

Policy: Admissions Policy

Date: June 2019

Approved by: Head of Data Management

1. INTRODUCTION

Gloucestershire College is a career-focussed FE college, providing people with transformational experiences for their future lives, maximising their life chances. We welcome applications from those who are aspirational, irrespective of background, ethnicity or past educational attainment, providing a nurturing and progressive environment that benefits both the economy and community,

The Admissions Policy and associated procedures comply with the relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks and are based on guidance by external bodies which protect consumer law, customer protection and education standards. They include the regulatory frameworks set out by the Office for Students and the Competition and Markets Authority, the core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and general guidance such as Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) good practice.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This Policy outlines the principles and procedures by which prospective students may access full time and part time further education, higher education and apprenticeships at Gloucestershire College.

- 2.1 The Policy is aimed at prospective students, applicants, education advisers and professionals and College staff involved with student recruitment and admissions.
- 2.3 Gloucestershire College works in partnership with a number of higher education institutions and awarding bodies (Pearson, Birmingham City University, University of Gloucestershire and University of the West of England) to deliver higher education courses. The relevant policies and regulations of these institutions will apply to prospective students and will be marketed in line with Consumer Marketing Authority regulations.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND OVERSIGHT

- 3.1 The Principal and Board of Governors have institutional responsibility for the review of Gloucestershire College's Admissions Policy adhering to the Governance policy review cycle, and updating the Policy to ensure its currency for prospective students and stakeholders.
- 3.2 Overall responsibility for Admissions activity lies with the Chief Finance Officer. Operational responsibility is owned by the Head of Data Management, Admissions Manager and the Admissions Team.

- 3.3 The Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality has responsibility for approving and reviewing entry criteria which is informed by performance data and supported by the Head of School for the specific academic area. Head of Schools and relevant Curriculum Leaders will provide specialist advice to support fair and transparent admissions assessment, decision and selection.
- 3.4 Responsibility for the recruitment and admissions decisions for applicants with learning support needs lies with the Director of Student Employment and Experience assisted by the Learning Support and Transition Teams. The Learning Support and Transitions Team will provide specialist advice to support fair and transparent admissions assessment, decision and selection.
- 3.5 Responsibility for the admission of International students is owned by the International Team.
- 3.6 The College will ensure that all staff involved in the admissions process receive appropriate training and development in order to perform their role to required level of compliance with this policy and its associated and procedures.

4. ADMISSIONS POLICY PRINCIPLES

Gloucestershire College aims to provide an outstanding application experience to prospective students, through excellent customer service, timely communications and high quality, accurate information. The College delivers this by:

- 4.1 Ensuring its Admissions procedures align themselves with the relevant strategic plan and values.
- 4.2 Increasing and widening participation in education and training, ensuring steps are taken to engage and support all applicants at each stage of the admissions process.
- 4.3 Ensuring the Admissions Policy and procedures are transparent and accessible and administered in a fair and consistent manner.
- 4.4 The Policy incorporates the College's approach to equal opportunities legislation for students.
- 4.5 Assessing any applicant on individual merit and their potential to contribute and benefit from the proposed programme of study or course. The College will ensure that a relevant and suitable range of course entry criteria and assessment methods are used by the College Teams.
- 4.6 Complying with the College's Data Protection and IT Security policy.
- 4.7 Ensuring a process of continual improvement through an annual quality review cycle.
- 4.8 The Admissions Policy and application procedure are monitored to take into account sectoral best practice and maintaining legislative compliance.
- 4.9 The effective communication of the Admissions Policy across Gloucestershire College resulting in coherent and consistent admissions practice.

5. INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Gloucestershire College is committed to providing high quality information online, in the College prospectus and through promotional materials. The College aims to provide as much information as possible about our provision including course entry requirements, course structure, delivery and assessment which is clear, accessible and accurate at the time of publication and which actively supports and informs course options and decisions.

The College also provides prospective student information online and in additional promotional materials about the application and enrolment process, including information on course costs and financial support available. The College actively engages with applicants during each stage of the application process, periodically confirming and explaining each step in a clear and accurate format.

The College best endeavours the accuracy of published course information by periodically reviewing the College's provision. The College reserves the right to make post-publication changes to sources of information where reasonable and necessary to ensure information is accurate and current.

To support applicants in making their course choices, the College will provide a range of events and information sessions, including open evenings, enabling prospective students to gain information by visiting our campuses, viewing the services and facilities available to them and providing clarity on the process. Each event is communicated to prospective students via our website, promotional materials and the application process.

6. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The College actively recommends that prospective students submit applications through the College website, which gives access to the self-service and application tracking facilities such as the online applicant portal. Alternative methods of application submission can be made, completing an application form and through face to face/telephone enquiry.

6.1 Primary Course Selection

For applicants applying for full time courses, where there are multiple applications, applicants will be required to select a primary course choice. The term "primary course" refers to the course an applicant most wants to study.

Throughout the application process applicants are given opportunities to revise and confirm their primary course choice before an enrolment invitation is approved and sent. Any failure to declare a change to a primary course decision before an enrolment invitation has been sent may result in an applicant having to make a new application.

6.2 Key Application Dates

6.2.1 Full Time Further Education

The College opens its admissions cycle for full time further education courses commencing in September 2020 from 1 October 2019. The College strongly recommends that applicants apply before 31 March

2020 to ensure they have the best opportunity to join their chosen course of study.

Equal consideration will be given to applicants that apply after 31 March where course capacity is available.

6.2.2 Higher Education

The College opens its admissions cycle for Higher Education courses commencing in September 2020 from 6 September 2019. The College strongly recommends that applicants apply before 1 September 2020 to ensure they have the best opportunity to join their chosen course of study.

Equal consideration will be given to applicants that apply after 1 September however applications submitted after this date are subject to the discretion of academic departments.

6.2.3 Part Time Further Education and Apprenticeships

Applications for part time further education and apprenticeships courses are accepted all year around.

Equal consideration will be given to applicants throughout the admissions cycle however we encourage all applicants to submit their applications with as much time as possible before the start date of an applicant's chosen course. All applications submitted within five working days of the course start date are subject to the discretion of academic departments.

7. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Initial Assessment

All applications are assessed against an initial set of criteria to ensure applicants are provided with the appropriate information, advice and guidance (IAG) specific to their application and personal circumstances. This process must take place before any offer is confirmed and will supersede any offers already held by an applicant.

7.1.1 Practical and Technical Knowledge Criteria

Individual courses may require specific practical and technical knowledge that could be attained through direct progression routes to the course. In this instance applicants will be assessed on attained qualifications or the predicted achievement that would demonstrate the practical and technical knowledge to undertake the course.

All relevant qualifications will be considered that do not form part of the College's preferred progression route and will be assessed on an individual basis.

7.1.2 Home Student Status Criteria

All applicants are required to provide information about their background including Nationality, Date of Entry to the UK and passport details. This information is used to determine the appropriate IAG. If the applicant is identified as an International applicant the application will be passed to the International Department for further processing.

7.1.3 Student Conduct Criteria

All applicants are assessed against any existing information available, which could include disciplinary actions. The College reserves the right to refuse entry to any applicant who has breached the Student Agreement and Code of Conduct or has been withdrawn from their programme of study following the College's Student Disciplinary Process. The College also reserves the right to refuse entry to any applicant who jeopardizes the security, safety or reputation and integrity of the College.

7.1.4 Age Criteria

All applicants are required to provide information about their background including their date of birth. This information is used to determine the appropriate IAG. Courses that require a specific age criterion to be met, are in most cases, due to government education funding rules and regulations, as well as the appropriateness to study courses in relation to course material and content. If the applicant is identified as not eligible or suitable for the course they have applied for in relation to age at course date, the College will use all reasonable endeavours to contact, notify and advise of a suitable alternative.

7.2 Course Entry Requirements

The College considers a variety of nationally recognised qualifications and gives equal consideration to academic and vocational qualifications that evidence the potential for an applicant to achieve the qualification. The College will also consider appropriate experience, knowledge, or industry-based qualifications. We will consider prior learning, life experience and/or work experience.

Entry requirements for specific courses are published on the College website, prospectus and associated UCAS web pages. The College also uses the UCAS tariff to inform academic offers and decisions for Higher Education applications. The College will also consider any information provided in a personal statement when applying for Higher Education as this may demonstrate appropriate experience and knowledge.

The College will conduct regular reviews of student performance data to accurately inform the consistency or amendment of entry criteria. All amendments to entry requirements will be considered in relation to key application dates and cycles to ensure applicants have relevant up to date information.

The College reserves the right to assess prior attainment fairly and objectively within the parameters of academic judgment and discretion. Due to the limited number of places on specific programmes, attainment of the entry criteria does not guarantee the applicant access to their course.

Due to the nature of College courses for example Health and Social Care and Early Years Studies, students will be required to apply for a Disclosure and Barring Service check in line with awarding body and industry practice requirements and guidance.

7.3 Interviews

Applicants may be invited to a formal academic interview as part of the course entry criteria.

In these instances, the Admissions Team will schedule an interview on behalf of the applicant with a Head of School or Course Leader from the academic department. Applicants will be clearly and fully informed about the rationale for the interview and all requirements.

The College will use all reasonable endeavours to be flexible in making alternative arrangements to remove barriers and support an applicant to attend an interview. The College may use its discretion to use an alternative assessment.

Non-attendance, without prior warning, may be taken as an indication that an applicant no longer wants to study the course applied for. The College reserves the right to withdraw the application on the basis of failing to meet the course entry criteria.

7.4 Assessments

Applicants may be required to complete a formal assessment as part of the course entry criteria. Assessments can include, but are not limited to, questionnaires, online tests and portfolio evidence.

In these instances, the College will notify the applicant of the assessment criteria and inform the applicant about the requirement for the assessment.

The College will ensure that all assessments as part of course entry criteria are fit for purpose and relevant to the course applied for. Assessment results will be evaluated by an appropriately qualified individual. The College may use its discretion to use an alternative assessment method if extenuating circumstances dictate.

Non-completion, without prior warning may be taken as an indication that an applicant no longer wants to study the course applied for. The College reserves the right to withdraw the application on the basis of failing to meet the course entry requirement.

8. ASSESSMENT DECISIONS AND OFFERS

The College will make a decision which is suitable to both applicant and course entry criteria. All decisions are communicated to applicants and made available through the College's online applicant portal.

If an applicant has made an application via UCAS decisions will be transmitted to UCAS by the Admissions Team. Once a decision has been entered, it is available to be viewed through UCAS track and the College's online applicant portal.

The College aims to make offer decisions within six weeks of an applicant's initial application submission date. Time periods stated, are for guidance only and may be varied by the College.

8.1 Conditional Offers

All conditional offers will be communicated to the applicant and will set out the conditions which an applicant needs to fulfil in order to be admitted onto the chosen programme of study or course.

Applicants may be required at the request of the College to provide satisfactory evidence of qualifications before admission. Failure to provide such evidence to the College's reasonable satisfaction may result in the withdrawal of the offer. If the conditions of the offer are not fulfilled before the date notified in the offer or any other date notified to the applicant, the College reserves the right to withdraw the offer.

The College reserves the right to offer a course on a specific campus dependent on the applicant's postcode where it enables the best opportunity to access learning.

8.2 Unconditional Offers

All unconditional offers will be communicated to the applicant.

Applicants may be required to provide evidence of qualifications, where already declared, before admission. Failure to provide such evidence to the College's reasonable satisfaction may result in the withdrawal of the offer.

8.3 Referrals

Where an application is referred the College will communicate the decision to the applicant. The College does not currently provide automatic feedback on referral decisions. This will be made available to applicants where possible and appropriate on request.

Gloucestershire College is committed to ensuring applicants are supported should an application be referred. This might include liaison with the applicant and to identify a possible suitable alternative course. The College may signpost applicants to the appropriate information, advice and guidance expertise in College or to an external education provider in the community.

9. ACCEPTANCE

As part of the application process Gloucestershire College requires the acceptance of any offers made to an applicant.

Due to the limited number of places on specific programmes, accepting a conditional offer with Gloucestershire College does not guarantee the applicant access to their course.

10. ENROLMENT

Clear and timely information about the enrolment process will be sent to applicants should an applicant been made or accepted an offer.

Enrolment for full time further education will refer to the applicant's primary course choice.

A number of the College's courses are very popular and there may be limited places. In these circumstances priority for enrolment will be assessed in relation to the time of

application and meeting entry criteria. In the case that a course reaches its capacity, the applicant will be offered an alternative available course.

11. INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

Gloucestershire College provides educational opportunities and experiences for students from outside the UK. The College is fully committed to the strict adherence of Home Office Immigration rules and Tier 4 Policy guidance to protect and maintain the College's Tier 4 sponsor license when admitting international students.

11.1 Direct Applications and Third Party Agents

All International applicants are encouraged to apply to the College's Admissions or International Team directly to maximise the potential for an expeditious and informed applicant experience. Gloucestershire College, when determining the best interest of applicants, reserves the right to refer an international applicant to private agents to support an application for admission.

11.2 Responsibility for Determining International Status

Upon the initial assessment of an application, as described in 7.1.2, international status will be based on the information provided in a prospective student's application. The College's Admissions and International Department will use this information and specific guidance from UKCISA to determine the appropriate information, advice and guidance specific to the applicant's circumstances, ensuring a consistent and transparent admissions process for all International applicants.

11.3 International Student Entry Criteria

Applicants whose first language is not English must have a sufficient command of the English language to complete their studies satisfactorily. The College expects applicants to fulfil the required course entry criteria as stated on the relevant College webpage and where necessary meet UKVI English language requirements (SELT) before admission is granted. For Tier 4 students, a minimum International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 4.5 across all skills is required. Gloucestershire College is committed to the equal consideration of all applicants and will consider exceptional circumstances when determining English language requirements. Where it is necessary and prudent, Gloucestershire College will use its discretion to assess English language requirements using appropriate proficiency assessments to ensure that students meet the course requirements.

11.4 UKVI Compliance (CAS Requirement and Procedure)

The College is committed to the compliance of all UKVI regulations and ensures all procedures and systems are reviewed on a periodical basis to establish comprehensive and up-to-date compliance with UK immigration law. Applicants that require entry clearance to enter/remain require a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) before enrolment onto a College course. The International Department will guide and support international applicants through the admissions process, including the completion of a CAS draft, to ensure the required standard of accuracy and validity are maintained ahead of and for CAS submissions.

11.5 International (Overseas) Fee Policy

Any applicant who does not meet the definition of "home student" is liable to pay the College's overseas fees rate. Gloucestershire College's Tuition Fee Policy including overseas criteria and fees procedure is available on the

Gloucestershire College website. The College will provide access to relevant/related policies when requested to do so by an applicant.

12. COURSE CHANGES AND CLOSURES

Due to the period between prospectus and website publication and registration, circumstances may change and therefore it may be necessary to vary the terms or content of the programme or services described in the prospectus or published on our website.

The College will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that changes are kept to a minimum, but if significant change is required to a programme (as described in an offer and/or prospectus and website) the College shall bring this to an applicant's attention as soon as possible and provide clarity on the next possible steps. If an applicant believes that a proposed change will prejudicially affect them, they may withdraw from the programme.

The College will use all reasonable endeavours to deliver all programmes described in the prospectus and website. However, if there is insufficient student recruitment to make the course viable, the College may be forced to cancel and close the course.

If an applicant has received an offer for a course described in the prospectus or on the website that is closed prior to enrolment, the College will notify the applicant as soon as possible and will use reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable replacement programme. If an applicant is unhappy with the suggested replacement programme, they may withdraw their application to the course.

For Higher Education applicants the College will work with UCAS to amend or release any course choices made for a course that is changed or closed.

13. DISABILITY AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Applicants are encouraged to declare a learning difficulty or disability on initial application to ensure an appropriate referral can be made to support them with the application process and transition to their programme of study or course. On receiving disclosure of any learning difficulties or disabilities, an applicant may be contacted by the Learning Support Team.

Recruitment and Admissions decisions for applicants with learning support needs will be undertaken by the Learning Support Team. The College will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate applicants with support needs in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. However, if the College is unable to meet these additional needs or can only do so by compromising the learning experience of the student in question, or other students, the College will inform the applicant as soon as the situation becomes apparent.

For any prospective student with an Education Health Care Plan a consult process should take place prior to any offer. The EHCP Consult process is a legal process between the Local Authority and education providers to determine if the provider can meet an individual's educational needs. This process must take place for any prospective college offer where the applicant has an EHCP. The result of the consult will be communicated to the Local Authority who are responsible for communicating to the decision to the applicant. Where it is felt the College cannot meet the needs of a

student, this decision will supersede any offer of placement through the College application process.

If an individual's circumstances change or an EHCP is updated the SEND Service Manager will reconsider an EHCP consult.

14. PLAGIARISM AND FRAUDULENT APPLICATIONS

The College expects applicants to be aware of their individual responsibilities in support of the effective application and admissions process. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all of the information provided to the College is valid and accurate. If it is discovered that an application contains material inaccuracies or fraudulent information, or that significant information has been omitted, the College may withdraw or amend the application.

Gloucestershire College reserves the right to withdraw or reject any application based on the significant evidence that information provided by a prospective student is fraudulent or plagiarised. The application process may be put on hold whilst the alleged fraud and/or plagiarism is investigated. Further evidence and information may be requested as part of the investigation. Failure or refusal to provide requested information will result in the application being withdrawn or rejected.

Should a prospective student enrol on a course and it is found at a later stage that the application was fraudulent/plagiarised the College reserves the right to terminate a student's enrolment.

15. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Gloucestershire College understands that there are times when circumstances occur, often unexpectedly, that can affect a prospective student's studies and exams. This could include illness or bereavement or perhaps adverse family circumstances. Any decision to offer a place on the programme if you do not meet the grades would be at the discretion of the Admissions Team and relevant academic department. The College strongly recommends that applicants notify the College of any such circumstance so that an application can be given the fullest consideration.

If an applicant believes there are circumstances the College needs to be aware of, please contact the Admissions Manager to submit a statement that explains fully the extenuating circumstances. The Admissions Manager will endeavour to communicate the outcome to you within 15 working days of your submission date. All information provided is treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be progressed with sensitivity and discretion.

Submitting extenuating circumstances does not guarantee that the College will accept if you do not meet the conditions of your offer. We cannot say in advance whether an application is likely to be successful or not on consideration of extenuating circumstances. Any application that does not meet our published offer level is submitted at the applicant's own risk.

Should an applicant be unable to complete this process independently, a school or relative can be asked to submit a statement on the applicant's behalf.

Time periods stated above are for guidance and may be varied by the College.

16. RIGHT TO APPEAL

Prospective students have the right to appeal to the Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality against an application withdrawal or rejection decision/recommendation if they can provide evidence that there are mitigating circumstances not previously raised.

A student must send a notice of appeal by email or letter to the Admissions Manager and give the reasons for the appeal, along with any further evidence which should be included and is not limited to character/employment references.

The Admissions Manager will acknowledge and consider the appeal should it be deemed necessary. The Admissions Manager will endeavour to communicate the outcome of your appeal to you within 15 working days of your appeal submission date. You may be required to attend a formal meeting with the relevant academic and support specialists and the Admissions Manager. All information provided is treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be progressed with sensitivity and discretion.

Applicants who consider the appeal decision unfair and wish to make a formal complaint can do so in accordance with Gloucestershire College's Talkback Policy.

Time periods stated above are for guidance and may be varied by the College.

17. FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

Gloucestershire College aims to provide a high quality service to all students, employers, partner organisations, members of the public and employees.

To ensure continuous improvement, feedback on the services the College provides is welcomed and this may from time to time include dissatisfaction with aspects of customer service. Any customer or stakeholder feedback received will be recorded and considered during annual College reviews of the Admissions process.

Applicants wishing to submit feedback, compliments or complaints can do so in accordance with Gloucestershire College's Talkback Policy and process.

Gloucestershire College's Talkback Policy, including timeframes involved with the complaints procedure, is available on the Gloucestershire College website. The College will provide access to relevant/related policies should an applicant so request.

18. USEFUL CONTACTS

Gloucestershire College Admissions Team

The Admissions Team endeavour to respond to any enquiries received by phone, email, in person or by letter within three working days of receipt.

Cheltenham Campus Postal Address:
Gloucestershire College
Princess Elizabeth Way
Cheltenham
GL51 7SJ

Contact Telephone:
0345 155 2020

Contact Email:
applications@gloscol.ac.uk

Gloucestershire College Student Services Team

Our Student Services Team is open between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Cheltenham Campus Postal

Address:

Gloucestershire College
Princess Elizabeth Way
Cheltenham
GL51 7SJ

Contact Telephone:

0345 155 2020

Contact Email:

info@gloscol.ac.uk

Gloucester Campus Postal

Address:

Gloucestershire College
Llanthony Road
Gloucester
GL2 5JQ

Contact Telephone:

0345 155 2020

Contact Email:

info@gloscol.ac.uk

Forest of Dean Campus Postal

Address:

Gloucestershire College
Northern United Way
Cinderford
GL14 3FF

Contact Telephone:

0345 155 2020

Contact Email:

info@gloscol.ac.uk

Related Policies and Procedures

- Gloucestershire College Strategic Plan 2017-2022
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Talkback Guidance and Policy (Compliments and Complaints)
- HE Student Protection Policy
- HE Terms and Conditions
- Tuition Fee Policy
- Data Protection and Information Security Policy
- Student Agreement and Code of Conduct
- Student Disciplinary Policy

Approved by: N Pratt
Date of next Board review: June 2020
Issued: June 2019