

Quality Management System

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Policy Title

Higher Education (HE) Admissions Policy

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Alternative Format Statement

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Higher Education (HE) Admissions Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

Bishop Auckland College Group (thereafter to be termed 'the Group') sets its own HE admissions policy in line with the strategic plan, vision and values of the College, promoting a fair and transparent HE admissions process. As a validated partner of The Open University for the provision of many of the Group's Higher Education programmes, as well as Pearson Edexcel for the provision of Higher Nationals, this policy is in conjunction with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

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

The Group will:

- Recruit learners with integrity and to the most suitable HE programme.
- 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 student journey.

The Group 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 Group requires that learners are funded by a government body, a Higher Education loan, have secured other funding, or are self-funding in order that payment for studying is received.

For the terms and conditions of enrolment please refer to the Group's Terms and Conditions of Enrolment which are available here. [Learning Agreement \(bacoll.ac.uk\)](https://bacoll.ac.uk)

2.0 Scope

This policy describes how the Group will make decisions relating to applications for admission to its Higher Education programmes. The policy also includes those students who are already studying within the Group and wish to progress onto a higher education programme of study.

3.0 Related Documents

- Strategic Plan 2024-2027
- QAA UK Quality code for Higher Education Part B: B2 Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education
- The Open University regulatory framework and associated policies
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Student Disclosure of Criminal Convictions
- Recruitment Strategy and associated plans
- Fee policy
- Customer Complaints procedure
- Higher Education Admissions Appeals Procedure for the Open University
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 Governance

Any changes to this policy will be approved by the Higher Education Academic Board.

4.2 Management

The Head of community and careers is responsible for the management of this policy but may delegate implementation to others.

4.3 Implementation

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Head of community and careers, the Admissions Coordinator, relevant Directors of curriculum, programme leaders and programme tutors involved in the delivery of The Group's higher education programmes.

5.0 Recruitment Process

5.1 Introduction

This section outlines the various stages of the HE Admissions Process at the Group, and what each of these stages involves/what communications prospective students will receive during this process. There are 4 stages to the process:

- Pre-Entry
- Application & Invitation to Interview
- Interview
- Decisions
- Making an Offer

Also within this section, we provide information regarding New Applicants and Existing Students.

5.2 New applicants

All HE programme applicants should apply to the Group in the first instance. This can be completed either via the College's website Higher Education Courses and selecting the relevant course of interest, then via the Apply Now button on the relevant course page. Alternatively, applicants can complete a paper-based application form by collecting one from our Reception or contacting us on 01388 443000 / start@bacoll.ac.uk and returning to the College's main campus.

In addition, for both Pearson and Open University-validated programmes, 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 course information or guides
- Be demonstrably proficient in spoken and written English to the satisfaction of the Group 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 Group 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 they will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course and achieve the standard required for

the award. The Group 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.

The Higher Education Academic Board will monitor the standard entry requirements, subject to the regulations of the validating / awarding partner that validate the particular programmes. Entry requirements will be reviewed annually prior to the onset of the recruitment cycle by the Director of Quality & Higher Education, Head of community and careers and the HE Development Coordinator. The Group accepts a broad range of qualifications and combination of qualifications for entry onto its programmes, including vocational and Access to HE Diplomas. Entry requirements for individual programmes can be accessed through the College website here: www.bacoll.ac.uk/HEcourses

Where appropriate, programmes comply with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements for entry.

The Group welcomes applications from students who do not meet conventional entry requirements and will consider alternative qualifications or other experience (within the restraints of any agreed entry criteria discussed during the approval or validation of the HE programme with the relevant awarding organisation).

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) This can be found here: <https://bacoll.ac.uk/HE>

Applicants are asked to declare whether they have any relevant unspent criminal convictions during completion of their initial application form, whether online or in paper format. Potential applications are signposted to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 for more guidance on this. (For note, further steps are taken during the admissions process regarding any declared relevant criminal convictions). Please see Student Disclosure of Criminal Convictions (BAC-SS-06) for this procedure in full This can be found here: <https://bacoll.ac.uk/HE>.

5.3 Existing students

For students already studying on a HE programme at the College, examination boards are held multiple times per year which decide upon whether existing students on HE programmes are successful at being approved for “Pass and Proceed” to the next year of study on their programme. Once the admissions team are provided with this information, successful students will be invited to re-enrol for the next year of study on their HE programme.

For current students having completed their Further Education programme, and wishing to apply for their first year of study on one of the College’s HE programmes, they should follow the process outlined above in 5.2 for new applicants.

5.4 Pre-Entry

At pre-entry stage all potential students who enquire 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 students, parents/carers, employers and other organisations through:

- Open Evenings and Recruitment Events
- Higher Education course information pages on the website www.bacoll.ac.uk/HEcourses (including any entry criteria)
- Higher Education Policies and Procedures on the website www.bacoll.ac.uk/HE
- Higher Education Programme Specifications (available on each individual programme’s designated page on the college website www.bacoll.ac.uk/HEcourses)
- Access to pre-entry impartial information, advice and guidance to make informed choices
- Information (including policies) being available for potential applicants with additional requirements such as adjustments which can be made should they be invited for interview, as well as written information being available in other languages, large font, audio etc. via the accessibility icon on the homepage of the College’s website.

Individuals who make either a telephone/online/in-person enquiry for a HE programme can expect a response from the Group within 2 working days.

5.5 Application & Invitation to Interview Stage

At application stage all new potential students should apply via one of the two methods outlined in 5.2.

Upon receipt of an application, the Admissions Office will review the application. Should there be any relevant criminal convictions declared, the application will be flagged for the attention of the Pastoral and Welfare Manager, who oversees the Student Disclosure of Criminal Convictions procedure. Such an application will be paused in the Admissions system whilst it passes through the Student Disclosure of Criminal Convictions procedure. This can be found here: www.bacoll.ac.uk/HE

If an application with a declared relevant criminal conviction is approved to continue on the Admissions process, the application is released back to the Admissions Office to invite for interview. If an application with a declared relevant criminal conviction is not approved to continue on the Admissions process, the Student Disclosure of Criminal Convictions procedure ensures a letter is immediately sent to the applicant to inform them that their applicant cannot progress any further at this stage. The Admissions Office are then asked to cancel the application within the Group's systems.

Applications where there are no relevant criminal convictions declared, or where an applicant has declared this, but it has successfully been approved to continue within the Admissions process, the Admissions Office will then schedule an interview with the programme leader (or designate) during the next designated interview timeslot for the relevant HE programme. In most cases, this will be within one month of the application date (however during busy/quieter recruitment periods this may be a slightly longer/shorter period of time). The invitation will invite the applicant to contact us to change this date/time if it is not convenient, as well as providing them with an opportunity to inform us of any adjustments that can be made to assist them at interview, should they have additional requirements.

Any prospective students who do not respond are sent reminder emails at regular intervals to try and ascertain their intention to attend a programme interview. Applicants who do not contact the Group, nor attend their interview will be emailed within 2 days of the initial interview date of non-attendance and offered a new interview date/time for the next scheduled interview date for their applied programme of study. This process will occur on 3 separate occasions (or until an applicant attends their interview, whichever is sooner). After 3 DNA's (Did Not Attend), a HE application will be referred to the student progression team for further advice and guidance.

5.6 Interview Stage

- 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. Interview criteria are set out within the Applicant Interview Record document and feature questions within the following categories:
 - The applicant's relevant qualifications on entry / relevant skills/aptitude
 - The applicant's genuine interest in the course.
 - The applicant's relevant/associated work experience linked to the course.
 - The applicant's motivations for applying to study the course (i.e. In order to gain employment in a particular sector / in order to progress to further/higher/post-graduate level study afterwards etc.)
- Outside of the admissions interview which involves academic staff, a Student Disclosure Form is completed by applicants in relation to their personal learning support/inclusion needs and is submitted by the applicant directly to the Admissions Office. Following this, the Group's Inclusion Team will determine the level of support required in readiness for commencement of the programme, should the applicant be offered a place on the course. Any applicant who discloses learning support/inclusion need, may require additional discussions to establish the most appropriate action(s) required to meet their individual needs to support successful achievement.
- Applicants will be asked to provide all details of their learning support/inclusion need so that the Group's Inclusion Team can advise them provisionally on the level of support available. (NB. Information provided of this nature by an applicant will not be included in any assessment for admission to the Group).
- The Group will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments for applicants with additional requirements, in order that they are able to attend an interview. For more guidance on this, please contact our Admissions Office on enrolment@bacoll.ac.uk or by telephoning (01388) 443000.

5.7 Decisions

All decisions relating to the academic aspects of admissions will be made by HE programme leaders (and/or designates) and will be based upon the below areas to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and equally during admissions):

- Meeting the set entry criteria (as outlined above in 5.6 above and any course-specific criteria which are set during each programme's validation). W
- here an applicant does not possess the required entry qualification(s), the College can seek evidence that the applicant can study at the required level and/or has achieved the specific learning outcomes, including professional competencies if relevant. The College's Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy can be found here: <https://bacoll.ac.uk/HE>
- The applicant's ability to complete and achieve the HE programme of study/award
- Outcomes from any relevant pre-course specific initial assessments to determine level of English (and maths, where relevant) and proficiency of spoken and written English must be at a level required for admission to the programme.
- Availability of places
- Work related experience (if applicable)

The Head of community and careers will have overall responsibility relating to the aspects of admissions, but may delegate implementation to others.

The following areas will fall within this area of overall decision-making responsibility and if any of these areas are not approved, then an offer of a place cannot be made regardless of the outcome of the academic interviewer(s)' decision-making:

- Other supporting information from external agencies
- Outcomes from panel meeting for criminal conviction disclosure
- Outcomes from DBS checks (where relevant for the programme of study)
- Ability to secure appropriate funding
- The College's ability to support any inclusion needs/make any reasonable adjustments as required by an applicant.

5.8 Making an Offer of Place

Offers made for HE programmes may be conditional or unconditional depending on the above outcomes from the admissions decision-making outlined above.

The Head of community and careers will have overall responsibility relating to any offers made, but may delegate implementation to others. All applicants will be advised of the outcome of the admissions process outlined in the steps above via email, followed up with a phone call (where no response to email/phone call is received).

The offer of a place will also include the College's current terms and conditions set out for Higher Education loan applications and Fee Policy. This can be found here:

<https://bacoll.ac.uk/HE>

The outcome of an individual's admissions interview should be sent by the College within 7 days of the interview.

If an applicant is not offered a place at the College, they will be informed of this by email in writing and can request feedback on any reasons for this decision by emailing enrolment@bacoll.ac.uk which is the Admissions Office email which is monitored regularly. A referral will also be made to the Student Progression team for independent CEIAG (Careers, Education, Information, Advice & Guidance) 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 being declined.

In the event of changes to programme start dates, all applicants and enrolled students will be advised of changes prior to the start date of the programme.

6.0 Registration and Enrolment

6.1 Higher Education students are invited to complete and finalise enrolment following the course offer. Payment (or arrangements for payment) is collected/made 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 College may complete enrolment without funding secured on the condition that the learner accepts the responsibility that payment will be required if funding is unsuccessful.

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

7.0 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head of community and careers. The College reserves the right to vary any part of the admissions process to ensure that it upholds its duty of care for staff and learners.

7.1 Monitoring and Review

- The annual review, monitoring and enhancement of the HE admissions process is delegated to the HE Academic Board.
- The HE Academic Board are responsible for ensuring that the HE admission process for all higher education applicants is clear and is reviewed regularly.
- Programme Leaders or their delegated representative are responsible for ensuring that appropriate admissions criteria are developed, and approved during Programme Validation events, for each individual course, then communicated to relevant College Departments and if updated (where required) that this takes place via the appropriate awarding organisation's channels, both in Programme Documentation and online on the College website.
- All staff engaged in HE admissions process are aware of, and support, the College's HE Admissions Policy and associated procedures discussed in this Policy, have received appropriate training on undertaking admissions interviews prior to undertaking any, are competent to make fair and sound judgements, are aware of the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and know how to obtain further advice when dealing with enquiries and applications.

8.0 HE Admission Appeals

If an applicant is not offered a place on their chosen programme of study at the College, they have the right to appeal. Applicants who wish to make an appeal should do so using the Higher Education Admissions Appeals Procedure (BAC-HE-01) which is available here. <https://bacoll.ac.uk/HE>.

If an applicant would like to make a complaint about any aspect of this process (rather than making an Appeal, as outlined above) they should consult the College's Customer Complaints Procedure (BAC-Q-05) which is available here. bacoll.ac.uk

Contact Information

For questions or feedback regarding this policy, please contact:

Jennifer Phillips

Head of Community and Careers

Email: Jennifer.Phillips@bacoll.ac.uk

Phone: 01388 443059

Summary of significant changes

For information about changes made to this Policy see the [Change log](#) found on our website.