

# 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 except for its Higher Education courses which are set out in the college's HE Admissions Policy, and its Apprenticeship provision. 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. The Apprenticeship Team will oversee admission procedures for apprentices. Foundation Learning and Skills and the 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 ENIC website to recognise and compare international qualifications and skills, this tool provides a UK equivalent level for the 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, Where Next events, interviews, and assessments for applicants on specified courses form a mandatory part of the admissions process. Where required, these events are hosted 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 event 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 the minimum enrolment total is not achieved, there is a significant reduction in attendance, or due to changes beyond our control.
- 3.1.8. If an applicant is identified as needing support with their studies, these will usually be discussed with the prospective student and the Additional Learning Support Team 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 during this meeting in order for applicants to understand the issues clearly.

#### 3.2. Admissions for Students with an EHCP

- 3.2.1. The College is committed to ensuring fair and inclusive access for students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), in accordance with the Children and

Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015). This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect any further amendments arising from the 2026 SEND reforms.

- 3.2.2. The College will not unlawfully discriminate against applicants on the basis of SEND and will consider all applicants with an EHCP through a fair and transparent process.
- 3.2.3. Admission of students with an EHCP is determined in partnership with the Local Authority (LA), which retains the statutory duty to name the placement in Section I of the EHCP.
- 3.2.4. The College will engage constructively with consultation requests from Local Authorities and respond within statutory timescales (usually 15 calendar days).
- 3.2.5. On receipt of a consultation request from the Local Authority, the College will review the student's EHCP, including identified needs, outcomes, and provision required.
- 3.2.6. The college will assess whether we can meet the student's needs, including:
  - The suitability of the curriculum offer
  - Availability of appropriate support, staffing, and resources
  - Health, safety, and safeguarding considerations
  - Compatibility with the efficient education of others
- 3.2.7 Where appropriate, the college will seek further information or clarification from the Local Authority or feeder school. We may also offer transition discussions, visits, or assessments to inform decision-making.
- 3.2.8 The College may agree to be named in the EHCP where:
  - The provision set out in the plan can reasonably be delivered from within the College's resources and support frameworks; and
  - The placement is compatible with the efficient education of others and the efficient use of resources.
- 3.2.9 The College may, in line with the SEND Code of Practice, make representations to the Local Authority if:
  - It considers it cannot meet the student's needs as specified; or
  - Admission would be incompatible with the efficient education of others and there are no reasonable steps that could mitigate this.
- 3.2.10 All decisions will be evidence-based and clearly communicated to the Local Authority.

### 3.3 Offer Acceptance by the Student

- 3.3.1 Unless otherwise stated, all offers are conditional of the applicant meeting all course entry requirements and other course specific criteria.
- 3.3.2 The applicant must attend a Where Next event/interview event in order to receive an offer. If an applicant does not attend two events that they have been invited to and they make no contact with the college, their application will be withdrawn. Any late applications will be considered however may not be guaranteed a place on a particular course.
- 3.2.3 Applications after 1 July are considered late applicants and some courses may have reached capacity.

### 3.4 Enrolment

- 3.4.1 During enrolment, the college ensures students' understanding of the college's terms and conditions by including these on the enrolment paperwork that the student signs.
- 3.4.2 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.
- 3.4.3 Applicants who have been offered a place on a course will receive an enrolment appointment which they must attend. If an applicant is unable to make this appointment, they must inform the college at least 24 hours beforehand so another appointment can be arranged.
- 3.4.4 Failure to attend a scheduled enrolment appointment, particularly without prior notice, may result in the loss of the applicant's place. Due to limited course capacity, the College reserves the right to offer the place to another applicant. Where an appointment is missed, the course may reach full capacity, and the applicant may instead be placed on a waiting list or offered a suitable alternative.
- 3.4.5 All appointments must be rearranged via the Admissions Team [admissions.team@cityofbristol.ac.uk](mailto:admissions.team@cityofbristol.ac.uk).

## 4 Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)

- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 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.

- 5.2 Each applicant must provide (or have provided on their behalf) admissions information which is accurate and complete at the time of enrolment.
- 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 disclose any unspent criminal convictions. In limited and proportionate circumstances, the College may request additional information relating to ongoing criminal investigations, arrests, pending charges, or previous custodial sentences where necessary for safeguarding purposes or where relevant to the proposed programme of study.
- 5.6 Where such information is disclosed, the College will undertake a risk assessment. If, in the College's reasonable opinion, the applicant's circumstances present a risk to the safety or wellbeing of staff or students, or otherwise compromise the College's duty of care, and that risk cannot be appropriately managed, the College reserves the right to refuse admission or impose restrictions. If the College decides to offer the applicant a place and a conviction occurs during the course of their study, it is the student's responsibility to share this information with us immediately to allow us to assess any new risk.
- 5.7 Proof of qualifications need to be presented at the time of enrolment.
- 5.8 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:
- A skills assessment.
  - A supporting portfolio of work.
  - A copy of the applicant's latest school report, college report or employer report/reference.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 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 (RPL) and Exceptional Entry

- 6.1 The RPL 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 a Where Next event or another admissions event. They will review the request and evidence provided in line with the published guidelines 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, City of Bristol College will endeavour to offer an alternative course.
- 7.3 As noted 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 above, there may be some applicants who have unspent criminal convictions, ongoing criminal investigations, arrests, pending charges, or previous custodial sentences, 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 reapplying 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 able to be admitted to the college. City of Bristol College will review 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 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 Admissions Appeals within 5 working days from the decision being communicated. Appeals should be made directly to: [admissionsappeals@cityofbristol.ac.uk](mailto: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. However, complaints about admissions appeals will not usually be covered by the Complaints Policy.
- 8.6 Appeals regarding naming of placements on section I of an EHCP:
- 8.6.1 Parents/carers and young people retain the right to appeal decisions regarding naming of placements through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. The College will cooperate fully with Local Authority processes and requests for information relating to appeals.

## **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 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 during the past three years will need to have their residency formally assessed by trained Student Services Officers. 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**

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.

## 12 Potential Risks

- 12.1 The College has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its students and staff. In addition to the requirements set out in section 5.5 regarding the disclosures, there may be circumstances where a safeguarding concern or risk is identified during the application or enrolment stage.
- 12.2 Where a potential safeguarding concern or risk is identified, the College's safeguarding procedures will be followed. This will include a referral to the Safeguarding Team, who may seek further information from the applicant and, where appropriate and proportionate, external agencies. A risk assessment will be undertaken to determine whether the applicant can be admitted safely and what reasonable adjustments, safeguards, or control measures may be required. This is a decision guided by the safeguarding team but ultimately taken by the curriculum leads
- 12.3 All decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis, taking into account the College's values, duty of care and its obligations under safeguarding legislation and guidance. Where, in the College's reasonable judgement, a risk to the safety or wellbeing of students, staff, or others cannot be effectively managed, the College reserves the right to refuse admission.

## 13 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 13.1 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.

## 14 Additional Learning Support

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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 Learning Support (ALS) before committing to the college.
- 14.3 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.

14.4 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.

14.5 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.

## **15 Funding**

15.1 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.

15.2 Adults will only be able to enrol onto one concurrent WECA adult funded vocational, academic or professional short course. For year-long courses there may be an option, where available and applicable, to enrol onto additional English, maths, ESOL or digital skills to support the development of these essential skills.

15.3 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 scheduled direct debits, or
- Prior agreement that students can enrol provisionally where they have evidence that they have applied for a loan

15.4 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.

## **16 Systems**

16.1 All information relating to admissions will be recorded on a college system (ProSolution and related other systems) and processed in line with the college's Data Protection & GDPR Policy

## **17 Monitoring**

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

17.3 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.

17.4 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**

- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notices
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Positive Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study Policy
- Fitness to Study/Practice Policy
- Higher Education Fees Policy
- Further Education Fees Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy
- SEND Policy

### **Regulatory / Legislation Guidance**

- 16-19 education funding guidance, issued by DfE
- 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, 2024
- Guidance on Equality Act 2010, issued by DfE, March 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance

| Version                     |                                                |
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| Lead Officer:               | Director of Marketing Sales & Student Services |
| Senior Manager responsible: | Chief Operating Officer                        |