

Admissions Policy 2020-2023

Policy Owner	Learner Services
Policy Status	Approved
Policy Version	3.1
Approved By	CMT
Approval Date	October 2020
Review Date	October 2023
Distribution	Intranet, website
EIA Completion Date	October 2020

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

Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Service Delivery.....	3
2.1	Principles	3
2.2	Guidance, Policies and Procedures	4
2.3	Responsibilities	4
2.4	Quality Assurance	4
2.4.1	Internal continual quality improvement	4
2.4.2	External quality mark accreditation	5
3.0	Information, Advice and Guidance.....	5
4.0	New Recruitment and Selection	5
4.1	Selection Principle	6
4.2	Admissions Processes	6
4.3	Interviewing and/or Assessment	7
4.4	Offers	8
4.5	Course Closure, Suspension or Material Change	8
5.0	Progression for 16-19 Study Programmes Only.....	9
6.0	Complaints about the admissions process	9
APP1	GCSE Equivalent Entry Requirements	11

1.0 Introduction

1.1 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.

2.0 Service Delivery

2.1 Principles

- 2.1.1 The College aims to provide education and training for all applicants who demonstrate the potential to benefit from its provision, in line with the specific entry requirements established for each course.
- 2.1.2 The College seeks to offer direct entry, progression from school and other training or education providers, to a wide range of vocational, professional and undergraduate programmes, welcoming applicants from a range of diverse backgrounds.
- 2.1.3 The admissions process is designed to ensure that applicants possess the ability and aptitude to complete their studies successfully.
- 2.1.4 All admission procedures and criteria by which applicants are selected will be fair, lawful, clear, explicit, open and consistently applied. They will reflect the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and widening participation mission reflecting a diverse population of applicants. All procedures will conform to the requirements of current legislation and the relevant commitments at Burton and South Derbyshire College.
- 2.1.5 All staff and applicants have access to, and are required to comply with, the College's policies and procedures. Staff involved in the admission of learners who give guidance to applicants and/or undertake admissions and enrolment duties, will be knowledgeable and competent in their roles. They will operate to clear guidance and be supported by appropriate staff development. They will have an understanding of the educational and cultural differences of a diverse population and knowledge of different routes into education and employment.
- 2.1.6 Applicants will be selected on the basis of their application, including evidence of qualifications and experience and, where appropriate, through the use of interviewing, auditions, portfolio evidence or other such mechanisms. Consideration will be given to the nature and the purpose of an interview, or any other selection method, the criteria to be used for selection and whether applicants are to be interviewed individually or in groups.
- 2.1.7 The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the College is in receipt of all information required to allow the institution to make a decision on their application and that all information is accurate. Omission of relevant information, or the supply of inaccurate information, may invalidate the application or the offer of a place. If the College identifies such inaccuracies after your enrolment as a learner, your enrolment will be withdrawn.
- 2.1.8 Admissions to courses which are offered through our partnership with Staffordshire University will be processed in line with the University's policies and procedures.
- 2.1.9 Information will be collected and used only in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.
- 2.1.10 All recruitment, admissions, enrolment and induction procedures will be regularly monitored for their effectiveness for all categories of applicants.

2.2 Guidance, Policies and Procedures

- 2.2.1 In order to implement its principles, the College will regularly review, update and publish annual guidance, procedures and policies including:
- Entry and admission criteria via the College [online course prospectus](#).
 - Fees, charges and financial support policies for [Further Education](#) and [Higher Education](#) provision.
 - Admissions procedures for applicants who disclose a criminal conviction.
 - Admissions procedures for applicants who disclose learning support needs (includes those with Local Authority issued Education, Health and Care Plan – EHCP)
 - Admission procedures for non-UK resident and international applicants (Student Visa which was formerly known as UK Tier 4).
- 2.2.2 The College Admissions Policy should be read in conjunction with other College publications as listed below:
- Additional Learning Support (ALS) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy
 - [Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance \(CEIAG\) Policy](#)
 - [Learner Disclosure and Fitness to Study Policy](#)
 - [Learner Transfer Guidelines](#)
 - [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#)
 - [Data Protection Policy](#)
 - [Feedback \(Compliments and Complaints\) Policy](#)
 - [Safeguarding Policy](#)
 - [Student Protection Plan for Higher Education Students](#)
 - [Higher Education Student Agreement and Terms and Conditions](#)
- 2.2.3 The Admissions Policy has been mapped against the Indicators of Sound Practice as detailed in the [guiding principles set out in the UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance for Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access](#).
- 2.2.4 All College [student policies, procedures and guidance](#) are published on the College's website and are available on request in hard copy form.

2.3 Responsibilities

- 2.3.1 The College admissions service and processes are managed by the Learner Services Team Leader, supported by the Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience.
- 2.3.2 The admissions processes are 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.

2.4 Quality Assurance

2.4.1 Internal continual quality improvement

- 2.4.1.1 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 – whether successful or unsuccessful on the offer letter sent. The results of the survey are captured, monitored and evaluated by the Admissions Team and underpin continual quality improvement of the central admissions procedures.
- 2.4.1.2 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.

2.4.2 External quality mark accreditation

2.4.2.1 The College holds the Matrix Quality Standard Accreditation for Learner Services and Customer Experience which was last reaccredited in May 2020. 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 (The Growth Company). The admissions team will continue to embed and focus on the following four key elements as part of the internal monitoring and review processes:

- a. Leadership & Management
- b. Resources
- c. Service Delivery
- d. Continuous Quality Improvement

3.0 Information, Advice and Guidance

3.1 The College will provide applicants with accurate, clear, relevant and accessible information and clear guidance to enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options prior to and during their course of study. This will be achieved by:

- a. Holding advertised Open Days/Evenings, Taster Sessions and Offer Holder Days
- b. Hosting visits by schools and providing talks at schools and careers events about entering further or higher education and studying at Burton and South Derbyshire College.
- c. Providing free information and advice from suitably qualified members of staff to applicants.
- d. Providing specific course information for every course via the College website. This information gives details of course content, awarding body, entry requirements, fees and any other costs associated with the course, duration of study, location, and progression opportunities. In line with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) guidelines, for higher education courses there will also be additional information on modes of study, course content and structure, key methods for teaching, learning and assessment and terms and conditions for HE learners.
- e. Providing further information on the College website about the range of learner support, academic or pastoral, available for students, including information technology and learning resources/library services, personal tutorial support, learner welfare, counselling and wellbeing services, employment and careers services and personal development planning available.
- f. Responding to applicants' requests for advice made by telephone, email on social media or in person.
- g. Providing advice and guidance on opportunities for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning where appropriate.
- h. Ensuring that any alterations to courses from earlier published information are communicated to applicants holding an offer. This may include closure of a course, significant changes to cost, location, content and the status of a course, including withdrawal or granting of validation by a professional or statutory body, or the failure of an advertised course to gain approval or accreditation.

4.0 New Recruitment and Selection

4.1 The College is committed to ensuring that selection policies and processes are transparent and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and promptly; Information concerning applicants will be treated as confidential in line with the College's Data Protection Policy and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules.

4.2 The College will ensure all admissions decisions are made by those equipped to make the required judgements.

4.1 Selection Principle

- 4.1.1 Entry requirements will be transparent and consistently used for all applicants when considering ability, aptitude, skills, qualifications and prior learning or experience (acquired in the workplace or elsewhere) and will be published through the College's online course prospectus.

4.2 Admissions Processes

- 4.2.1 Opportunity will be given on application forms, at any interviews or other selection activities, for applicants to draw attention to relevant qualifications, experience and other information that might support their application.
- 4.2.2 Where courses are full and/or waiting lists are held, or when courses have to be closed for any reason, applicants will be informed immediately with the offer of alternative courses wherever possible.
- 4.2.3 Every reasonable adjustment will be made to support applicants who have disclosed a physical or sensory disability or specific learning need. On the application form, at any interview or during other selection activity, applicants will be encouraged to disclose any disabilities or specific learning needs, in order for the College to understand their needs and put reasonable adjustments in place prior to arrival.
- 4.2.4 Applicants for Further Education courses who declare they currently are the subject of a valid Local Authority issued 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 then engage with the Local Authority EHCP consultation process as set out in the SEND Code of Practice 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 course applied for, and applicants will still be required to follow the application and interview process set out in this policy.
- 4.2.5 Applicants for Higher Education courses who declare a disability, including specific learning difficulties, mental health needs and with physical and unseen disabilities will be provided with advice and guidance on Disabled Student Allowances, accessibility issues and a wide range of support and adjustments that may be available to meet the individuals need. An applicant should contact the Additional Learning Support Team by emailing als@bsdc.ac.uk or calling 01283 494601 to make an appointment to speak to a member of the additional learning support team.
- 4.2.6 Every reasonable adjustment will be made to support applicants who have disclosed a physical disability, learning difficulty, mental health conditions, criminal convictions or behavioral issues. On the application form, at any interview or during other selection activity, applicants will be encouraged to disclose so that their needs may be discussed and any necessary support arrangements are put in place prior to arrival. Applicants making such disclosures may also be subject to assessment as outlined in the College's Learner Disclosure and Fitness to Study Policy which is [available here](#).
- 4.2.7 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 Services for Learners and Customer Experience, or a delegated authority, 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 it is felt that this is necessary.
- 4.2.8 For certain courses, particularly in teaching, early years, education, sport, health, social work and other courses involving work with children or vulnerable adults, applicants must declare relevant criminal conviction(s), including spent sentences and cautions as this may affect their ability to complete required work or industrial placement elements of their course. Accordingly such applicants may be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously referred to as CRB check), the outcome of which may inform the final admissions decision.

- 4.2.9 Applicants who declare that they are currently In Care or a Care Leaver will be referred to the College's designated LAC team who will then engage with the relevant Local Authority to understand the support needs of the applicant.
- 4.2.10 For applicants to a course where a reference is required and there has been a significant break since schooling, a personal reference from a professional or employer (not friend or family) may be requested rather than a school reference.
- 4.2.11 Applicants must be aged 16 years or older at time of enrollment.
- 4.2.12 The College reserves the right to carry out checks on documents supplied by applicants to establish authenticity in order to guard against fraudulent applications.
- 4.2.13 Applicants who are not UK or EU nationals and who are not sponsored under Student Visa will be required to demonstrate that they have appropriate leave to remain in the UK. Where an applicant states they are resident on an Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), Permanent Residency (PR) or Indefinite Leave to Enter (ILE) VISA the applicant will be contacted to provide their passport or biometric identify card and their VISA.
- 4.2.14 An applicant's VISA must not expire prior to the end date of the chosen course. Where the VISA does expire before the specified end date any offer will be subject to the applicant receiving an appropriate extension to their VISA prior to enrolment.
- 4.2.15 Applicants aged 16, 17 and 18 years who have not achieved a Grade A*(9) – C (4) in either GCSE English or Mathematics, or an equivalent qualification (see APP1 below), will be required to retake this GCSE alongside their vocational course. The College will not provide support for re-takes where students have already achieved a Grade A*(9) – C (4).
- 4.2.16 Applicants aged 19 years or older who have not achieved a Grade A*(9) – C (4) in either GCSE English or Mathematics, or an equivalent qualification (see APP1 below), will be encouraged to further study these subjects where it will support career and study progression.
- 4.2.17 Applicants with overseas qualifications, will need to supply a qualification equivalence comparison from [UK NARIC](#) in order to ascertain whether they meet the entry requirements for their desired course. Burton and South Derbyshire College is unable to facilitate or fund this service.
- 4.2.18 Student Visa applicants for Staffordshire University partnership courses should apply in the same manner as other students, either via UCAS or directly via the University Application System. Applicants can find [guidelines on the Student Visa application process](#) on the University's website or seek support from the [International Student Support](#) team.

4.3 Interviewing and/or Assessment

- 4.3.1 Applicants will receive clear information on requirements for interviews, auditions, portfolios or any form of assessment applied during the application process. Interviews, auditions and assessments will be conducted and evaluated in a standardised manner for the course.
- 4.3.2 Decisions and the reasons for the decisions, are recorded in writing to facilitate feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
- 4.3.3 For certain courses, initial assessment for Basic Skills attainment (numeracy, literacy, ESOL) may be carried out as part of the admissions process. The offer of a place on the course may then be informed by the outcome of those assessments.
- 4.3.4 Where diagnostic assessment on needs in literacy and numeracy is required, this should be carried out during the induction process, as this is not part of the admissions process and will not compromise an applicant's enrolment on a course. The purpose of these tests is to ensure that appropriate support is provided after an applicant has been admitted.
- 4.3.5 Where an applicant is perceived as unsuitable for a particular course then, wherever possible, they will be referred to other appropriate courses or to Learner Services for further information, advice and guidance.
- 4.3.6 Applicants applying on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) will be required to provide a portfolio of evidence to show the equivalence of the normal entrance requirement of a specific course which will then be assessed in line with the College's Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and/or Staffordshire University's Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning process.

- 4.3.7 Applicants seeking sponsorship through UK Visas and Immigration Student Visa sponsorship will be required to meet the requirements as set out by the Home Office in addition to College requirements.
- 4.3.8 Any applications requested to be considered under extenuating circumstances should be approved by the Vice Principal & Executive Director, Curriculum & Quality. Such extenuating circumstances may include, but not be limited to:
- a. Long-term illness or the death of a close relative that adversely affected the learner'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.

4.4 Offers

- 4.4.1 Offers will be made within 6–8 working weeks from the date of application acknowledgement. Clear information will be provided to the successful applicant on:
- a. any conditions attached to the offer
 - b. what the applicant has to do next and by when
- 4.4.2 Any offer will then be followed up with further information, for example, joining instructions, arrangements for enrolment and induction.
- 4.4.3 Clear information will be given to applicants who do not meet the required entry criteria specified in the offer regarding their options and what action to take.
- 4.4.4 Prompt and clear feedback is given to applicants who have not been offered a place and advice about alternatives and future options will be given, as appropriate. For example, the following conditions, which is not exhaustive, would result in the applicant being declined a place on their chosen course
- a. The applicant is unable to demonstrate that they meet the published entry requirements.
 - b. The applicant is seeking to undertake a programme which is not in their best educational interest.
 - c. The applicant has 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.
 - d. The applicant has behaved inappropriately whilst attending interview interviews or other selection activities.
 - e. The applicant has failed to disclose any circumstances that affect their suitability or fitness to study their chosen course.
 - f. The applicant has disclosed needs which the College is unable to meet by reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.4.5 Where offers have been made on the basis of fraudulent information, the College reserves the right to withdraw the offer or withdraw the student if enrolled.
- 4.4.6 Where an applicant is made an offer by Staffordshire University for a partnership HE course, the College will send out details of any College Offer Holder events direct to the applicant.
- 4.4.7 Applicants will be invited to upload their examination result and/or qualification evidence prior to enrolment. The College will then assess and confirm that the applicant has met the published entry requirements.

4.5 Course Closure, Suspension or Material Change

- 4.5.1 In the event of a course closure, suspension or material changes to course content, this will be communicated to the applicant by the admissions team.
- 4.5.2 Applicants who have accepted offers will not be contacted until the closure or suspension process has been fully completed and confirmed by the Vice Principal & Executive Director, Curriculum & Quality or Assistant Principal & Dean, Curriculum.
- 4.5.3 Applicants affected will then be informed of their options to transfer their applications to another course within the College/University or to another institution.

- 4.5.4 Applicants who have been made offers, but have not yet accepted them, may however be advised that a closure or suspension request has been made. Such applicants should be advised that the offer of a place is suspended until a final decision has been made and will be withdrawn if the request is accepted. They should also be advised that they may choose another course or institution. Where appropriate further careers information, advice and guidance will be offered.
- 4.5.5 Closure, suspension or material changes to a Higher Education courses will be managed in line with the [Student Protection Plan](#) and [Policy and procedures for Closure, Suspension and Changes to Higher Education Programmes Policy](#).

5.0 Progression for 16-19 Study Programmes Only

- 5.1 The College is committed to ensuring the progression of all current learners.
- 5.2 Learners will be informed of the College's progression application process via the College's 'Be' tutorial programme, supported by discussions with their respective Progress Coach regarding their intended progression pathway. Learners will then be signposted and where appropriate, will complete and submit a progression application. Learners on 'other' part time or full-time learning programmes will be notified of the College's progression process via their Course Leader or Tutor. Alternatively, learners can contact the Learner Services team to seek further information, advice and guidance.
- 5.3 Upon receipt of the learner's application the admissions team will send a conditional offer to learner meeting the minimum entry and performance thresholds outlined within their respective offer letter. Please note that the list of conditions is by no means exhaustive as additional performance indicators may be considered and may affect a learner's progression. Where appropriate, learners may also be required to provide satisfactory evidence of their UK residency.
- 5.4 The applicant will be required to respond confirming their acceptance or declining the offer. Once the acceptance has been received by the College the learners place on the course will be secured.
- 5.5 Applicants failing to meet some or all the conditions of the progression, at time of enrolment, will be provided information, advice and guidance. At this time the learner may be permitted to progress, subject to a probationary term, during which the learner will automatically be required to comply with specific performance criteria i.e. attendance or progress targets. Performance against such targets will be reviewed over the probationary period following their respective enrolment.
- 5.6 If a learner fails to adhere to or achieve the agreed performance targets then they are at significant risk of being withdrawn from their respective programme of study.
- 5.7 Should any learner be at risk of not meeting the progression criteria or if they were unsuccessful at the progression panel or interview they will be automatically offered a consultation with a qualified Careers Guidance Coordinator, who will support the learner to identify the available options for their next step so they are able to make an informed progression choice. This consultation will include exploring a wide range of post-16 options supporting the learner's development.
- 5.8 Where a learner has failed to meet the progression criteria due to extenuating circumstances they may still be permitted to progress. The decision whether to grant progression under extenuating circumstances is solely at the discretion of the Progression Panel and must be approved by the relevant Deputy Director of Curriculum or a nominated representative. In such cases acceptance may be granted subject to agreement to an initial 6-week probationary contract.

6.0 Complaints about the admissions process

- 6.1 An applicant cannot complain or appeal where this is a disagreement with the judgement of an admissions decision, in assessing the merits of application, or in reaching a decision on entry, which has been reached in accordance with the published criteria and processes contained in this policy.
- 6.2 Where an applicant has reason to believe that their application has not been handled fairly, objectively or in accordance with the procedures described above, they should write to the Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience, Burton and South Derbyshire College, Lichfield Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, DE14 3RL or email feedback@bsdc.ac.uk setting out their reasons.

- 6.3 The Head of Services for Learners and Customer Experience will then review the handling of the application in the light of the applicant's written statement and report, in writing, to the Vice Principal & Executive Director, Curriculum & Quality within fourteen working days. The Vice Principal & Executive Director, Curriculum & Quality may confirm or rescind an earlier decision in the light of this report and a written reply will be sent to the applicant within ten working days of receiving the request for the review of the application. Such decision shall be final.

APP1 GCSE Equivalent Entry Requirements

The College does not accept Level 2 Adult Numeracy or Literacy in lieu of GCSE's.

GCSE Grade	Equivalent	Comments
GCSE Grade 5 (B) English Language	Key Skills L3 Communication	
	IGCSE First of Second Language at Grade 5 (B) or above	
	Single Award GCSE English Studies at Grade 5 (B) or above	
GCSE Grade 4 (C) English Language	Functional Skills L2 English Essential Skills Wales L2 Communication Essential Skills Northern Ireland L2 Communication Key Skills L2 Communication	Teacher Training courses only accept IGCSE as an equivalence
	IGCSE First of Second Language at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	Single Award GCSE English Studies at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	IBMid Grade 4 or above	
GCSE Grade 5 (B) Maths	Key Skills L3 Application of Number	
	IGCSE Math at Grade 5 (B) or above	
	AQA L2 Certificate (GCSE) Use of Mathematics (Higher Level)	
	Single Award GCSE Maths at Grade 5 (B) or above	
GCSE Grade 4 (C) English Language	Functional Skills L2 Mathematics Essential Skills Wales L2 Application of Number Essential Skills Northern Ireland L2 Application of Number	Teacher Training courses only accept IGCSE as an equivalence
	Key Skills L2 Application of Number	
	IGCSE Maths at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	Single Award GCSE Maths at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	GCSE Application of Maths and Method of Maths only accepted if applicant has both at Grade 4 (C) or above	
GCSE Grade 5 (B) Science	IBMid Grade 4 or above	
	GCSE Applied Science at Grade 5 (B)	
	GCSE Additional Science at Grade 5 (B)	
GCSE Grade 4 (C) Science	IGCSE Science at Grade 5 (B) or above	
	GCSE Applied Science at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	GCSE Additional Science at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	IGCSE Science at Grade 4 (C) or above	
	EdExcel BTEC Level 2 Certificate in Applied Science (3 mandatory units only)	
	Cambridge National Level 2 Science	
	IBMid Grade 4 or equivalent	

The College recognises students who have achieved an HE qualification at Foundation Degree/HND level or above as having equivalent qualifications.