waiting lists may be established depending on curriculum planning and availability of funding.

If an applicant is not offered a place at the Organisation they will be informed in writing and if requested feedback will be provided. A referral will also be made to the Student Progressions team for alternative provision as appropriate.

Where applicants have accepted offers on courses which incur a fee the applicant will be expected to secure funding prior to course commencement and agree a payment plan in the event of funding declined

In the event of changes to course programmes i.e. start dates all applicants and directly enrolled students will be advised of changes prior to the start date of the programme.

4.6 Registration and enrolment

Places for full time courses are finalised at the Organisation Results and Enrolments Days held post examination results when applicants for full time courses holding offers are invited to attend. All learners must verify proof of identity and following a discussion with the course tutor enrolment is completed on the agreed course and level.

Part time and Higher Education Learners are invited to complete and finalise enrolment following the course offer. Payment is collected upon enrolment where learners are self-funding. Where learners have applied for funding, evidence of funding secured will be required at the point of enrolment. In exceptional circumstances the Organisation may complete enrolment without funding secured on the condition that the learner accepts the responsibility that payment will be required if funding is unsuccessful. If an employer is paying, they would need to bring confirmation letter on enrolment.

All applicants enrolling for Organisation programmes do so in accordance with the procedures, terms and conditions as published on the Organisations learning agreements. Applicants enrolling for Foundation Degrees do so in accordance with the Organisation and University of Sunderland's and The Open University's procedure, terms and conditions.

Applicants may not enrol for a course that they have previously completed and achieved.

5.0 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of Admissions responsible for student admissions services. The Organisation reserves the right to vary any part of the admissions processes to ensure that it upholds its duty of care for staff and learners.

5.1 Monitoring and review (Open University)

The annual review, monitoring and enhancement of the admissions process is delegated to the Academic Board.

The Academic Board are responsible for ensuring that the Admission processes for all higher education applicants are clear and updated regularly.

Programme Leaders or their delegated representative are responsible for ensuring that:

- Appropriate admissions criteria are developed for each course, communicated to relevant College Departments and updated annually, both in Programme Documentation and online.
- All staff engaged in admissions processes are aware of and support the Organisation's Admissions Policy and associated procedures, are competent to make fair and sound judgements are aware of the Organisation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and how to obtain further advice when dealing with enquiries and applications.

6.0 Appeals procedure

If an applicant is not offered a place at the Organisation they have the right to appeal.

A letter is required to be sent to the Head of Admissions who will investigate the decision and provide feedback on the outcome within 10 working days.

Appeals are to be directed to the following address

Head of Admissions
Bishop Auckland College
Woodhouse Lane
Bishop Auckland
Co Durham
DL14 6JZ

If the appeal is in relation to a Higher Education course which is provided in conjunction with the University of Sunderland the appeal will be handled in accordance with the University's appeals procedure.

6.1 Open University Programmes

Applicants and Heads of School are expected to attempt to resolve the appeal informally. Applicants should contact, in the first instance, the nominated representative of the Head of School, as identified in the letter or email informing them of the admission decision. The informal process must be commenced by the Applicant within 10 working days of the date of formal notification of the admission decision.

For further information on appeals for the Open University please refer to Higher Education Admissions Appeals Procedure for the Open University (BAC-OU-01)

For further information contact:

Kevin Burns
Head of Admissions

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