

Title: Admissions Policy (Further Education)

Type: Policy

Purpose: Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College is committed to operating a fair and transparent admissions process which considers all applicants consistently and without prejudice on their individual merits.

Scope: The principles of this policy will apply to all full-time further education course applications and enquiries.

Responsibility: The Vice Principal HR & Student Services is responsible for this policy. The Director Student Services is responsible for the monitoring of the policy.

Legal Context: Equality Act 2010

1. Policy Statement

This policy applies to all students applying to do a full-time further education programme at Solihull College & University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College (hereafter referred to as the College).

The College is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all who are able to demonstrate their ability to meet the entry criteria for a course which is relevant to their career pathway.

Applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. The College's FE Admissions Policy and Procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards.

2. Equal Opportunities

The College is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all of its activities and to encouraging access to from all groups. The College is working to create an environment in which diversity and individual difference are positively valued in an atmosphere free from harassment and discrimination. The College takes its legal and moral obligations with respect to equal opportunities seriously. The College welcomes dialogue with groups and individuals on ways in which its equal opportunities policies and practice can be enhanced.

The College will not tolerate any form of behaviour or activity that discriminates on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, religion and belief, age, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and unrelated criminal convictions.

3. Marketing and Recruitment

The College marketing and recruitment communications are disseminated through promotional materials and activities which we aim to ensure are accurate, current, and accessible.

Marketing and recruitment activities include:

- Participation at Careers exhibitions/ events
- Open Days

Marketing and recruitment information is communicated through a variety of different media and includes:

- online prospectus
- the College website (www.solihull.ac.uk / www.Stratford.ac.uk)
- social media

4. Role of Applicants in the Admissions Process

Applicants are expected to:

- provide complete and honest information in applications submitted to the College
- respond in a timely manner to requests for further information from the College, communicate any changes to the information supplied in their application as soon as possible be courteous and respectful in their communications with College staff.

5. Applications

Full Time Further Education courses

Applicants for all Further Education (FE) courses should complete the College application form and submit to the College as soon as possible.

Internal applicants wishing to progress onto another FE course should complete the internal application form and submit via the Student Hub by the end of March.

The College will assess whether the applicant meets the entry requirements for a particular course (as detailed in the College Prospectus and/or course fact sheets) and allocate the most relevant course in relation to qualifications and aspirations.

All applicants for FE full time courses will be required to attend an interview to assess their suitability for the course. Applicants who have indicated a learning support requirement on their application may be supported at interview by a member of the Additional Needs Team. Interviews will be arranged by the College and applicants will be informed of their interview details normally within 10 working days of receipt of the application form and supporting documents.

The College will book the interview and advise the relevant Head of School/Course Tutor, and Additional Support Tutor if required, of the date, time and venue. When applicants arrive for an *interview*, they are welcomed by the appropriate member of staff who will provide a specific subject interview.

The outcome of the interview will be notified to the applicant at the end of the interview. If the applicant is accepted on the course, an offer letter will be issued including an acceptance declaration for the applicant to complete.

For courses that are over-subscribed or cancelled, applicants will be notified and offered an alternative programme where available or offered the opportunity to be entered onto a course waiting list.

For all applicants, confirmations of enrolment details are sent to the student prior to the commencement of the course.

6. The Interview Process

Where applicants are invited to an interview the purpose is designed to:

- Enable interviewing tutors to decide on an applicant's ability to complete the course successfully, establish their motivations, ability, appropriateness and suitability for joining their chosen course and explain alternatives if appropriate.
- Enable prospective students/trainees to gain an understanding of the course they are interested in and to form a view on how it will meet their requirements.
- Enable tutors to provide more detailed information about the course and facilities.
- Enable Additional Needs staff to assess any learning support requirements.

Interviews are designed to be a two-way process and applicants are encouraged to ask questions.

In the majority of cases there will be one interview. However, sometimes it is necessary to request further meetings for example, if applicants have chosen a vocational course and need to demonstrate practical skills. It is the College's intention to keep interviews to a minimum and only ask candidates to return if really necessary. If applicants decide to choose another course after initial interview, a further interview may be required particularly if it is in a different subject area.

Following an interview, the Course Tutor (and Additional Needs staff member if relevant) will make one of the following recommendations:

- Offer an unconditional place
- Offer a conditional place
- Offer an alternative course
- Refer for a Fitness to Study meeting
- Refer to Safeguarding Panel (where enhanced DBS indicates a concern)
- Unable to make an offer – refer to Careers Team for further support.

In most cases offers will be made subject to conditions such as achievement of the course entry requirements, acceptable references or evidence of work experience. In some cases, applicants will be asked to submit a personal statement or provide a summary of work experience.

Where applicants do not meet the standard entry requirements, exceptional entry may be considered. Under these circumstances, applicants may be asked to furnish evidence of work experience, training courses and similar work-related activities. In some cases, pre entry assignments may be set to assist in determining the appropriate course offer for an individual applicant.

It is important that applicants receiving conditional offers meet those conditions prior to commencement of the course so they can receive an unconditional offer of a place in good time. The submission of an application does not guarantee a place on any course of study.

7. Criteria for Entry

The main principles involved in determining the offer of a place on a course are as follows:

- That the applicant is clear that the course meets their aims and aspirations.
- That the applicant has the necessary general education to have a good chance of fulfilling the learning outcomes of the course therefore being successful.

Applicants should normally have obtained or expect to obtain the entry requirements specified to study.

If after examination results have been received, the applicant has not received the grades needed for entry, an alternative course may be offered. Where applicants do not have the qualification needed other factors can be taken into account such as work experience or career history.

The College's standard entry requirements for all Further Education courses are detailed in the relevant Course Information Leaflet.

8. Offer of Admission

Each applicant who is successful will receive a formal offer via email following their interview setting out any conditions which need to be met.

9. Failure to Disclose

The College reserves the right to withdraw any offer made, where an applicant has failed to disclose information or discloses at a late stage information which might influence the admissions decision-making process.

10. Appeals

The College ensures that applicants will have the right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with an admission decision of the College. Applicants should note that published entry criteria must be

met. Any appeals should be made in writing to the Assistant Principal of the Faculty. This must be done within 10 working days of an initial admissions decision being made. Applicants wishing to appeal should refer to the Admissions Appeal procedure.

11. Further Information

For further information on Further Education procedures please contact the College on admissions@solihull.ac.uk or 0121 678 7000