

# Further Education and Apprenticeship Admissions Policy

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## 1. Scope and purpose

Wiltshire College and University Centre is committed to providing a transparent, fair and inclusive FE admissions process which meets the needs of the applicant. Wiltshire College aims to encourage individuals to realise their full potential, support lifelong learning and help students, the community and business to prosper. The purpose of this policy is to set out the process of admission to the College for all applicants and details what students can expect from Wiltshire College and University Centre.

### 1.1 Policy Statement

Students are at the heart of all that we do. The College aims to offer information, advice and guidance (IAG) at key points of the initial student journey. The college will also:

- Work with applicants to reduce or remove initial barriers to learning
- Provide clear expectations of the college/applicant partnership during the admissions process
- Clarify exceptions to the admissions process
- Identify the process for determining course entry requirements
- Set out the role of the Fair Access Panel

### 1.2 Scope

The policy is applicable to all applicants wishing to engage in programmes of study within Wiltshire College and includes Apprenticeships, students on distance learning programmes and classroom-based students.

## 2. Accountability

Everyone has a responsibility to actively support this policy by ensuring that the policy is known, understood and implemented across all areas of delivery.

### 2.1 Applicants

- To follow the admissions process as explained by the Marketing and Admissions team and set out in the college prospectuses and on the website. To meet college expectations such as attending interview dates and enrolment events and providing appropriate ID evidence to support their enrolment.

### 2.2 Admissions Team

- To set out admissions processes for all learners through marketing materials such as the college prospectuses, website and other relevant materials
- To ensure all staff involved in the admissions process are aware and are working to current procedures
- To provide training to staff involved in the admissions process and act as a central point of contact for all queries
- To monitor the quality of IAG provided by staff offering admissions interviews, and ensuring we work to agreed service standards concerning timeliness of interviews and offers
- To ensure offers made are appropriate and meet college entry requirements

- To ensure residential placements are suitable and referrals are made to the Safeguarding Group where appropriate.
- To ensure appropriate referrals are made to the Fair Access Panel
- To ensure appropriate referrals are made to other teams such as Inclusion and Support, Careers Guidance (CG), and Safeguarding and Tutorial (ST) to remove barriers to learning
- To lead applicants through the admissions process until they are enrolled and are active students at the college

### **2.3 Course and curriculum representatives**

- To provide accurate and up to date information to the Admissions, Careers and Marketing Teams enabling them to give accurate IAG to prospective students
- To offer impartial information to applicants during admissions interviews
- To know when to refer and to make appropriate referrals to other college teams such as Inclusion and Support, CG, and ST to remove barriers to learning

### **2.4 Residential Accommodation**

- To provide accurate up to date information on the admissions process for prospective residents.
- To refer students for additional support to remove barriers to living in residential accommodation.
- To triage referrals via the Safeguarding Group to ensure the safety of all residents on campus.
- Work with the curriculum teams, school links and other supporting agencies to collate relevant health and safety information.
- To provide transition support to residents to develop independent living skills.

### **2.5 Marketing**

- Work with curriculum teams to collate up to date and relevant information about courses available
- Agree and clearly set out college and course entry requirements, working with Heads of Faculty and Admissions team to review these regularly
- Provide accessible information to help prospective students make informed and objective choices

### **2.6 Heads of Faculty**

- To work with Marketing and Admissions to ensure the most up to date information is provided about courses available including entry requirements
- Work to a process that allows the formal and measured review of course entry requirement at appropriate times during the college year.

### **2.7 Senior Leadership Team and Board of Governors**

- To support the development of the Admissions Policy
- To seek to include SLT representation on College Committees related to admissions, such as P&Q and CMG meetings

## **2.8 Safeguarding and Tutorial and Career Guidance staff**

- To receive referrals from the Admissions Team and interviewing staff and respond appropriately providing impartial IAG to prospective students
- To endeavor to work with other college teams and/or outside agencies to remove potential barriers to learning.

## **2.9 Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

- Will ensure that both informal and formal complaints, appeals and compliments are logged and responded to, in accordance with the Complaints and Compliments Procedure.

# **3. Process and Procedure**

## **3.1 Working with Applicants to reduce barriers to learning**

- The college will engage with the Local Authority EHCP consultation process as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) and will provide information to the Local Authority as to the college's ability to meet the educational support needs of the young person. A positive confirmation of this will not necessarily mean acceptance to the vocational programme of study applied for, and applicants will still be required to follow the application and interview process set out in this policy.
- Where admittance of a student with an EHCP will require additional funding from the Local Authority (to ensure all needs can be met), it may be necessary for the college to issue a conditional offer of a place until such time as the Local Authority has confirmed that funding is approved.
- Where a student applies to the college and receives an offer of a place without disclosing their EHCP or learning needs, it may subsequently be necessary for the college to review any offer issued to ensure its ability to meet the statutory duty as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice.
- Students with EHCPs should also be referred to the Inclusion and Support Department.
- Referrals are made to the Learning Skills Development Service, Safeguarding and Tutorial and Careers Guidance by all teams, where appropriate, to reduce or remove barriers to learning. The Inclusion and Support team works with schools and agencies to establish potential barriers and work with students and their families to suggest and implement support packages.

## **3.2 Clarify exceptions to the admissions process**

- Although college and course requirements are set and communicated to all applicants, certain exceptions may apply. These are at the discretion of the Head of Faculty and may include reasons such as interrupted schooling, portfolio instead of grades on entry, medical difficulties or home schooling. The final decision is made by the Head of Faculty and may include conditions of enrolment.
- Applications from students under the age of 16 on 31<sup>st</sup> August prior to their course start date should be made by their school or current education provider.

- The College has the right to refuse admission to a course, where the applicant does not meet the criteria set out in the relevant funding guidance.
- The College has the right to refuse admission to apprenticeship training where the student does not meet entry requirements of the programme or where their current employment does not cover the scope of the apprenticeship.

### **3.3 Identify the process for determining course entry requirements**

- SLT agree and set the college entry requirements. Admissions will confirm interview requirements with each department which may include assessments, auditions or portfolios.
- The relevant Vice Principal is responsible for ensuring consistency of entry requirements across departments and will respond to requests for changes to entry requirements.
- Deadlines for making changes must be in line with Marketing requirements to meet deadlines for prospectus production and student recruitment. Entry requirements cannot be changed once recruitment for the next academic year has started.

### **3.4 Interview non-attendance**

- The college reserves the right to withdraw any applicant who does not attend their College interview and does not contact the College, The College will endeavour (wherever appropriate) to contact the applicant either directly or via their school or college to ascertain the reasons for their non-attendance and will offer an alternative date.

### **3.5 Initial Assessment**

- Any information from initial assessments will be used to determine the appropriate level of study and used as a diagnostic for assessing potential learning support needs for students to the curriculum teams, Admissions and Inclusion and Support to help them with their studies. Reasonable adjustments to the initial assessment process may be made for candidates with disabilities

### **3.6 Provide clear expectations of the college / student partnership during the induction process**

- All students are inducted into college before taught lessons start. During induction the college expectations should be outlined along with what the college commits to offering. We do this using the Student Agreement.

### **3.7 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

- The College welcomes applications from applicants irrespective of their age, disability, family responsibility, marital status, race, ethnicity, nationality, faith, gender or sexual orientation, in line with the College's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

### **3.8 The role of the Fair Access Panel**

- The Fair Access Panel will consist of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Inclusion and Support, Vice Principals and, where appropriate the relevant Head of Faculty. The aim of the panel is to ensure the right support is being offered for

students currently on programme. The panel will also discuss and agree the most appropriate progression for students who have experienced barriers to learning or who have not met college expectations in a previous year of study at the college.

- Other potential support needs and barriers to learning will be identified during the screening process that Admissions carry out. These will be subject to appropriate referrals such as Safeguarding and Tutorial, Inclusion and Support and Careers Guidance.
- Where new applicants are declined and wish to appeal this decision, they can ask for their case to be referred to the Panel who will look collectively at all relevant information and ensure the decision is fair and appropriate. The college reserves the right not to accept a student in College but will work with them to refer to more suitable provision, as appropriate

### **3.9 Course Closure**

- Where a course is under-subscribed or there is a significant change to government funding which creates non-viability, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course (including after an offer has been made or accepted). In such cases, applicants will be offered advice and guidance on the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other suitable alternative education providers wherever possible.

## **4. Criminal Convictions**

### **4.1 Criminal Convictions and DBS Check**

- Applicants are required to declare criminal convictions within the application process, prior to starting their course. A course and/or residential accommodation offer may be refused for applicants with certain criminal convictions so as to safeguard the whole student community. All applicants who declare an unspent criminal conviction are required to meet with the safeguarding team prior to curriculum interview.
- It is our policy that all those who apply to study with the College are required to disclose any unspent criminal convictions on the Criminal Record Disclosure Form (CRDF). (Annex A) Failure to disclose, or subsequent discovery of a conviction, will be treated seriously and may result in a student being withdrawn from their course.
- The College aims to ensure that all applicants who make a disclosure of a criminal record, have access to a fair and confidential admissions process, while preserving the College's duty of care to the entire student and staff community.
- The College recognises that access to education and training is one key element in the effort to assist those with a criminal record not to reoffend and to move on in life.
- Having a criminal record will not prevent an applicant from being considered by the College, nor will the information disclosed necessarily prevent a person from studying on the course of their choice. However, depending on the course, there may be occasions whereby a conviction may preclude an applicant from

enrolling on that course. In such cases, the College will discuss this with the applicant and will endeavour to offer appropriate alternatives.

- The information disclosed on a criminal conviction is 'sensitive personal data' under the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018. The College will ensure that all such information is processed, stored and protected in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy, the FE Retention and Disposal Schedule and the College Privacy Statement.
- The documents relating to unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed no later than 28 days after the Safeguarding Panel decision being communicated to the applicant, except for the record of the decision itself. The notes of the Safeguarding Panel will include minimal information:
  - Applicant name
  - Course applied for
  - Date of application
  - Date of Panel decision
  - Reason for refusal
- For successful applicants, all documentation will be retained in accordance with the FE Retention and Disposal Schedule.
- All disclosures and discussion regarding any disclosure will be treated confidentially. If in the course of its assessment of risk, the College is required to contact an external organisation such as Social Services or the Youth Offending Team, consent will be sought from the applicant on the criminal conviction disclosure form.
- The College does not normally require applicants to be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked other than those who apply for specific courses in Health and Social Care or whom are required to have a DBS check for their work placement or reasons of professional requirement in that sector. This DBS checking will normally be completed as part of the enrolment process. All offers for courses where there is a DBS check requirement will be conditional on successful DBS clearance.
- Under exceptional circumstances, the College might require an applicant to have a DBS check as an admission requirement.

#### **4.2 Process for making a disclosure**

- The purpose of a Risk Assessment is to identify and assess any applicant whose declared record of offences indicates they could be a risk to themselves, other students, staff, visitors or the College environment. The student Risk Assessment is one way in which the College works to provide a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all students and staff.
- The risk assessment will be reviewed by at least three members of the Safeguarding Board by invite from the Safeguarding and Tutorial Manager.



- The panel will discuss the nature of the disclosure, its relevance to the course applied for and will seek advice from external agencies if necessary. The panel will determine the risk outcome as follows:
  - Green – Application accepted and proceed to enrolment
  - Amber – Applicant accepted with terms and conditions
  - Red – Unable to proceed with application as the risk presented cannot be managed satisfactorily while maintaining a duty of care to others
- In the case of the outcome being Amber or Red, the Safeguarding team will communicate this to the applicant. If the applicant is unable to proceed to enrolment, advice on any options available regarding other appropriate courses will also be given.
- It may be necessary to share information about an applicant with a criminal record to appropriate staff or work placement provider. This information will be released on a 'need to know' basis only.

#### **4.3 School Link Students**

- The College relies on the linked school to inform the College if a pupil is being managed under a risk assessment following a disclosure of a criminal record. The College reserves the right to conduct its own risk assessment if it considers that there is a risk to the pupil or to its own student and staff population.

#### **4.4 Convictions after commencement of a course**

- If a student is convicted of a criminal offence after they have applied or started a course, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately via the dedicated safeguarding email – [safe@wiltshire.ac.uk](mailto:safe@wiltshire.ac.uk)

#### **4.5 Concerns raised about a student**

- The College will investigate any disclosure made about an applicant or student by another person. In the event that any concern proves to be valid and the applicant to student has not made a disclosure to the College, the Safeguarding Panel will undertake a risk assessment as per the application stage or take a decision as to whether the student can continue with their studies.

#### **4.6 Appeals**

- Applicants who have been refused a place at College as a result of a Risk Assessment may appeal against the decision in writing within 14 days from the date the decision is communicated. They will consider each individual case and confirm their decision to the applicant in writing.

## **5. Associated Documents**

- IAG Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Procedure
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## 6. Equality Impact Assessment

Wiltshire College & University Centre strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all students, local people and the workforce. As an employer and a provider of education, the College aims to ensure that none are placed at a disadvantage as a result of its policies and procedures. It is intended that this policy and procedure is fair to all. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

## 7. Data Retention Statement

The College will handle data and information in a manner that ensures that it safeguards individuals and personal data. Information will always be managed in a manner that complies with the College Data Protection Policy. All staff involved in admissions have received training that enables them to discharge their responsibilities in relation to data protection.

For further information please refer to Wiltshire College & University Centre's Data Protection Policy.

## 8. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- The department/team responsible for each area of student enrolment has an obligation to analyse and report the effectiveness of provision utilising tools such as observation records, service standards and customer feedback.
- Student enrolment results may be aggregated at different levels (by college, campus, subject area etc.)
- Issues arising may be addressed at various levels within the college. Key trends, areas for development, and key responses, form a major element of the annual Quality Cycle. Results of enrolment will be analysed and priority areas for action and improvement targets set within departmental areas and the organisation's overall Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan. Action Plans will be monitored by the Quality Team.

## 9. Policy Review and Ownership

This policy and procedure is owned by the Admissions department. It will be reviewed by the Admissions department periodically, at least annually, to ensure it continues to be relevant and supports operational effectiveness.

## 10. Amendments Log

Version	Date of Issue	Amendment summary	Author(s)
V1.0	August 2022	Reviewed by SLT	Sophia Oleszynski
V1.1	August 2023	Reviewed, only amendment change of Policy owner.	Jo Lennon

## Appendix A

### Criminal Conviction Record Form – To be completed by the applicant

#### PART A

Your Name:		Date of Birth:	
Your Address:		Parent/Carer Name & Tel No (if under 18):	
		Course Applied for:	
		Campus:	
		YOT/Case Worker Name:	
Home Tel No:		YOT/Case Worker Tel No:	
Mobile Tel No:		Date:	

If you would like support from the College Safeguarding Team while studying at the College, please tick here ☐

**PART B (If multiple convictions please complete a separate sheet for each)**

What charge(s) were brought against you?	
In what year were they brought?	
What was the outcome? When was the conviction dated? (mm/yy)	
On what date will the conviction be considered spent?	

**PART C**

This section is your opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding your convictions and provide a balanced view on you as a whole person

Please give relevant details about the circumstances under which you came to have this criminal record(s).

<b>Yours comments/explanation of the surrounding circumstances</b>

**PART D**

Provide any other information you wish to support your application

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**PART E**

Please give us the full name, job title, telephone number and address of someone we can contact for more information to support your application. This person will be in the criminal justice system such as a social worker, or probation officer or a police officer. We will use this information only if we need to assess your suitability for the course you have applied for.

### Declaration

I give consent to Wiltshire College to process the information I have given on this form for any purposes connected with my studies, for my health and safety or that of others while on College premises, or for any other legitimate reason.



Please tick if you agree ☐

I agree to Wiltshire College's Safeguarding Team contacting the person named above for information about my offending, as part of the Risk Assessment process to ascertain on my suitability to attend the College.



Please tick here if you agree ☐

I certify that the information I have given is correct.

Your signature:

Date: