
Admissions Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy is to define the arrangements which govern the admission of potential students and the progression of existing students, ensuring that education/training needs and any legal requirements are met, and that any funding constraints are adhered to. This policy is intended to ensure a consistent approach across the College and that best practice is followed.

In accordance with the College's commitment to a fair admission process, all applications will be considered carefully and fairly based on specified entry criteria published on the website against each course, as well as general admission requirements that are applied consistently.

City of Bristol College is fully committed to ensuring a high-quality and fair admissions process which provides an equal opportunity for all applicants, regardless of their background, to gain admission to a college course suited to their ability, experience and aspirations. This in line with our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

2. Scope of Policy

The admissions process is intended to facilitate the exchange of information between the applicant, the admissions team and curriculum in order that the following elements can be addressed:

- The applicant has access to clear and concise information about the course.
- The applicant has the appropriate academic ability and aptitude for the selected course.
- The needs of applicants with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are identified so that appropriate adjustments can be made.
- The applicant fully understands the nature and content of the course.
- Referral for advice and guidance on alternative courses where the applicant is unsuccessful or the course is not appropriate as a result of exploring any of the above components.
- The applicant has access to impartial and meaningful careers information, advice and guidance from a qualified professional and, where relevant, includes local labour market information (Gatsby benchmark 2 & 8) and as specified in the college's [Careers Policy](#) and [Careers and Progression Strategy](#).

These policies and procedures apply to all courses offered by City of Bristol College with the exception of its Higher Education courses which are set out the College's [HE Admissions Policy](#). International applicants who require a Student Route visa to study in the United Kingdom will be advised of any UKVI licence stipulations etc. All data collected will be used in accordance with the [College's Data Protection Policy](#).

3. Procedures

3.1 Application Process

City of Bristol College is committed to the provision of a high quality and customer focused admissions service, through which students embark on, or progress to the most appropriate programme for their needs.

The admissions process will be led by Student Services for further and higher education applicants and adults. The Apprenticeship Team will oversee admission procedures for apprentices and SEN and Learning Support team supports the Early College admission process.

Recruitment and admissions material are available on the college's website and provided upon request in a hard copy format. The information on the website will include details of entry requirements, the range and content of programmes of study, assessment processes, progression opportunities, fees and financial support. This information is reviewed annually.

Where there are criteria for entry to a course they will also be set out clearly in any college offer. City of Bristol College consults the UK NARIC website to recognise and compare international qualifications and skills, this tool provides a UK equivalent qualification. Any offer is subject to assessment of need and appropriateness of the course for each individual. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that applicants are only recruited to courses that meet their requirements, capabilities and career aspirations.

Where required, course information meetings and assessments for applicants on specified courses form a mandatory part of the admissions process. Where required, course information meetings are carried out by appropriately trained and informed staff. Due to the variation in course requirements there may be some variation in the format of the meeting to ensure the suitability of the candidate in terms of the programme. The course Information meeting will be structured to provide the applicant with general information about the college and specific information about the course and career options.

General information about fees and loan/bursary/grant opportunities will also be given with applicants being offered the opportunity to discuss these in more detail with a member of the Student Services team.

A minimum enrolment total is required for the opening of any class. City of Bristol College reserves the right to cancel or change a class, course or programme if there is a significant reduction in attendance, or where the minimum enrolment total is not achieved, or due to changes beyond our control.

If an applicant has access needs, these will usually be discussed with the prospective student at course information meeting in order to ascertain reasonable adjustments and support requirements which may need to be put in place to support them in their studies. Any concerns about suitability should be dealt with at the course information meeting in order that applicants understand the issues clearly.

3.2 Offer Acceptance by the Student

The applicant has 30 days in which to accept the offer, if the offer is not accepted in the allotted timeframe the College reserves the right to offer the place to another applicant if contact has not been made.

3.3 Enrolment

During enrolment, the College ensures students' understanding of the College's terms and conditions by providing all enrolled students with a copy of their Enrolment Confirmation and Learning Agreement. Enrolment Confirmation and Learning Agreements can be provided in alternative formats (e.g. large print), should they be required.

The College will discuss its fee policy and student loan/fee payment plan during enrolment and ensure that the students are aware that if they withdraw after the course starts that they will be liable for the remainder of any unpaid course fees.

4. Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)

All applicants and learners have the right to expect accurate, up-to-date and consistent information from City of Bristol College about all available programmes.

The learning and pastoral support provided by City of Bristol College provides impartial information, advice and guidance throughout the admissions process to assist applicants to make informed choices about applying to City of Bristol College and the courses that best suit their ability, potential and aspirations.

City of Bristol College publishes course information and entry criteria on its website and in printed materials. City of Bristol College will encourage all applicants to attend admission and open events where they can seek any further information to inform their application.

City of Bristol College provides a wide range of support and guidance on the admissions process, as well as information on College life and the additional support available. Applicants can contact the admissions team and the admissions staff will either answer the query directly or put the applicant in touch with somebody who can. Contact details for admissions teams can be found on the [College website](#).

5. Course Entry Criteria

Admission criteria for each course are based on the level and specific demands of an individual course and are designed to ensure that admitted applicants are offered the right course and have a good prospect of a positive outcome.

General Entry Requirements

5.1 Each applicant must provide (or have provided on their behalf) admissions information which is accurate and complete.

5.2 City of Bristol College will require some applicants to undertake a Disclosure Barring Scheme (DBS) check. City of Bristol College will only require an applicant to undertake a standard or enhanced DBS check where the relevant course or course component falls within an exemption to the rehabilitation of offender's legislation.

5.3 Where the applicant is required to pay tuition fees and/or materials they must commit to doing so at enrolment. The applicable fees will be clearly set out in the course enrolment letter sent to the applicant. The letter will also identify whether the applicant is eligible to pay in instalments or apply for a loan. Fees and other charges applicable for the courses are identified under the course details on each college website.

5.4 Students are expected to be 'fit to study', which means that the applicant's physical and /or mental health, considering such adjustments as the City of Bristol College may reasonably agree to make, enables the applicant, if enrolled, to participate fully and successfully in their chosen course without significant adverse effect on their health, safety, and wellbeing and or that of other members of the college community. Applicants must declare any physical or mental health support needs which may impact on their learning on the application form to ensure college can assess and make appropriate support or adjustments to support the student. All applicants must provide details if requested of any medical documentation that is relevant to ensure that the applicant is 'fit to study'. Please see our [policy here](#).

5.5 Applicants must provide details on request of any relevant unspent criminal convictions they may have. If an applicant has a criminal conviction and the City of Bristol College, following a risk assessment and in its reasonable opinion, considers that the applicant will compromise the City of Bristol College duty of care to staff and students or otherwise presents a risk that cannot reasonably be managed will refuse admission. Please see the [Student-Disciplinary-and-Fitness-to-Study-Policy-September-2021-for-website.pdf \(cityofbristol.ac.uk\)](#)

5.6 Proof of qualifications prior to enrolment should be shown before confirmed offers of a place are made.

5.7 The applicant is expected to meet the entry requirements for the course they are applying for, as set out in the entry requirements section of the course page on the college website. Admissions criteria are primarily based on prior qualifications, though for some courses may include a requirement for one or more of the following:

- a) a skills assessment
- b) a supporting portfolio of work
- c) a copy of the applicant's latest school report, college report or employer report/reference

Please see Appendix 1 for details of when and how a) to c) are assessed

5.8 Applicants who have had a break in education, or do not hold qualifications in English and maths may need to undertake assessment in these areas.

5.9 Some courses do not have course entry criteria. Where entry criteria are not required for a course this will be made clear on the relevant website page.

Course entry requirements are reviewed annually and published on the College website within the course information. [Courses - City of Bristol College](#)

6. Recognition of Prior Learning; APL and Exceptional Entry

The APL Policy may be used to recognise equivalency for whole qualifications or for elements, in line with awarding body requirements.

6.1 Applicants who have completed a full or part qualification (or similar qualification) elsewhere, may be able to enter with 'advanced standing'. For example, enter directly into the second year of a two-year programme. Any admission of this type must satisfy the relevant awarding body requirements and is covered by the Assessment Policy. [Assessment-Policy.pdf \(cityofbristol.ac.uk\)](#)

6.2 Applicants who do not hold formal qualifications but have relevant and equivalent experience may be able to gain entry to a course through Exceptional Entry. This process assesses whether that

experience is equivalent to the formal entry requirements for the course. This process may require the applicant to produce some written work, or demonstrate practical skills.

6.3 Applicants applying via the Exceptional Entry route should make this clear on the application form and discuss this with the tutor at course information meeting or other admissions event. They will review the request and evidence provided in line with the published guideline and any awarding body regulations. The relevant Head of Department will make a professional judgement on course admission based on evidence the applicant is able to provide and/or a bespoke entry assessment.

7. Successful and Unsuccessful Applications

7.1. Applicants that meet the General Entry Requirements and any specific courses entry requirement will be admitted to the course they apply for provided there is an available place. If there is no place available the College will always look to offer an equivalent alternative where possible.

7.2. In some cases, the predicted grades or actual qualifications held by an applicant or other course specific requirements will not satisfy the course entry requirements and the applicant cannot be admitted to the course. In these cases, the City of Bristol College will endeavour to offer an alternative course.

7.3. As noted in section 5.4 above, there are some cases where City of Bristol College is unable to meet the needs of an individual student who has additional needs, in this case the City of Bristol College will offer guidance to attempt to support the applicant to find an alternative placement for the applicant.

7.4. As noted in section 5.5 above, there may be some applicants who have unspent criminal convictions, which lead to a risk assessment being undertaken by City of Bristol College. Should that risk assessment determine that the risk is too high to admit the applicant, they will be offered guidance to attempt to support the applicant to find an alternative placement.

7.5 There may be cases where it is determined through the Fitness to Study Policy that the applicant is not 'fit to study', which means that the applicant's physical and /or mental health, taking into account such adjustments as City of Bristol College may reasonably agree to make, enables the applicant, if enrolled, to participate fully and successfully in their chosen course without significant adverse effect on their health, safety, and wellbeing and or other students or staff. In such cases the applicant will be offered advice and guidance to explore alternative options, which could include re-applying at a later date, when the health condition has abated.

7.6 Applicants who have previously been excluded may not be admitted to the College. City of Bristol College will risk assess applicants who have previously been excluded to identify if the re-enrolment conditions identified at the point of exclusion have been met.

7.7 Applicants (early college, further education, higher education, SEN, adults or apprentices) may be refused admission but any such decision must be approved by the relevant Head of Department. The reason for refusing admission will be made clear to the applicant, who may appeal to the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, in writing against any such decision.

8. Appeals and Complaints

8.1. Any admission appeals should be sent in writing to the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality, to admissionsappeals@cityofbristol.ac.uk within 5 working days from the decision being communicated.

8.2. Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

- There is new evidence that was not earlier considered and could have been expected to have materially affected the decision
- The College did not adhere to its own policies and procedures when arriving at the original decision

Appeals will be considered by a panel Chaired by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality or a nominated Senior Manager, whose decision is final. The investigation may work in conjunction with relevant other College staff and will be undertaken through a review of documentation, or by a formal hearing, as appropriate.

The decision to be communicated as soon as reasonably practical and no later than 20 college working days of the appeal being received.

Complaints about the admissions process can be found within the College's [Complaints Policy](#).

9. Disclosure and Barring Service / Fitness to Practice or Fitness to Study Checks

Some courses will require applicants to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and/or Fitness to Practice/Study check, either:

- to enable mandatory work placement associated with the course; or
- to meet the requirements of a HE Institution or a relevant professional body if accreditation is required.

Where these checks are required, City of Bristol College will ensure that it has appropriate procedures in place in order to comply while ensuring that confidentiality is maintained. Adverse disclosures made in the checking process do not necessarily lead to non-admission but failure to comply with the checking procedure may result in exclusion from the course.

10. Residency Status

All students who declare that they haven't been resident in the UK or EEA during the past three years will need to have their residency formally assessed by trained Student Services advisors. Home students will be processed in accordance with their mode of study, however, the college is currently unable to accept International applications requiring a Tier 4 licence to study.

11. False and Misleading Information

City of Bristol College will refuse admission / withdraw an offer if an applicant submits false or misleading information that was instrumental in securing an offer of a place. Following any such incident, City of Bristol College will take a view, on a case by case basis, whether the discovery of misleading information warrants a referral to an external authority. Should this be the case, any referrals will be carried out in accordance with relevant policies and protocols regarding information sharing.

12. Potential Risks

There may be prospective students who present a potential risk to the College's duty of care to its students and staff. All students are asked if they have any unspent criminal convictions during enrolment, at this point they are not requested to disclose the details of the conviction. The College system prompts for contact to be made by the Safeguarding team prior to the student starting, a risk assessment on whether the student can continue their studies at the college is carried out. Guidance is available on a restricted basis and Student Services will advise the applicant on the procedure.

13. Equality and Diversity

City of Bristol College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all students and potential students and welcomes applications from all regardless of age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, unrelated criminal convictions and other irrelevant criteria. See our [EDI Policy](#).

14. Additional Learning Support

City of Bristol College welcomes students with additional needs and will encourage students to disclose any learning difficulty, disability or health condition that impacts on learning, at the application stage. Applicants with Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will be provided will be invited for a support interview and assessment to establish the learner's support requirements.

14.1 Additional support funding is available but the allocation to the College is stipulated by a range of external factors which require consideration before admission is made. If an application is made by a potential student with high support requirements, advice should be sought from Additional Learner Services (ALS) before committing the college.

14.2 Applicants will need to meet the entry requirements for courses as set out by the City of Bristol College, but will not be refused access to opportunities because they have SEN. However, if following a support interview, it is determined that the City of Bristol College is unable to provide the required support to meet SEN the City of Bristol College will notify the applicant of this position in accordance with its [published procedure re SEND – [COBC-doc-template-portrait.docx \(cityofbristol.ac.uk\)](#)

14.3 All students will be offered tutor-led support, adapted equipment, specialist software, a risk assessment and PEEP as needed and so are encouraged to make the College aware of their support needs prior to enrolment.

14.4 If the City of Bristol College is unaware of applicant's needs at the point of enrolment it may be unable to make reasonable adjustments at a later stage and therefore reserves the right to withdraw the student under these exceptional circumstances.

15. Funding

15.1 Course Funding

Constraints are placed on the College by its funding bodies. Where an applicant does not meet the relevant funding criteria or where appropriate funding is not available, Student Services will provide information and advice on the fees chargeable. In certain circumstances it is possible that the College may have to refuse admission where no funding is available and the student is unable to fund themselves.

15.2 Fees

There is a <https://www.cityofbristol.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Fees-Policy-2023-24.pdf> for Further Education Students and Higher Education Students approved by the Corporation and supplemented by relevant procedures, which are updated periodically.

Fees are to be paid in full at the point of enrolment, the exceptions to this rule are:

students who meet the requirements to pay a deposit at enrolment followed by monthly direct debits, or

prior agreement that students can enrol provisionally where they are applying for a loan or need to supply evidence that does not fall in the allotted timeframe.

15.3 Support Funding

Funding to support students is available from a range of support funds. Student Services will explain eligibility criteria and application process with potential students during their admission process. However, potential students should be aware that these funds are limited and are not automatically available. Offers may therefore be conditional upon such funding being available. [See Bursary Policy.](#)

16. Systems

All information relating to admissions will be recorded on a college system and processed in line with the College's [Data Protection Policies.](#)

17. Monitoring

17.1 As above, regular monitoring of ProSolution provides data relating to the admission process with additional information provided after college open days, course information meeting events and progression activities. Additional feedback is also gathered directly from students in regards to their experience, captured once at time of enrolment and then again during the Student Surveys.

17.2 The college has successfully retained the matrix standard which reviews the careers education provision across the college. Detail from this informs annual planning and appraisal of the Student Experience and Careers team

A review of the Gatsby benchmarks is carried out termly using the Compass Assessment tool to review our performance in careers advice, this highlights key areas in which we need to implement changes to see improvements. This feeds into our Gatsby benchmark development plan, in which we collaborate with the different departments within City of Bristol College.

17.3 Destinations of students on a full-time study programme are gathered annually to support the admissions process for the following year and highlighting areas for development in terms of academic progression routes and employment-based programmes.

18. Linked policies / procedures and consideration of regulatory / legislation guidance

Linked Policies/Procedures

Privacy notices (students, general public and employers)
Safeguarding policy

Careers and progression strategy
Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study Policy
Fitness to Study/Practice Policy
Fees Policy

Regulatory / Legislation Guidance

16-19 education funding guidance, issued by ESFA, Feb 2023

UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law, issued by Competition & Markets Authority (CMA), May 2023

The UK quality code for higher education, issued by QAA, May 2023

Guidance on Equality Act 2010, issued by DfE, March 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, July 2023

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Lead officer	Admissions Manager – Student Services
Senior Management Responsible	Director Marketing Sales & Student Services