

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS POLICY 2023/24

Policy Statement

Hertford Regional College (HRC) has a commitment to consider and process applications from individuals with fairness, without prejudice and in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation.

The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all persons seeking to engage in learning with the College and welcomes applications from all individuals with the potential and willingness to progress and succeed.

The College aims to offer a broad range of courses to meet demand from a varied learner and employer population, and to ensure that individuals are appropriately matched to a course that will enable progression to employment and/or further training or learning.

This policy applies to applicants, of all ages, on Further Education courses including full time, part time and apprenticeships. It applies to anyone seeking admission onto a College programme including those who are already at the College and wish to progress from one programme to another.

This policy outlines the Further Education Admissions procedures applicable to all applicants who are eligible to study at HRC.

Principles

The guiding principles for the College's approach are:

- To provide accurate and timely careers information, advice, and guidance to new applicants to enable them to make the right choices for their future
- To build a College community which celebrates inclusivity, diversity, and the contributions of a wide range of students and apprentices
- To operate open, transparent, and consistent admissions procedures
- To operate procedures that are guided by a sense of 'fairness' and the aspiration that applicants are placed on a course that meets their long-term career aims and interests

Aims

- To provide impartial careers information, advice, and guidance (CIAG) which helps students to make realistic and informed decisions about their choice of learning
- To ensure that the admissions process does not treat applicants less favourably on grounds of disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, race (including colour, nationality

ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, or maternity

- To make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access to learning programmes for people with disabilities
- To make available comprehensive and accurate information for each course to include entry criteria, qualification aims, costs, study requirements, progression routes and assessment methods
- To work with, where appropriate, other agencies such as National Career Services, schools, universities, and employers to develop partnerships that aid progression from referring organisations to the College
- To develop opportunities for learners to view the College and its facilities, prior to the commencement of a course by holding 'Applicant Days', 'Open Events', 'Taster Events' or arranged visits
- Applicants with additional support needs can access appropriate support from the College's Additional Learning Support Team and will be given the opportunity to disclose their support needs at application stage, interview and at enrolment so that their needs can be met from the earliest stages in the student journey

Equality and Diversity Statement

HRC is committed to the promotion and development of equality and diversity. This policy is designed to ensure consistent, effective and fair treatment for all and has been impact assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect users on the grounds of age, disability, race (including colour, nationality ethnic or national origin), sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion and belief, Marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

This policy will be implemented in accordance with our Single Equality Scheme, and any careers information, advice and guidance provided will not be influenced by the student's background or situation. The College will promote and recruit to courses based on interests and potential, and challenge stereotyping or discrimination where encountered.

See Appendix 1 for Equality Impact Assessment.

Data Protection

HRC processes personal data collected during the application and enrolment process in accordance with its data protection policy. Students are informed at application and enrolment stages of what data is collected and the purpose of such collection. Data collected is held securely and accessed by or disclosed to individuals only for the purposes of recruiting and enrolling all learners including apprentices on courses delivered by HRC and our subcontractors.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the College data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under HRC disciplinary procedure.

Admissions

The admissions process for students is overseen by the Admissions Team who work closely with Curriculum Teams and other cross college services to ensure that each applicant is supported in a timely manner to meet their individual requirements and provide them with an experience that supports their admission into the College.

All applications made to HRC are acknowledged within 48 working hours of receipt. Interview and Applicant Day invitations are processed within 5 working days in accordance with the College Admissions Process.

Personal data obtained and processed as part of the admission and enrolment processes will be processed in accordance with the College's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation May 2018.

The central admissions process is the responsibility of the Deputy Principal and is managed and implemented by the Admissions Manager.

The management of admission interviews, where these are carried out, is the responsibility of the Directors of Curriculum.

14 – 16 Schools Link for Admissions

Schools applying for students to join the HRC 14-16-year-old, day release vocational programme, are required to complete a 14-16 College Application Form and a pen portrait for each student. Applications for this programme can only be made via the student's current school.

14 - 16 Alternative Provision Admissions

All 14-16-year-old students on Alternative Provision must complete the same HRC application form as 16-18-year-old students. If the applicant is referred by school, a reference is requested.

The College will seek relevant local authority engagement if:

- An applicant has an Education Health and Care Plan that the College has not been consulted on
- Identified educational outcomes for the applicant being put in place are for a school setting

At interview, a 14-16-year-old or elective home educated applicant will be required to complete a pen profile in addition to undertaking a diagnostic assessment. This is required as the College will have received no other student information or prior achievement data.

Discreet provision - Inclusive learning (LLDD)

The majority of applicants to this provision will already have named Hertford Regional College as the educational setting they would like to attend via their Education Health and Care Plan.

In most cases, the relevant College department will already know about a young person through their work with the local authority or via attendance at local school events and through the work of the College Post 16 Transition Support Worker.

On receipt of the Education Health and Care Plan the College is asked whether it can meet the applicants' needs. Confirmation the College is able to meet the applicant's needs will start the transition process based on assessment.

The Inclusive Learning Team will:

- Attend school transition events where appropriate
- Offer careers information advice and guidance at open day/evening events and provide an opportunity for Parent/Carers and the young person to visit the provision
- Set up a transition period where / whenever possible
- Personalise the interview process to meet the needs of an individual
- Invite new applicants and families in for an information evening (regard will be given to the SEND code of practice)

LLDD conditional offers are based on:

- Funding agreed by relevant local authorities
- Late applications are subject to EHCP consultation process and agreed funding
- Non-disclosure or anomalies found through further assessment

Supporting Applicants with Additional Support Needs

Hertford Regional College welcomes applications from individuals with disabilities and learning difficulties, people with literacy, numeracy, and language difficulties.

Where an applicant is identified as declaring a disability or a difficulty which may impact on her/his/their learning this will be followed up by the College's Additional Learning Support Team.

A disclosure form will be sent to the applicant asking for further details of the support or reasonable adjustments which may be needed to be made by the Additional Learning Support Team.

The Additional Learning Support Team will provide:

- Guidance and training for tutors and assessors on the disclosure of disabilities or learning difficulties at a course team meeting
- Support for applicants at interview as required by the applicant
- College tutors with the information on the support strategies required for learning
- Support to ensure that applicants can access College support services such as course advice
- Any applicant with a disability who is not offered a place on a course will have this decision reviewed by a panel led by the Learning Support Manager and/or Head of Student Services to ensure that the appropriate consideration has been given to the application

- Offers of places to disabled applicants (or to applicants who may need learning support) will also be reviewed by the Learning Support Manager to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made to College services
- Due regard will be given the SEND Code of Conduct 2014 to ensure that best endeavours have been made to provide for applicants with SEND

Apprenticeship Admissions

All applications relating to apprenticeships are facilitated through the Central Apprenticeship Team who will undertake initial screening interviews and assist with securing suitable employment opportunities if required.

Apprenticeship programmes have a roll-on roll-off structure and are typically delivered in the workplace. Depending on the Apprenticeship Standard, some apprenticeship programmes are delivered on a day-release model and timetabled accordingly. All apprentices must be employed before they can start their apprenticeship.

Recruitment, Promotional and Marketing Materials

The College is committed to ensuring that applicants, and potential applicants, have access to high quality information which will enable them to make an informed decision regarding their future. This information includes printed marketing materials such as prospectuses, as well as online information, events, and open days.

The College has a Community / Schools Liaison Officer who works in partnership with local schools and community partners to ensure that individuals understand the wide range of options available to them and to provide information regarding the courses and facilities on offer at the College.

The College works to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Matrix Quality Standards and is committed to providing impartial careers information, advice, and guidance.

The College is committed to ensuring that course prospectuses, the website, and other publicity materials contain accurate, reliable, current, and comprehensive information that are designed in a market-appropriate and accessible way.

Entry Criteria

The College publishes academic entry criteria in the prospectus and on the website. The criteria are guided by a commitment to ensure progression through levels of learning and to ensure that applicants have the academic ability to achieve and succeed on their chosen course.

Entry criteria will vary between courses; however, each course will have a clear statement on entry requirements, and this will be displayed in all relevant publications. Entry criteria may be varied at the discretion of the relevant Curriculum Manager, where: it may reasonably be considered that an applicant's experience is equivalent to certain qualifications, or if the applicant has demonstrated their knowledge, such as by taking a test.

Existing College students applying to undertake a further course or progress onto an apprenticeship are required to fulfil the relevant entry criteria and follow the admissions procedure for internal applicants.

Applicants for whom English is a second language may be asked to complete an assessment of their reading, writing and comprehension as a condition of entry onto non- ESOL courses.

Adjustments to the stated criteria may be made for applicants who are assessed as having a disability or learning difficulty.

Learners with a learning difficulty or disability can access appropriate support through the learning support referral route and will have opportunities to disclose a support need at application, interview, and enrolment.

The College reserves the right not to admit an individual who has any outstanding debts with the College unless a firm arrangement is put in place at enrolment to settle the outstanding balance.

Interview / Applicant Event

This is a two-way process to ensure that applicants can find out more about the specifics of their chosen course. An opportunity to discuss their application and ensure that the course content, assessment, and attendance requirements fit with the applicant's expectations.

Risk Assessment & Safeguarding Duty

The College has a duty to ensure all students, apprentices and staff feel safe, protected whilst at the College, and will work with statutory and other local agencies to ensure the safety of its students, apprentices, and staff.

The College will undertake risk assessments on applicants or students and apprentices who disclose potential risks.

Where there is an identified risk, the College reserves the right to share information regarding the risk with statutory and other agencies in order to ensure the safety of its students and staff.

Students and apprentices have the right to appeal and complain against a decision.

Fitness to Study

The College is committed to supporting students and recognises the importance of their health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progress and College experience. Students are expected to take a proactive part in the process, by managing their own health and wellbeing and engaging with any support, in order to fulfil their academic potential.

The Fitness to Study Procedure applies to any student admitted or enrolled by the College. This procedure is not intended for use during the interview or admissions process. The College's Admissions Policy provides career information, advice and guidance and the assessment of individual needs on application to study at the College.

DBS Checks

The College requires applicants who apply for specific courses to undertake DBS checks prior to starting the course. This will normally be completed as part of the course review meeting process. This process relates to courses where there is a work placement, which requires the DBS check. All offers for courses where there is a DBS check requirement will be conditional to the successful DBS clearance.

Criminal Convictions

Applicants are asked to disclose criminal convictions on their application form. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose, and risk assessments may be undertaken. For further guidance on this please contact the College's Admissions Team. A panel to review the application will be held if the risk rating within the risk assessment process exceeds the appropriate thresholds.

Fees Assessment

All Applicants over the age of 19 Years may be eligible for course fees in line with ESFA Guidance.

Eligibility for waiving of fees will be assessed as part of the application process and where fees still apply the applicant will be advised prior to main enrolment.

If an applicant declares a non-EEA nationality on their application form, or that their normal country of residence is outside the UK, or that they have not been living in the EEA for the last 3 years they will need to attend a Fees Assessment. The Fees Assessment will determine the fees a student should pay.

Application Submission

All applicants applying to the college are required to submit a completed application form which will be formally acknowledged to the applicant by the Admissions Team.

Course Offers

Course offers may have conditions in addition to the standard academic entry criteria.

Course offers will be made in writing via the Admissions Team normally within 5 working days of the interview subject to relevant support information and references being received.

If a course is not thought to be suitable, or the applicant does not meet the required course entry criteria, they will be contacted by the Admissions Team to discuss alternative opportunities. Where required a careers information & guidance appointment will be made accordingly.

Reasons not to offer an applicant a place would normally include:

- Applicant not having the (predicted) academic requirements to meet the published entry criteria
- Applicant being supplied with a poor reference from their previous school or College.
In some instances, an applicant may be asked to complete a Code of Conduct as a condition of entry if a reference causes concerns about an applicant's behaviour
Alternative provision or support may well be recommended
- Applicants not displaying the core competencies expected for a course at the College at the interview / applicant day
- Concern that the applicant could not meet the specific work placement requirements of the course

Course Closure

Where a course is under-subscribed or where there is a significant change to how a course is funded, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course. In such cases, applicants will be offered advice on the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other local education providers. However, the offer of a place cannot be guaranteed.

Course Acceptance

Applicants must accept or decline their place at College by returning the reply slip at the bottom of the offer letter, by email or by telephoning the Admissions Team within the timescale as stated on the offer letter otherwise their place may be at risk.

The College reserves the right to:

- Request references and/or school reports for applicants
- Require DBS checks prior to entry on courses that lead to careers where this is a requirement or where work experience providers have this as a requirement. Certain convictions may lead to a refused course offer
- Review and refuse admission to applicant who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution. This will be subject to an Interview with the relevant College manager to assess suitability to study in a College environment and duty of care to other students, apprentices, and staff
- Conduct risk assessments, review, and refuse admission for applicants where there is evidence that they could be a threat or danger to themselves or others. This relates to the College's duty of care to students, apprentices, and staff
- Review and refuse admission to an applicant who has any outstanding debt to the College
- Require that students and apprentices are funded by a government body, employers, themselves or another body in order that the College receives payment for the cost of study

Joining the College

Every effort will be made to ensure that joining the College is a positive experience for applicants. All applicants starting a course will be sent information about joining the College during July/August (for apprentices at time of appointment) along with literature on financial support, specialist services available for students and any other relevant information about life at the College.

Probationary Period

During the first 42 days of every student's course they are in a probationary period. This is to allow them the opportunity to decide if the course is right for them and for staff to assess if they are on the right course. During this time, the Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedure is not adhered to, instead students are RAG rated by tutors, and actions taken to see if concerns can be addressed via the probationary procedure.

Cases of Gross Misconduct

In most cases the probationary procedure should be followed, however, if students are deemed to have been involved in Gross Misconduct the Director of Curriculum of the students can either:

- Place the student on a stage 3 and follow the disciplinary procedure. They may do this as a process to establish the facts of a case and then to help decide the best course of action
- In consultation with the Head of Student Services the Curriculum Director may decide to withdraw the students place. This can be done when there is sufficient evidence that the student has been involved in gross misconduct which is deemed to have led to their failure of probation. In such a case the withdrawn student has the right to appeal this decision to the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality

Appeals and Complaints

If an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision made by the College with respect to an application to study at the College, a letter should be sent to the Deputy Principal Finance & Resources. An acknowledgement of an appeal will be sent within 3 working days. This appeal will then be presented to the relevant college manager. The applicant should expect to receive a formal response regarding their appeal in writing within 10 working days.

Any dissatisfaction with any administrative or service delivery aspect of the admissions process can be addressed using the College's published Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring and evaluation

The implementation of the Admissions Policy is monitored via:

- Customer feedback and survey responses
- Service standards
- Performance monitoring reports to the Senior Leadership Team relating to enquiries and applications
- Monitoring conversion of applications to enrolment
- Monitoring early withdrawals and transfers
- Sampling of completed interview forms
- College self-assessment process
- Equal opportunities data relating to the admissions process reported annually to the Inclusion & Impact Group.

Policy Version Control

Version Number	2
Approving Body	Senior Leadership Team / Board of Corporation
Designated Owner	Deputy Principal Finance & Resources
Linked Policies & Procedures	Fees Policy Single Equality Scheme DBS Checks for Students Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and Prevent Policy & Procedure Fitness to Study Procedure Data Protection Policy
Date Approved by Approving Body	August 2023
Date of Next Review	June 2024

Appendix 1 - HRC Equality Impact Assessment Template

Impact Assessment for the 4 strands of Equality, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Sustainability	
Initial Form to be completed with Risk Assessments or as part of a proposal or change to a policy, plan, or new way of working	
<p>Title of Activity: Admissions Policy</p> <p>Author and Date: August 2023 Diane Douglas Andrew Clare</p>	<p>New <input type="checkbox"/> Revised <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Equality and Diversity. Which of the characteristics maybe impacted upon? And, if yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?</p>	<p>Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Disability, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy & Maternity.</p> <p>Clear concise Admissions arrangements are in place and takes into consideration accessibility and reasonable adjustment and support.</p> <p>The Admissions team and Curriculum Directorates make available comprehensive and accurate information for each course and/ or programme of study, to include entry criteria, qualification aims, costs, study requirements, progression routes and assessment methods. Admission staff work within Matrix quality standards including Principles which strongly challenges stereotype e.g. encourage female in STEM careers</p>
<p>Safeguarding: (including Safeguarding) Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a student/member of staff/visitor to feel unsafe? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>1:1 IAG is provided as part of the Admissions process, delivered by either the curriculum team or the Information Centre team and is conducted in a room with visibility, whilst ensuring confidentiality; i.e.; Interview rooms, tutorial pods with clear window panes. The Admissions Policy includes Criminal Conviction declaration and a DBS process accordingly.</p>



<p>Health and Safety: Have any risks been identified? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Sustainability: Are there expected impacts on sustainability issues? If yes, how have these been considered?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Evidence: What evidence do you have for your conclusions and expectations for these conclusions? How will this impact be monitored for all these considerations?</p>	<p>Records kept of all criminal conviction risk assessments. Matrix accreditation for IAG delivery to ensures compliance with equality, diversity and professional boundaries linked to safeguarding. IAG documentation recorded to ensure transparency within the guidance provided and delivered. Admissions data assessed & analysed for fair assessment and transparency.</p>
<p>Is this policy of a high/medium or low risk?</p>	<p>High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>