

# Central Admissions Policy

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Burton & South Derbyshire College's commitment to Equality and Diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of gender neutral language, jargon free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes. This document is available in alternative formats on request

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## Introduction

Burton and South Derbyshire College (BSDC) is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and widening participation through our education and training provision. We actively encourage applications from any individual interested in embarking on a learning journey with us and will endeavour to offer a wide range of education and training provision to meet the needs of our local community and wider catchment area. This Central Admissions Policy underpins our commitment to ensuring that all applicants have an informative and positive admissions experience to guide and support them to enrol on the right programme of study, in order to promote attainment of their learning potential.

## Our Aims

The Central Admissions Service aims to:

- a) Communicate clearly and promptly to all enquiries
- b) Provide an accessible and uncomplicated application process
- c) Gain feedback from our applicants to evaluate and improve the service
- d) Produce information and guidance on enrolment and induction for new starters
- e) Promote BSDC admissions services at open events and external partner events
- f) Provide outstanding customer experience
- g) Signpost applicants to qualified Careers Guidance Services, Financial Support Advice and Guidance and Additional Learning Support
- h) Treat all applications fairly and respectfully adhering to data protection and equality of opportunity
- i) Work closely with Curriculum Teams to deliver outstanding interview and enrolment events

## Service Delivery

### Scope of service

The College Central Admissions Service provides the following principal services:

- a) Advice and guidance on the application process
- b) Application forms for new starters and progressing learners
- c) Appointments for Interview and Information Events and Progressing Learners' Panel
- d) Attendance at partner events to promote our curriculum offer and the application process
- e) Attendance at BSDC Opening Days/Evenings
- f) Information and updates on the applicant journey, 'next steps' and enrolment.
- g) Referrals to: Curriculum Staff, qualified Careers Guidance, Financial Support and Additional Learning Support services
- h) Support with disclosure procedures
- i) Transition support for School Leavers
- j) Surveys on the Admissions and Interview experience

The College Central Admissions Service aims to support applicants to achieve the following core outcomes, by ensuring that the applicant:

- a) Has access to relevant and up-to-date information on our course offer and application process
  - b) Is equipped to make informed course choices by receiving accurate and impartial advice and guidance
  - c) Is fully prepared to embark upon a successful learning journey at BSDC
  - d) Is given the opportunity to give feedback on the admissions experience and service
  - e) Can make discrete disclosures and receive timely and relevant support
- a) Promptly receives an interview
  - b) Receives clear and timely communication about their journey
  - c) Successfully enrolls on the right course to reach their potential

## Service principles and values

The College is committed to delivering an inclusive and outstanding central admissions service which adheres to, and embodies the following core principles and values:

- Accessibility
- Advice and Guidance
- Client-centred Approach
- Confidentiality and Data Protection
- Impartiality
- Outstanding Customer Service
- Positive Disclosure Procedures
- Promotion of Equality of Opportunity
- Transparency
- Widening Participation

## Responsibilities

The central admissions process for full-time further education programmes is the responsibility of the Learner Services Team Leader, supported by the Head of Learner Services and Customer Experience and is implemented by the Admissions Team based in Learner Services. The process is fully embedded across the wider Customer Experience and Learner Services Teams to ensure positive collaboration across a range of additional support services delivers a holistic service to applicants.

## Quality Assurance

### Internal continual quality improvement

At BSDC we believe that the views of our service users are the most important and useful tools for measuring satisfaction and driving improvements therefore an Admissions Survey is integral to the process. A request to complete the survey is communicated to every applicant on the offer letter sent. The results of the survey are captured, monitored and evaluated by the Admissions Team and shared with Curriculum and Support Area Leaders and serve to underpin continual quality improvement of the central admissions procedures.

The Admissions Policy is additionally monitored through; internal audits, annual self-assessment reports and regular reporting of recruitment data to the College Management Team and Senior Leadership Team.

### External quality mark accreditation

BSDC achieved the Matrix Quality Standard Accreditation for the Learner Services and Customer Experience Area in May 2017. The Admissions Team as an integral part of the Learner Services Team is fully committed to continual quality improvements. This 3-year accreditation will be monitored annually internally and by the external quality mark organisation (Matrix). The Admissions Team will continue to embed and focus on the following four key elements as part of our internal monitoring and reviewing processes:

- i. Leadership & Management
- ii. Resources
- iii. Service Delivery
- iv. Continuous Quality Improvement

## Supporting documentation

The following College documents support and provide further guidance on the application of this policy across the organisation:

- Additional Learning Support (ALS) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disclosure Policy
- Feedback Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Single Equality Scheme
- Transgender Protocol

## Study programme

### Entry requirements

Many of our study programmes have minimum entry requirements which are published in the College prospectus and on the College website. These requirements will be discussed with the applicant at interview. Some courses or subjects may require additional skills evidence such as an audition, a dexterity test or evidence of a minimum level of fitness. These requirements will be discussed with the applicant at the interview stage.

Applicants, where appropriate, will be screened during induction to assess their levels of literacy and numeracy.

### Conditional offers

Once an application has been received by the College, the Admissions Team will make contact with the applicant to arrange an interview. At this stage the applicant will be guided through the entry requirements and the content of the course by the interviewer. Subject to a successful interview, a formal conditional offer will be sent to the applicant confirming the outcome of their application. The conditions of the offer will focus on prior attainment [e.g. GCSE] and where applicable, completion of audition, a dexterity test or a minimum level of fitness where applicable.

Applicants who have declared a learning disability or support need will be referred to the Additional Learning Support Team to ensure that an appropriate support package is arranged.

Where admittance of applicant with an EHCP will require additional funding from the Local Authority (to ensure all needs can be met), it may be necessary for the College to issue a conditional offer of a place until such time as the Local Authority has confirmed that funding is approved.

Where an applicant applies to the College and receives an offer of a place without disclosing their EHCP or learning needs, it may subsequently be necessary for the College to review any offer issued in order to ensure the College's ability to meet the statutory duty as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice. Such review may result in a withdrawal of offer.

### Course confirmation

Applicants will be invited in to the College after the GCSE results have been released to confirm their eligibility for their chosen Study programme. Curriculum staff and the IAG Team will be available to offer support to applicants who have not met the minimum entry requirements. All applicants must:

- a) provide evidence of their previous achievements and good conduct at their current school or college
- b) satisfy requirements for admission to the proposed study programme.
- c) undertake further assessment or provide information as necessary to allow the College to support any identified additional learning needs.
- d) agree in writing to adhere to the College Respect Agreement and to any agreements between the College and individual students and or their parents or legal guardians that the College may reasonably require.

### Equal opportunities

The College will always operate within the terms of current legislation for Equality and Diversity. In cases where applicants have additional needs or special requirements, the College will discuss these with the applicant and their parents/carers at an early stage in the application process so that all necessary arrangements can be put in place to meet the needs of the learner by the start of the academic year.

### Safeguarding

The College takes its responsibilities for Safeguarding extremely seriously. All applicants are asked to declare any criminal convictions that they may have or are pending. Criminal convictions are not necessarily a barrier to entry to study at the College. However, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Head of Learner Services and Customer Experience and the College reserve the right to contact agencies such as the Independent Safeguarding Authority, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Police and Youth Offending Teams if they feel this is necessary. For some courses of study it is a requirement that Learners are registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority before they are able to go out on placement. Where this is appropriate, learners will be notified in advance.

## Residency

If an applicant declares that they have not resided in the UK/EU for the past three years and or is resident on a VISA, the application will be referred to the Learner Services Team Leader or manager for assessment prior to acknowledgement of the application. Where an applicant is residing on an Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), Permanent Residency (PR) Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) VISA the applicant will be contacted to request that they provide their passport or biometric identify card and their VISA.

An applicant's VISA will require a minimum of an 18 month term remaining to progress their application.

## Declined admission

The College aims to provide all applicants with a Study programme which suits their individual needs. An applicant will not be admitted to a programme if they:

- a) Screen below Entry Level
- b) Are unable to demonstrate that they hold the minimum entry requirements
- c) Are seeking to undertake a programme which is not in their best educational interest
- d) Have a criminal conviction which bars them from certain areas of work and they wish to follow a programme which would normally lead to that type of work
- e) Have behaved inappropriately whilst on College premises
- f) Disclose other circumstances which questions their suitability for a course
- g) Have disabilities and or support needs that cannot be met by reasonable adjustments

If the College is unable to accept an applicant for their chosen programme of study, they will offer appropriate careers education initial advice and guidance [CEIAG] to enable the learner to make other informed choices. Any refusal to admit can only be agreed by the Head of Learner Services and Customer Experience who has overall responsibility for central admissions. The applicant may appeal to the College Director of Quality.

## English and Mathematics

Applicants who have not achieved a Grade A\*(9) – C (4) in either GCSE English or Mathematics are required to retake this GCSE alongside their vocational programme. The College will not provide support for re-takes where students have already achieved a Grade A\*(9) – C (4). However, the College will encourage further study of these subjects where it will support career and study progression.

## Interviews

All applicants for full-time and substantial programmes will be invited for an interview. Interviewers will offer impartial guidance at the interview. A model programme and back-up plan will be agreed but the applicant may change their programme at enrolment provided they have achieved the appropriate entry requirements for their chosen Study programme.

## Applicants with a learning difficulty and or disability

The College welcomes applications from applicants requiring additional support on their chosen course. Applicants who declare an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be given the opportunity to name Burton and South Derbyshire College as their preferred choice of post sixteen education after due consultation with all interested parties.

The College will engage with the Local Authority EHCP consultation process as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) and will provide information to the Local Authority as to the College's ability to meet the educational support needs of the young person. A positive confirmation of this will not necessarily mean acceptance to the vocational programme of study applied for, and applicants will still be required to follow the application and interview process set out in this policy.

Applicants without an EHCP are encouraged to disclose any support need at the initial interview stage.

### Additional or specialist support interviews

Where an applicant has either indicated on their application form or been identified during the admissions process as possibly requiring additional or specialist support, but does not hold an EHCP, a second specialist interview with the appropriate person will be arranged by the Admissions Team.

### Overseas qualifications

For applicants with overseas qualifications, they will need to supply a qualification equivalence comparison from UK NARIC (<http://ecctis.co.uk/naric/>), in order to ascertain whether they meet the entry requirements for their desired course. Burton and South Derbyshire College is unable to pay for this service.

### Admissions in extenuating circumstances

These would include requests for consideration relating to:

- a) Long-term illness or the death of a close relative that adversely affected the student's study and have been confirmed by the personal tutor or external reference
- b) Significant other social reasons for interruption to normal schooling
- c) Outstanding occupational/technical skills/talent

This decision to accept the applicant must be approved by the relevant Director of Curriculum.

### Progression

All current learners will be informed of the College progression application process and criteria during tutorials and this will be followed up by discussions with their Progress Coach regarding their intended progression pathway. Learners will then be encouraged to complete and submit a progression application form.

### Progression Criteria

#### 90 Credit Progression Learners (Level 3 Year 1 to Year 2) and Foundation Diploma

Learners must, by the end of the summer term, successfully complete all the units from their programme in order to progress onto the second year of the programme.

Learners who are wishing to progress onto Year 2 of their study programme, who are on GCSE Maths and or English programmes should demonstrate good attendance at these lessons, attendance at all exams that they were entered for and either have passed or at least be able to demonstrate significant progress. The learners, who are on a vocational programme with Maths and or English core, should be able to demonstrate good attendance at these lessons and an ongoing commitment to continue to study Maths and English to attain the targeted level.

#### Entry Level, Level 1 and 2 Progression Learners

The College's aspirational target for attendance is 94%. In order to progress within the College, learners are required to achieve a minimum of 90% attendance with a good punctuality record, in all elements of their study programme.

Learners are required to achieve their current qualification with least an overall MERIT or CREDIT performance, where applicable, in order to progress onto the next level. Learners who are on GCSE Maths and or English programmes should demonstrate good attendance at these lessons, attendance at all exams that they were entered for and either passed or at least be able to demonstrate progress in these exams. The learners, who are on a vocational programme with Maths and or English core, should be able to demonstrate good attendance at these lessons and an ongoing commitment to continue to study Maths and English to attain the targeted level.

Learners are required to demonstrate positive progress throughout the year and therefore a Progression Panel will review the learner's disciplinary record, smart targets and progress reviews and will obtain a reference from the Course Leader.

### Progression Criteria in Extenuating Circumstances

Where a Learner has failed to meet the progression criteria they may still be permitted to progress where they can demonstrate:

- a) a good attendance and punctuality record
- b) positive progress reviews
- c) achievement of SMART targets
- d) no significant disciplinary actions
- e) an ongoing commitment to continue to study Math and English to the targeted level (grade C (4) or above)

The decision whether to grant progression under extenuating circumstances is at the discretion of the Progression Panel and must be approved by the relevant Director of Curriculum or a nominated representative.

In such cases acceptance may be granted subject to agreement to an initial 6 week attendance and behaviour contract and or engagement with Nu Futures or Prince's Trust programmes over the summer holiday period. Such conditions and or referrals to external partners will be agreed with the learner at interview prior to offer.

### Re-Starts

Current learners wishing to re-start their programme will use the same process as new applicants. This includes meeting entry criteria and having a satisfactory reference. Interviews will be carried out and decisions will be made by the relevant Director of Curriculum or a nominated representative. The interview will be recorded and details sent to appropriate departments e.g. the Admissions Team.

### Appeals

If any applicant is dissatisfied with the decision regarding their application, they will be advised to submit an appeal. They should state clear reasons for their appeal and produce supporting evidence if needed.

Appeals should be made in writing and be addressed to:

Admissions Appeals  
Head of Learner Services and Customer Experience  
Burton and South Derbyshire College  
Lichfield Street  
Burton-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
DE14 3RL

The Head of Learner Services and Customer Experience will then meet with the applicant and their parent or guardian to discuss their application. Where appropriate and or necessary the Head of Learner Services and Customer Experience will consult with and make a recommendation to the Vice Principal Corporate Relationships whose decision will be final. The applicant will then be advised of the outcome and any action to be taken in writing within 28 days.