

<b>Policy Name</b>	Admissions Policy
<b>Directorate</b>	Sales & Marketing
<b>Created by (Job Title)</b>	Director of Sales & Marketing
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	December 2017
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	December 2019
<b>Pathway</b>	TBC
<b>E &amp; D Policy Disclaimer</b>	<p>This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.</p> <p>(For the E&amp;D statement to be included the policy must be reviewed using the Equality Impact Assessment process as outlined on staff intranet)</p>

# Admissions Policy

## Introduction

1. This policy details the Group's approach to its admissions service. It applies to all colleges within The Bedford College Group: Bedford College, National College for Motorsport, Shuttleworth College, The Bedford Sixth Form and Tresham College.
2. The Bedford College Group provides a wide range of learning opportunities at different levels to facilitate access and progression. It is our policy to operate an admissions service which guides prospective students on to appropriate programmes of study and courses, from which they are likely to benefit and which will enable them to maximise their potential. This is achieved through the Group's values of being student-focused, high performing and demonstrating openness, respect and honesty.

## Admissions Policy

3. It is the aim of The Bedford College Group's admissions service to:
  - Provide impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) which helps prospective students make realistic and informed decisions about their choice of learning opportunities
  - Make available comprehensive and accurate information for each programme of study or course, which includes entry criteria, qualification aims, costs, study requirements, progression routes and assessment methods
  - Manage applications and enrolments in a timely and efficient manner, with high levels of customer service
  - Ensure that the admissions process does not disadvantage applicants by discriminating on any grounds, including disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity or sexual orientation
  - Make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to learning programmes for people with disabilities
  - Provide information and advice on college facilities and support services
  - Undertake best endeavours to maintain a safe college environment for all our students, staff and visitors
  - Ensure applicants are notified of the reason where admission to their chosen course is declined
  - Allocate places on a first come, first served basis where a course is oversubscribed and a limit on numbers has been approved
  - Provide applicants with information on alternative opportunities, including those offered by other providers, where we are unable to meet their needs
  - Treat applicants with courtesy and respect at all times
  - Provide information, advice and guidance services which continue to meet the standards of the Matrix quality mark.

## Responsibilities

4. The central admissions process is the responsibility of the Director of Sales & Marketing. It is implemented by the Student Recruitment and Customer Service teams under the leadership of the Student Recruitment Manager, and the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team under the leadership of the Head of Business Development and Director of Business Development.
5. Interviews for full-time and substantive/ specified part-time courses are the responsibility of the relevant Course Manager / Course Lead. Interviews for The Bedford Sixth Form are the responsibility of the Student Recruitment Team and senior management team at the Sixth Form. Interviews for apprenticeships are the responsibility of the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team.

## Monitoring and evaluation

6. The implementation of the admissions policy is monitored through:
  - Assessment under the Matrix quality standard
  - Customer feedback
  - Service standards detailed in the admissions processes
  - Radius reports showing conversion rates and duration from application to interview to enrolment
  - Monitoring early withdrawals and transfers
  - Observation of admissions interviews and related activity
  - College self-assessment process
  - Equality impact analysis.

## Supporting documentation

7. The following College documents are relevant to the application of this policy:

Document	Owner
Applicants Disclosing a Criminal Conviction Policy	Director of Student Services
Customer Care Charter	Director of Sales & Marketing
Disclosure of Unspent Convictions by Students Policy	Director of Student Services
Equality & Diversity Policy	Equality & Diversity Improvement Co-ordinator
Fitness to Study Policy	Director of Student Services
Student Progression (Full-Time FE) Policy	Director of Sales & Marketing

Student Progression to HE Policy	Director of Higher Education
Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy	Director of Student Services

Sarah Baxter  
Director of Sales & Marketing, December 2017

## **Appendix 1: Admissions Processes**

### **Principles**

There are three processes for admitting prospective students to the College, depending on the course they have chosen. These are:

#### **Information**

This normally applies to part-time and short courses which have no pre-requisites. Applicants are provided with information, either verbally, paper-based or on-line, and may then proceed directly to enrolment.

#### **Advice**

This includes apprenticeships (for existing employees), and some part-time courses and HE courses, which have pre-requisites in terms of previous qualifications, level and/or experience which need to be checked. This will normally be undertaken by the Student Recruitment / Customer Service Team or the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team, but may involve a referral to a lecturer.

#### **Guidance**

For all other apprenticeships, full-time FE programmes and designated part-time courses and HE courses, prospective students are required to complete an application form prior to a guidance interview with an appropriate member of staff, normally a lecturer or a member of the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team or Student Recruitment Team. The interview is normally held face-to-face (although may be carried out over the telephone if appropriate), and may also include presentations to potential students and/or parents, as well as practical activities.

## **Process for admission to full-time and designated part-time FE courses**

### **Stage 1 – Preparing to receive applications**

Student Recruitment Advisers are linked with specific programme areas so that Course Managers / Course Leads have a named contact for all admissions matters. Advisers make contact with Course Managers / Course Leads to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge of all courses we propose to offer in the following academic year.

At the Bedfordshire campuses, Course Managers supply interview dates for the new academic year by the admin weeks in September. Arrangements for dealing with applications received after the end of the academic year are notified to Student Recruitment by Easter half-term.

At the Northamptonshire campuses, college-wide interview dates are set for the new academic year by the end of July.

### **Stage 2 - The application form**

Applicants can apply online via each college's websites through the Group's recruitment system Radius, where they will be asked to set up an account if it is the first time they have applied to one of the Group's colleges.

All applications are screened by the appropriate Student Recruitment Co-ordinator / Customer Service Executive to ensure they are completed correctly (and are realistic in terms of entry qualifications). Applicants are contacted by email or telephone if any information is missing or if there are any other queries.

If an applicant has applied for more than one course, they are offered an interview for all of these courses.

Applications are acknowledged by return.

Applicants are invited to indicate on the application form if they have a learning difficulty, disability or support need. The Additional Support Administrator identifies these applicants by running a report in Radius on a regular basis up to 1<sup>st</sup> September, and emails these applicants to introduce the additional support service and explains how to contact the service for help and advice. After 1<sup>st</sup> September, referrals for additional support are made via the relevant Personal Tutor.

### **Step 3 – The guidance interview**

All applicants are offered an interview within four weeks of receiving their application form.

At the Bedfordshire campuses, the designated Student Recruitment Co-ordinator allocates the applicant a date and time to attend their guidance interview, according to the schedule supplied, and this is notified to the applicant via email, including any additional information they might need about the interview format.

At the Northamptonshire campuses, applicants are sent an email and text message inviting them to book on to an IAG interview event.

Interview details are recorded on Radius.

Applicants are contacted by text two days prior to their appointment and on the day itself to remind them to attend.

The format of the guidance interview varies according to the course applied for and can include, for example, auditions, written assessments, practical skills tests or presentations. All applicants have a one-to-one meeting with the relevant Course Manager / Course Lead (or, at The Bedford Sixth Form, the Student Recruitment Adviser), to give them the opportunity to ask questions and obtain detailed information about the course and college, and to help staff assess the suitability of the applicant for their chosen programme.

If the applicant is known to have a learning difficulty, disability or support need, a member of the Additional Support Team may be invited to attend the interview. If an applicant discloses at interview that they have an EHCP a place cannot be offered until a needs assessment has taken place. The applicant's decision will be put on hold pending the outcome of this assessment.

During the interview a checklist on AppReview is completed to ensure all the relevant information is covered, including entry requirements, assessments, progression routes, associated costs, additional learning needs and financial support.

The only permitted outcomes of the interview are offer, offer another programme or no offer.

If an applicant does not attend their guidance interview the Student Recruitment Co-ordinator/ Customer Service Executive will contact the applicant up to three times by telephone to try and re-book the appointment. If contact is made the appointment is re-booked, otherwise their Radius status remains Did Not Attend. Applicants will normally be offered two opportunities to attend, unless they notify us of exceptional circumstances.

#### **Step 4 – The offer**

If we can offer a place, an email is sent asking the applicant to log into their account to view and confirm the offer made at interview.

The offer will either be **unconditional**, which means that a place at college has been offered with no conditions attached, or **conditional**, which means that a place has been offered provided that the applicant can meet certain conditions. Conditions will normally relate to qualifications which the applicant is required to pass (including specific grades required) prior to taking up their place. The offer email refers applicants to the conditions. Any arrangements for applicants to notify examination results to the Course Manager / Course Lead are made by the programme areas.

In some areas an offer is made to a programme rather than to a specific course. Applicants are then allocated to the appropriate level of course once any conditions have been met and/or examination results are known.

If it is not possible to offer a place on the chosen course (or on an alternative course discussed at interview), the applicant is notified by email. The email may suggest alternative options, and will include a referral to the College Careers Service.

All offers/no offers are recorded on Radius.

Information on offers made to applicants aged 16-19 is sent to the local authority by the College's CIS team as part of the September guarantee requirement.

### **Step 5 – Accepting the offer**

Applicants are requested to respond to their decision letter from college via the Radius portal within two weeks, and can accept or reject the offer made. If the acceptance is not confirmed within two weeks a reminder email is sent with a further two week deadline. If there is still no response, the applicant is telephoned.

All decisions are recorded onto Radius.

### **Step 6 – Welcome Day**

All new full-time students (excluding students applying for Access courses) are expected to attend a one day Welcome Day course in June/July, designed to introduce them to the college, the course and their fellow students, keep them on track and ease the transition to post-16 learning.

### **Step 7 – Starting College**

In early July, applicants are written to confirming induction arrangements and enrolment times, including any other information they might need, such as fees payable, in order to make their transition to college as smooth as possible.

### **Process for progressing students**

Progression from Level 2 to Level 3 is discussed with students in tutorials during the Spring term, in line with the tutorial policy and progression guarantee policy.

There is a short, fast-track application form which is used for students wishing to progress to the next level within their subject. The form is a combination of an application form and the guidance interview checklist used when interviewing new students.

See Student Progression (Full-Time FE) Policy for more details.

Where students on the first year of a Level 2 or Level 3 programme are subject to conditions for progressing on to the second year, the programme area is responsible for checking that any conditions attached to the offer have been met before re-enrolling the student (as they would with new applicants).

## **Process for admission to higher education (including teacher education) courses**

### **Stage 1 – Preparing to receive applications**

The relevant Student Recruitment Coordinator/Customer Service Executive is the main point of contact for HE Course Managers / Course Leads so that they have a named contact for all admissions matters. The teams have regular contact with Course Managers / Course Leads to ensure that they have all the up-to-date knowledge of all courses we propose to offer in the following academic year. The HE Co-dominator checks for accuracy the 'roll-over' of all courses from the previous application cycle and makes any necessary amendments to advertised provision at least 20 months in advance of the start-date for full-time courses (when UCAS perform their 'roll-over' of all courses from the previous application cycle) and 11 months in advance for part-time/teacher education applications (when our CIS team performs their 'roll-over' of all courses from the previous application cycle). Course Managers / Course Leads ensure the Student Recruitment/Customer Service team members are aware of any information about the interview process which needs to be communicated appropriately to applicants (e.g. presentation of portfolio, written assessments to be undertaken, special clothing required etc.). Course Managers / Course Leads also ensure and confirm their availability as contacts during clearing.

### **Stage 2 - The application form**

Full-time HE applicants are required to apply through UCAS.com. Part-time and teacher education HE applicants apply direct through the College's online application portal.

All applications are screened by the relevant Student Recruitment Co-Ordinator/Customer Service Executive to ensure they are completed correctly (and are realistic in terms of entry qualifications). Applicants are contacted by telephone if any information is missing or if there are any other queries.

Some subject areas do not require the applicant to be interviewed. The relevant Student Recruitment Co-Ordinator/Customer Service Executive is able to make decisions on those applications in-line with the advertised entry requirements, and make offers or recommendations accordingly.

Interviews are required with applicants for other subject areas (e.g. Art & Design, for which a portfolio must always be presented), and with mature applicants applying on the basis that they meet entry requirements with experience rather than qualifications.

UCAS and direct applications are entered on to Radius and acknowledged within five working days.

Applicants are invited to indicate on the application form if they have a learning difficulty, disability or support need. When students are offered a place, the Student Recruitment Co-Ordinator/Customer Service Executive signposts students to the Additional Support Team, and explains how to contact the service for help and advice. They also notify students of the Disabled Students' Allowances.

### **Step 3 – The guidance interview**

The Student Recruitment Co-Ordinator/Customer Service Executive allocate the applicant a date and time to attend their guidance interview with the Course Manager / Course Lead and this is notified by email writing to the applicant, including any additional information they might need about the interview format.

Applicants are interviewed within four weeks of their application being acknowledged, or within four weeks of the start of the spring term for those applying before January.

Interview details are entered on to Radius.

The format of the guidance interview varies according to the course applied for and can include, for example, auditions, written assessments, practical skills tests or presentations. All interviewees are given the opportunity to ask the relevant Course Manager /Course Lead questions and obtain detailed information about the course and College. The interview may also help staff assess the suitability of the applicant for their chosen programme.

If the applicant is known to have a learning difficulty, disability or support need, a member of the Additional Support Team may be invited to attend the interview.

During the interview a checklist is completed on AppReview to ensure all the relevant information is covered, including entry requirements, assessments, progression routes, associated costs, additional learning needs and financial support.

The only permitted outcomes of the interview are conditional offer, unconditional offer or no offer.

If an applicant does not attend their guidance interview they will be contact by telephone up to three times to try and re-book the interview. If contact is made the appointment is re-booked, otherwise their Radius status remains Did Not Attend. Applicants will normally be offered two opportunities to attend, unless they notify us of exceptional circumstances.

### **Step 4 – The offer**

If we can offer a place, an email is sent confirming the offer made at interview and, for full-time courses, UCAS Track is updated with the decision. The offer will either be **unconditional**, which means that a place at College has been offered with no conditions attached, or **conditional**, which means that a place has been offered provided that the applicant can meet certain conditions. Conditions will normally relate to qualifications which the applicant is required to pass (including specific grades required) prior to taking up their place and/or the securement of a work placement. The offer letter refers applicants to the conditions stated in the guidance checklist or their UCAS 'Track' facility.

The offer letter offers those applicants not required to attend an interview the opportunity to request one from the Student Recruitment Co-ordinator/Customer Service Executive. The offer letter also requests all applicants complete an online web form which captures additional learner information required by HEFCE and for enrolment.

Once any conditions have been met and/or examination results are known, places are confirmed with the applicant with an invitation to an induction and enrolment day. UCAS applicants also have their places confirmed through the UCAS 'Track' facility.

If it is not possible to offer a place on the chosen course (or on an alternative course), the applicant is contacted and offered alternative options and/or a referral to the College Careers Service.

All offers/no offers are entered on to Radius.

### **Step 5 – Accepting the offer**

Applicants are requested to notify the College whether they wish to accept or reject the offer made. Full-time HE applicants do this by replying through UCAS Track in line with set UCAS applicant reply deadlines. Part-time and teaching education HE applicants are asked to accept the offer in the portal. If there is no response, the applicant is contacted during the August confirmation period (before courses begin).

All decisions are entered on to Radius

### **Step 6 – Welcome Day and starting college**

Four weeks before the course starts (or after A-level/BTEC results are released, for conditional offers), applicants are written to confirming induction arrangements and enrolment times, including any other information they might need such as fees payable, in order to make their transition to HE as smooth as possible.

All new HE students are invited to attend an induction and enrolment event in September, designed to introduce them to the institution, the course, timetabling, their fellow students and ease the transition to HE learning.

Students studying towards qualifications validated and awarded by a university are also required to attend a similar orientation event at the partner institution.

### **Process for progressing students**

Progression should be discussed with students in tutorials in the autumn term in line with the UCAS admissions process and progression guarantee policy.

There is a short, fast-track application form which is used for students wishing to progress to higher education at the college. The form is a combination of an application form and the guidance interview checklist used when interviewing new students.

See Student Progression to HE Policy for more details.

## **Process for admission to apprenticeships**

### **Stage 1 – Enquiry and applications**

All information on apprenticeships, including the types of apprenticeships we offer and information for parents and schools, can be found on our websites.

Applicants must apply for apprenticeships by responding to an advertised apprenticeship vacancy. Every vacancy informs the applicant of the entry criteria, place of work, hours and salary, as well as a full job description. Applicants can apply online via the Group's websites. Applicants will receive an automated email to confirm receipt of their application.

If applicant cannot see an opportunity for the type of apprenticeship that they are looking for they can complete an online enquiry form and a member of the Recruitment Team will contact them. They will collect information on the type of apprenticeship the applicant is looking for and check that they meet the specified entry requirements.

### **Step 2 – Review of applications**

When an application for an apprenticeship has been received it is reviewed by a member of the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team who check that the applicant meets the specified entry criteria and has provided an appropriate level of information on their application form. Applicants are contacted by email or telephone if any information is missing or if there are any other queries.

Once the application has been reviewed, applicants will receive an email asking them to contact the Recruitment Team for an initial interview or to let them know that they have been unsuccessful. Online Maths and English assessments are sent out and are completed prior to the initial interview.

Applicants will also receive a reminder call, text and email from the Recruitment Team informing them about the initial interview and advising that their application will not be sent on to the employer unless they have attended.

Applicants who do not meet the entry criteria will be notified in writing. The communication may suggest alternative options, and will include a referral to the College Careers Service.

Applicants are invited to indicate on the application form if they have a learning difficulty, disability or support need. This information is then passed to the Additional Support Administrator who writes to these applicants to introduce the additional support service and explains how to contact the service for help and advice. If the candidate is offered an apprenticeship a notification is sent to the Additional Support department so they can begin to put support in place for the apprentice.

### **Step 3 – Initial interview and testing**

All applicants have a one-to-one interview with a member of the Recruitment Team, which will include an overview of apprenticeships, discussion of their application and maths and English assessment, and general interview questions.

If the applicant hasn't completed their online maths and English assessment prior to attending interview, they will be asked to undertake this on the day.

If the applicant is known to have a learning difficulty, disability or support need, a member of the Additional Support Team may be invited to attend the interview.

During the interview a set of questions are completed to assess candidates' suitability, as well as completing a checklist for personal circumstances for the candidates such as travel, disability and their understanding of the College's expectations. This form is signed and dated by the candidate.

At the end of the process candidates complete a feedback form which asks them to confirm that all core areas of information have been covered. If any of these are left blank, these are addressed. The applicant is given a letter to confirm that they have attended their initial interview, highlighting what has been discussed, what happens next and where to go for further information and advice.

Applicants who do not appear 'job ready' will be offered advice and guidance as to how they can improve their application and/or interview technique, assistance with application and interview techniques or referred to the Careers Team for further career information, or to enquiries for alternative course information if appropriate.

Interview details are recorded on Radius.

#### **Step 4 – Employer Recruitment Process**

Only applicants who attend an initial interview will have their details passed on to an employer.

Once applicants have been in to see the Recruitment Team, their application is sent on to the employer on the specified closing date and the employer shortlists who they would like to invite in for interview.

Applicants who are not shortlisted for interview or who are interviewed but are not successful, will be sent an automated email with the outcome and employer feedback if available. The Recruitment Team will continue to work with the applicant to strengthen their applications and find alternative opportunities keeping them updated via calls, emails and texts.

The successful applicant will be notified either by the employer or by a member of the Recruitment Team via phone or email and will need to confirm that they have accepted the position.

Outcomes are recorded on Radius.

#### **Step 5 – Enrolment**

Following an offer of employment from the company, the applicant and College will receive a contract confirming the apprenticeship. The applicant will be invited in to the College to complete their enrolment paperwork and English and maths testing if they had not completed this earlier in the process (for example, where employers come with an apprentice). Identification, national insurance and qualifications will be

checked at this point. If the applicant has not yet received his/her results it will be a condition of the contract that they produce them to the College as soon as they are available. Enrolment will be undertaken by the Compliance Team.

### **Step 6 – Starting College**

The Apprentice can start work with the employer as soon as a contract has been received and will start the College part of the apprenticeship following their enrolment.

Following enrolment the induction process will be carried out by the programme area, which will ensure that all enrolled apprentices receive written notification as to when their induction will be, when their course starts as well as any other important course related information.

## **Processes for admission to other provision**

### **Foundation Education courses**

Applications for Foundation Education programmes are entered onto Radius and then forwarded to the relevant Course Manager / Course Lead who deals with all subsequent stages.

### **Employer-responsive programmes**

Admissions to training requested by employers are handled via the Business Development team. Where a course requires an application to be submitted, this then follows the normal procedures outlined above.

### **Admission of students under age 16**

Admission of any applicant under the age of 16 will be considered by a Vice Principal. Admission of such students will usually be in conjunction with a project or school link agreement, or because there are special circumstances which mean that their educational needs cannot be met in school.

### **Admission to Shuttleworth College Halls of Residence**

Admission for residential students to the halls of residence at Shuttleworth College is by application and interview with the Student Development Manager at the Shuttleworth campus. Students and their parents are also required to attend an information meeting prior to the start of their first term in halls. Where demand for places exceeds supply, applications will be prioritised according to the distance from the student's home to the College.

## **Processes for applicants disclosing a criminal conviction**

We have a duty of care under our safeguarding procedures and Prevent strategy to make every effort to ensure that students who might pose a risk to other College users are not admitted onto our courses, and have procedures in place to do this. The procedures were developed in consultation with Nacro.

Applicants are asked at application stage to declare any unspent criminal convictions. They are also assured that this declaration will not necessarily be a bar to them joining the College. Convictions which would give rise to particular concern are those for offences against a person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, convictions involving unlawful supplying or possession of controlled drugs or substances, and theft. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and reformed under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012)) do not need to be disclosed. However, applicants for courses involving working with children or vulnerable adults are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

### **Right to refuse admissions to the College**

Under certain circumstances the College may reserve the right to refuse an application or enrolment. Applications from prospective learners who fall into this category will be given full consideration before any such refusal.

The College reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant who:

- has disclosed a criminal conviction which is either not spent or can never become spent and which the College believes represents an unacceptable risk to students and/or staff
- has previously been excluded from this or another education institution. Before any such decision is made, reasonable effort will be made to obtain references from previous education institution/s. Where provided, references will support any decision to offer a place
- has previously attended this or another education establishment and not completed courses, including all external assessments, without good reason
- has previously been subject to the College's disciplinary procedure and has not followed the recommendations following the outcome of any such disciplinary
- has been notified by the police as presenting an unacceptable risk
- has outstanding debts with the College
- provides false or misleading information on an application or enrolment form.

The above list is indicative, and is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. The College reserves the right to make the final decision on whether or not to accept an application or enrolment to College. Any such decision will be made by a Vice Principal or the Director of Student Services.

In the event the College offers a place and subsequently discovers that the candidate has committed an action that would constitute gross misconduct under the College's Disciplinary Procedure, the College reserves the right to withdraw the offer, whether or not the course or programme has commenced.

Should an applicant dispute a decision not to admit them to the College, they may appeal to the Vice Principal with responsibility for Quality. However, the original decision will only be reconsidered if it did not follow the College admissions policy, or other relevant policy or procedure, and/or the applicant provides evidence that was not revealed earlier in the admissions process.