

It is intended that this policy is 'fair to all'. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

SWINDON COLLEGE INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Title: Higher Education
Admission and Student Transfer Policy 2020 Entry

Owner: HE Manager

Review Date: September 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Admission and Student Transfer Policy for Higher Education at Swindon College sets out the aims for fair admission of students to our courses. The policy is written with consideration of the Guiding Principles of the Expectations and Practices for Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access, as set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA, 2018)
- 1.2. The policy is aimed at staff, students and prospective students in order to provide them with the information needed in advance of, and during the process of student application, and to provide details of other considerations which may be needed at that time, including student transfer into, out of and within the institution.
- 1.3. The College will also take account of the admission policies and procedures of partner institutions and awarding bodies as follows:
 - Oxford Brookes University for students on franchised provision
 - University of Gloucestershire for students on validated provision
 - Pearson Education for students studying HNC and HND provision

2. General Principles of Admission

- 2.1 Swindon College aims to provide applicants with equality of opportunity, taking account of individual need in order to make adjustments for applicants with disabilities or those with exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2. Support in making applications is provided through our dedicated HE Admissions, Advice and Guidance Advisor, who liaises closely with both Swindon College staff, and colleagues within our partner Universities.
- 2.3 All courses will specify the minimum entry requirements, and give examples of acceptable alternatives.

- 2.4 The College will seek evidence that the applicant has the necessary entry qualifications, and the necessary personal, educational and professional requirements to meet the demands of the course applied for.
- 2.5 The College reserves the right to admit any student who has previously been enrolled at the college when:
- They have been withdrawn for non-payment of fees
 - They have been excluded for disciplinary/conduct reasons
 - They have accepted an exit award within the last year (Oxford Brookes)

3. Student Information

- 3.1 Information about our courses will be communicated and published in the following manner:
- College Prospectus for HE
 - College Website
 - Partner University websites
 - UCAS website
 - Leaflets and promotional materials
 - Events
- 3.2 The College website displays profiles of our individual courses, and in addition advice pages which detail other aspects of studying at the College to assist applicants in making an informed choice.
- 3.3 As part of the College's ongoing conditions of registration, the Office for Students require us to publish other information for prospective and current students which can be found under [Policies and Processes-HE](#) and include:
- Access and Participation Statement
 - Student Protection Plan
 - Course Closure Process
 - Transparency Information

Other policies and procedures relating to Higher Education can be found under Policies and Processes including Terms and Conditions of enrolment, and the full Fee Policy.

- 3.4. Information sent to students during the application process may be provided in electronic format or by letter. Where an interview is required students will be informed of a date and time to attend the College.

4. Conditions of Entry

- 4.1 In addition to the specified qualifications on entry, courses may have additional requirements of entry which may include:
- Attending interview
 - DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check
 - A specified number of workplace hours
 - Work or volunteering experience in a specified context

- IELTS (International English Language Testing System) entry scores for applicants for whom English is not their first language may be specified.

4.2 Non-UK Entry Qualifications

Applicants wishing to apply for a course who do not have the evidence of the specified entry qualifications undertaken in the UK, may have certification of studies completed in another country. In these cases we will recommend they engage with [UK NARIC](#), the National Agency for the Recognition and Comparison of international qualifications and skills, to obtain a Statement of Comparability which will confirm the level of the qualifications completed in relation to the UK qualifications framework. This helps us to ensure that the applicant has gained the necessary experience of study at the required level to do the course applied for.

4.3 English Language Requirements

Applicants for whom English is not their first language, may be required to undertake an approved test to demonstrate their proficiency. This may form part of their entry conditions when an offer is made. Entry criteria for each level of course, will refer to a specified IELTS score which must be achieved in any component and/or an overall score which must be achieved. The components of an IELTS test measure proficiency in Listening, Reading, Speaking and Listening, and provide an overall score. This test is recognised by our University partners and awarding bodies. Further information can be found on the [IELTS website](#) and advice and support can also be sought from the HE Admission staff at the College.

4.4. Deferred Entry

Applicants who are made an offer which is accepted by them, may decide to defer their entry. This is acceptable if the applicant makes this clear either through their UCAS application, or in the case of part-time courses, to the HE Admissions staff prior to the start date of the course. Applicants with deferred entry would be expected to begin the course the following academic year (usually September) unless circumstances prevent them from doing so, in which case they should notify the College in order to withdraw their application.

5. Student Transfer Arrangements

5.1 This section provides guidance on the arrangements available to students who:

- Transfer into a course at Swindon College from another provider (including one of our partner University courses)
- Transfer from a course at Swindon College to another provider
- Transfer from a course at Swindon College to another course at Swindon College (including those provided by a partner University)

5.2 Transferring into a course at Swindon College

A student who has studied elsewhere, and wishes to join a course at Swindon College, should contact our HE Admissions staff in the first instance. An initial check of the student's circumstances will be carried out in order to ascertain at what point it would be appropriate to make an application. If the student is applying for direct entry (advanced standing) into a

second or third year of the course, and has the required credits (CATS) this can be treated as in section 6 below, providing evidence can be produced in line with the cycle of admission, and prior to the start of the academic year of entry. If the receiving course is delivered at the College but awarded by a partner University, the conditions of entry must be met in accordance with their own admissions policy.

5.3 Pearson Programmes

For students who have achieved all or part of a programme of study awarded by Pearson at another institution, it will necessary to provide the registration details, in order to complete a student transfer. Applicants should advise HE Admissions Staff of these details and this process will be completed in liaison with the Exams Department at the College.

5.4 Students transferring to another provider

In the case that a student wishes to transfer to another provider, and has been studying at the college the following guidance applies:

- Students are advised to Research the receiving institutions policies on transferring in
- Ensure you continue to attend and complete assessments until the transfer and terms of transfer have been approved
- You inform your Programme Leader and HE Office as soon as possible of your intention to transfer
- If you are taking an exit award, you must request this via your Programme Leader; this will be tabled at the next Exam Board to confirm your award
- Any requests for Transcripts of results are made in writing to the HE Office
- Exit award certificates and/or Transcripts will not be available until 2 weeks after Exam Board ratification of marks
- It is the students responsibility to ensure that all fees are paid in full both for tuition and any other resource costs, and that arrangements for payment have been made with the receiving institution

5.5 Students transferring within Swindon College

In the event that a student wishes to transfer from a course at Swindon College, to another course at Swindon College, the following will apply:

- Transfer is acceptable within the first two weeks of study OR when arrangements are confirmed and transfer can be completed in time for the start of a subsequent academic year of study (subject to the acceptance of the credits achieved /subjects studied as detailed in section 6).
- Transfer from a Swindon College course (HND/HNC) to a course franchised to the College by a University, will be subject to meeting conditions of the University's own admissions/student transfer policy
- Students can seek further support on how to apply for transfer to a franchised University course through our HE Admissions Staff, which may include UCAS application
- Students wishing to transfer to another course which is a change of mode of study i.e. full-time to part-time or vice versa, should discuss this fully with their Programme Leader, who can approve the change and notify relevant College personnel

- Changes in mode of study for any of our franchised University courses should also be discussed with the Programme Leader in the first instance and can be supported by the HE Admissions Staff and HE Office
- Changes to mode of study will also impact on any student finance and the student should take this into consideration

6. Admission with Credit, Prior Learning or Experience

6.1 In some circumstances applicants may enter a course having achieved academic credit either at Swindon College or another institution. The following section provides guidance on the processes available for entry with credit achieved previously or with relevant experience.

6.2 Entering a 'top-up' programme (level 5 or 6)

Certain courses, in particular one year Honours programmes, or HND 'top-up' programmes, will publish entry requirements in terms of academic credit already gained in previous qualifications e.g. Foundation degree as 240 credits or HNC as 120 credits. Some honours year programmes also require achievement of a certain grade average across the Foundation degree. It is usual for this credit and grade average to be evidenced through a Transcript of results, which we will require in order to evidence this requirement.

6.3 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).

On occasion an applicant may present who does not have the entry criteria as published, but who may have other relevant qualifications, or work place experience which could demonstrate their academic ability and the personal attributes necessary to fulfil the course requirements. Applicants would discuss this with our HE Admissions Staff in the first instance. It would be a decision of the admitting tutor for the course, as to whether the proof of existing qualifications provided, can be accepted as entry to the course.

A process would then be undertaken, by academic staff within the department, to map the evidence of attainment in terms of level and relevance to the subject to be studied. This may also involve confirmation of acceptance of that evidence from the relevant University or awarding body, whose regulations will also be upheld during this process.

6.4 Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

If an applicant does not have any relevant formal qualifications, or academic credit which can be assessed to meet entry standards, they may wish to use previous experience in the workplace, as a volunteer, or other relevant personal pursuits which could demonstrate sufficient competence to enter into the course of study. This process is time consuming, and so applicants must be prepared to gather substantial and sufficient evidence during this process to make their claim.

Applicants making a claim should follow these points of guidance:

- It is the claimants responsibility to demonstrate what has been learned from the experiences
- Statements should be clearly written so that evidence of learning can be assessed
- The evidence collated must demonstrate clear links to the learning outcomes being met

- Assessment of the learning is carried out by academic staff with the responsibility to make a judgement on the relevance and sufficiency of the learning presented, against the requirements of the course.
- Such evidence must be suitable to satisfy External Examiners and Examination Boards
- Applicants can be advised of appropriate methods to gather evidence at interview
- Applicants should be aware that if evidence cannot be judged as suitable for APEL, they may be required to take the assessments as denoted for the Unit/Module.

7. Other Admission Requirements

7.1 Applicants with a criminal conviction

Applicants who have a criminal conviction/s are required to disclose this information at the point of application. Failure to do so will be considered as a serious breach of admission protocols, which could result in refusal of entry or exclusion from the College

- 7.2 Following a disclosure, applicants are obliged to provide full details of the all/any convictions upon request; withholding of information may result in refusal of entry or exclusion
- 7.3 Having a prior conviction will not automatically prevent an applicant from being offered a place at Swindon College, and this will depend on the context, nature and timing of the offence in question, and the relevance to the standards and requirements of the course to be studied
- 7.4 Applicants who disclose a criminal conviction will receive careful consideration by Admissions and Curriculum staff, who will consult with a member of the Senior Leadership Team in making an appropriate decision, based on the details provided
- 7.5 For University (franchised and validated) courses taught at the College, such information will be shared with relevant staff in order to make an appropriate decision based on the requirements of both institutions
- 7.6 The college reserves the right to refuse entry to an applicant with criminal convictions if it is judged that this could jeopardise the security, safety, reputation and integrity of the College or its community.

8. Fitness to Study

- 8.1 The College expects students who study Higher Education here to behave professionally, and with due regard for others at all times. A safe and stable environment is crucial for our HE students to study and succeed on their course. Actions which threaten the positive experiences of the students, staff and community are not acceptable.
- 8.2 When determining an applicant's suitability to study, the College must also take into account the individual needs of the applicant, and be assured that these needs can be met during the time they are studying here. The College has a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for students as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and will seek to ensure, that where possible individual needs can be met. Applicants may need to attend interviews or meetings where their needs will be discussed and/or assessed.

- 8.3 On occasion, applicants may be declined the opportunity to study here, if in doing so, they would pose a risk to themselves or others at the College. The College would always seek to provide advice and guidance to applicants, and direct them to other agencies for support where appropriate.
- 8.4 Fitness to Study may be taken into account where relevant to the admission of a student in relation to, but not limited to the following examples:
- Health issues or disabilities
 - Mental health issues
 - Issues with addiction/substance misuse
 - Inappropriate behaviour towards others
 - Aggressive or threatening behaviour
 - Defamatory language or actions against the college or its community
 - Previous exclusion
 - Failure to achieve the required DBS clearance as set out in the course entry requirements
- 8.5 The above examples can lead to a student being refused entry to a College course. This would be determined in discussion with an appropriate Senior Leadership Team member.
- 8.6 The College takes the duties placed upon it as detailed in 8.2 very seriously; Health, Mental health and Disabilities are not a reason for refusal of entry, but careful consideration must be given to the welfare of the applicant and others as detailed in 8.3 where fitness to study is a concern.
- 8.7 Where the course is a University (franchised or validated) programme, the College reserves the right to determine Fitness to Study, taking account of the University Policy and in consultation with relevant University staff.

9. General Admissions Processes

9.1 Full time applications

Students wishing to apply to a full-time course taught at the College, including those awarded by a University, will apply through [UCAS](#). Here applicants will set up an account to apply, and to track their applications.

The UCAS application information, such as campus codes, can be obtained either from our course profiles on the website, or from HE Admissions staff.

Those applying to other Universities through UCAS who are currently studying a course at Swindon College will be provided with guidance on the process, who to go to for a reference, including the college 'buzzword' by their Tutor or Programme Leader.

9.2 UCAS deadlines

Current students should be aware that there are [UCAS deadlines](#) which need to be considered. Students should follow internally set college deadlines in order to ensure references can be written and attached, qualifications are correct and that these are submitted in time to UCAS.

For courses starting in September deadlines are:

15 October of the previous year for Medicine, Veterinary medicine/science and Dentistry courses

15 January of the same year for all other programmes

Applications are referred to as 'on-time' if they are received by these deadlines. This means the application is guaranteed to be considered, however places for some courses are extremely competitive and applications should be made as soon as possible.

Swindon College courses of Higher Education will accept applications after the January deadline, and these will be considered if places remain available for each of our courses. We will also take into account the target numbers set by awarding Universities when deciding if places are available.

9.3 Part Time applications

For part-time courses, applications can be made directly to the College using the part-time application form. Our HE Admissions Staff will provide guidance to applicants on the process, and issue Employer Sponsorship forms for those whose employers are paying their fees.

9.4 Deferring your application

Deferring can be either for applicants who chose to apply to start a course the following year, or for applicants who intended to start but whose circumstances have changed, and now need to delay the start of their course. Applicants can:

- Select a 'deferred' start date in UCAS Apply; you should contact the University or College to check that they are happy to accept deferred entries before doing this
- If you have been made an offer, and decide to delay your start, contact your University or College and ask if they can change your start date to the following year
- For all part-time courses please contact the College HE Admissions staff directly to advise of any changes to your start date

9.5 Offering a place

Applicants can be offered a place in two ways:

Conditional Offer- this means you are required to meet the conditions you have been set. This can be achieving certain grades, a DBS or other condition **before** you can start the course. This will also apply even if you want to defer your start date.

Unconditional Offer- means you have already met the required entry criteria. In this case you are ready to start the course, providing you accept the offer. Students are responsible for responding to offers and should use UCAS Track to monitor their applications to full-time courses.

9.6 Confirmation and Clearing

Swindon College will make a decision on applicants holding conditional offers to confirm places, once results have been released from awarding bodies.

After 30th June applicants eligible for Clearing will be considered.

9.7 Unsuccessful Application

On occasion applicants may be unsuccessful for a number of reasons including not meeting the conditions of entry, or that the course is at capacity. On occasion an applicant may be unsuccessful at the interview stage of the process. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback on the outcome of their application.

9.8 Interviews

Interviews are used across most of the College's HE provision. They are an important part of the application process. Interview requirements are stated on our website course profiles. For some of our courses, all applicants are interviewed to ascertain their suitability for the course, in particular where workplace experience or hours are critical to the course requirements.

Interviews may not be needed where an applicant has met all entry conditions, however, they are a useful way for applicants to meet staff, and to be able to discuss matters such as transferring to a course from another institution, or to find out more about the applicants qualifications and/or experience relevant to the course, particularly for those with a non-traditional academic background.

Staff conducting the interview will ensure that the applicant understands the course requirements and commitment to study that they are making. A standard interview form will be completed, and submitted to HE Admissions staff with a decision and details of any offer made.

Decisions will be entered into UCAS or communicated directly to the applicant by HE Admissions staff.

10. Individual Needs

The College has a very diverse learning environment, and is pleased to welcome students from all backgrounds, ethnicities and those with disabilities, health or learning needs.

In order for the College to put the necessary support in place for individuals, we strongly advise applicants to disclose their individual needs on the application form. At interview, applicants will be asked some questions, the answers to which are recorded on the Study Support form. This enables us to ensure that we discuss individual requirements, and how we might support individuals in good time to make any adjustments needed. Your information will be passed on to the HE Study Support Officer (HESSO) who will arrange a confidential meeting, and may do an initial assessment of needs.

Some applicants may be able to apply for [Disabled Students' Allowances](#) (DSA) to cover some of the extra costs incurred because of ill health, disability or learning needs. This is not means tested, but paid as a grant in addition to Student Finance. Although the College is not a registered provider for Non-Medical Help, the HESSO can give advice on what is needed to apply for DSA. UCAS also has lots of information for [applicants with individual needs](#) including information on financial support.

For more information on the support that can be offered to our students whilst studying HE at the College please see our [Support for Students](#) page on the website.

11. Advice and Guidance

For advice and guidance on any aspect of this policy, external applicants should contact HE Admissions on HEAdmissions@swindon.ac.uk or for current students the HE Office on HESupport@swindon.ac.uk

12. Appeals

If applicants are not satisfied with the handling of their application, or believe that they have been unfairly treated in this process, they can raise their concerns in the first instance by email to studentservices@swindon.ac.uk . An appeal on an admissions decision will be directed to the Admissions Appeal Policy.