

Admissions Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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

2.1 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:

2.1.1 The applicant has access to clear and concise information about the course.

2.1.2 The applicant has the appropriate academic ability and aptitude for the selected course.

2.1.3 The needs of applicants with disabilities and/or learning difficulties are identified so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

2.1.4 The applicant fully understands the nature and content of the course.

2.1.5 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.

2.1.6 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.

2.2 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 in the college's HE Admissions Policy. All data collected will be used in accordance with the college's Data Protection Policy.

3. Procedures

3.1 Application Process

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 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.

3.1.3 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.

3.1.4 Where there are criteria for entry to a course, these 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.

3.1.5 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.

3.1.6 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.

3.1.7 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.

3.1.8 If an applicant has access needs, these will usually be discussed with the prospective student at a 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 for applicants to understand the issues clearly.

3.2 Offer Acceptance by the Student

3.2.1 Unless otherwise stated, all offers are conditional of the applicant meeting all course entry requirements including entry requirements and other course specific criteria.

3.2.2 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.

3.2.3 Applications received after the 1 July will require a faster acceptance. Individual applicants will be advised of the timeframe in their offer letter. Applications after 1 July are considered late applicants and some courses may have reached capacity.

3.3 Enrolment

3.3.1 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.

3.3.2 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 for courses that require student payment .

3.3.3 Applicants will be sent an appointment to attend the college to enrol on their offered course, if the applicant is unable to make this appoint they must let the college know at least 24 hours before the appointment so another appointment can be arranged.

3.3.4 Please note that if an applicant is not able to make the original enrolment appointment, the course may become full and the applicant may be placed on a waiting list or be offered a suitable alternative. If the college is not made aware that the applicant is not able to make the enrolment appointment, the college reserves the right to offer this place to another applicant.

3.4 All appointments must be rearranged via the Admissions Team
Admissions@Cityofbristol.ac.uk

4. Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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 to seek any further information to inform their application.

4.4 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

5.1 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

5.2 Each applicant must provide (or have provided on their behalf) admissions information which is accurate and complete at the time of enrolment and in person.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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 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 Fitness to Study Policy

5.6 Proof of qualifications need to be presented at the time of enrolment.

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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, this may include a requirement for one or more of the following:

5.7.1 A skills assessment

5.7.2 A supporting portfolio of work

5.7.3 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.

6. Recognition of Prior Learning; APL and Exceptional Entry

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

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 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.

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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, 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 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. Please see our Fitness to Study Policy.

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 Deputy Principal in writing against any such decision.

7.8 There is an expected level of positive and professional behaviour expected by City of Bristol College. Applicants who exhibit behaviours and communications that are not deemed acceptable and respectful by the college may be refused admission to college.

7.9 The college reserves the right to withdraw a student's application or offer to study for misconduct. This relates to any inappropriate behaviour by an applicant or anyone accompanying them, at any stage of the admissions process.

8. Appeals and Complaints

8.1. Any admission appeals should be sent in writing to the Director of Student Experience, Quality & Safeguarding, via the Admissions Appeals Team within 5 working days from the decision being communicated.

Appeals should be made directly to: admissionsappeals@cityofbristol.ac.uk

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

8.2.1 There is new evidence that was not earlier considered and could have been expected to have materially affected the decision.

8.2.2 The college did not adhere to its own policies and procedures when arriving at the original decision.

8.3 Appeals will be considered by a panel Chaired by the Deputy Principal 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.

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

8.5 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

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

9.1.1 To enable mandatory work placement associated with the course; or

9.1.2 To meet the requirements of a HE Institution or a relevant professional body if accreditation is required.

9.2 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

10.1 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. International Applicants

11.1 Applications from international students who require sponsoring are considered on individual merits through an interview and assessment process. Qualifications are assessed by the admissions and/or curriculum teams using guidance taken from ECCTIS ([ECCTIS Homepage](#)). Applicants must meet the academic progression requirements of the Student Sponsor Guidance. In line with the

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Sponsorship, for visa purposes, of international Students Policy, other considerations are required to assess whether an application is accepted.

11.2 The Admissions Team is responsible for compliance with the UK Home Office in the form of offer and visa letters to applicants, logging of relevant data about all new applicants and doing all in its power to ensure that anyone admitted to a programme is a genuine student.

11.3 Applicants whose first language is not English must have a sufficient command of the English language to complete their studies satisfactorily and have completed a Secure English Language Test (SELT) that has been assessed as meeting the UK Home Office requirements equivalent to a minimum level B1 with at least grade four in all four components. This is a minimum requirement and specific courses may require higher levels of English language attainment.

11.4 International applicants who require a Student Route visa to study in the United Kingdom will be advised of any UKVI licence stipulations.

12. False and Misleading Information

12.1 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.

12.2 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.

13. Potential Risks

13.1 There may be an applicant who presents 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.

13.2 The college system prompts for contact to be made by the Safeguarding Team where any potential safeguarding risk is identified prior to the applicant starting, a risk assessment on whether the applicant can enrol is carried out.

13.3 If an applicant poses a safeguarding risk to other students, staff or stakeholders of the college, they may be refused admission to the college.

14. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

14.1 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 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

15. Additional Learning Support

15.1 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.

15.2 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.

15.3 Applicants will need to meet the entry requirements for courses as set out by City of Bristol College, but will not be refused access to opportunities because they have SEND. However, if following a support interview, it is determined that City of Bristol College is unable to provide the required support to meet SEND, City of Bristol College will notify the applicant of this position in accordance with its published procedure re SEND.

15.4 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.

15.5 If 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.

16. Funding

16.1 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.

16.2 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.

16.3 Fees

There is a college Fees Policy for Further Education students and a Fees Policy for 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.

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16.4 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.

17. Systems

17.1 All information relating to admissions will be recorded on a college system and processed in line with the college's Data Protection & GDPR Policy

18. Monitoring

18.1 As above, regular monitoring of ProSolution provides data relating to the admission process with additional information provided after college Open Events, 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.

18.2 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.

18.3 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.

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

Linked Policies/Procedures

- Data Protection Policy
- High-Needs Admissions Process
- 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
- Higher Education Fees Policy
- Further Education Fees Policy
- Sponsorship, for visa purposes, of International Students 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, September 2024

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Lead officer	Director of Marketing Sales & Student Services
Senior Management Responsible	Chief Operating Officer