

Quality Code for Higher Education

Equal Opportunities Code of Practice

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Originator: Higher Education & Skills
Approval by: Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee

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Description: This document sets out the College's commitment to equality of opportunity in making admissions decisions

NOTE: Where the awarding body has different requirements this will take precedence over the College's Code of Practice (CoP)

Responsibilities: Student Services
Curriculum Leaders

Applications for exemptions to: Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee

Report Exemptions to: Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee

Links to UK Quality Code for HE: [Chapter B2](#)
[Chapter B4](#)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES CODE OF PRACTICE

AUTHORITY

The Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee is the final arbiter of the application and interpretation of this Code of Practice (CoP).

INTRODUCTION

The College is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in every aspect of its provision and seeks to apply the principle of equality of opportunity in relation to all aspects of its admission process. It will make every effort to ensure that there is neither direct, indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation against enquirers or applicants on the protected characteristic of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality), religion or belief (includes non-belief), sex, sexual orientation or any other matter not strictly relevant to the projected programme of study.

All College publications concerned with admission of students should include a statement of the College's commitment to Equality & Diversity and aims to ensure that individuals are treated fairly with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, trade union affiliation, social/economic background, position in the organisation or other inappropriate distinction.

DATA COLLECTION

The College collects data about the nationalities, ethnic origins and disabilities of its students, both for its own use in monitoring the effectiveness of its policies and other things and because it is required to supply such data to the Higher Educational Statistical Agency and other similar bodies. Students are encouraged but not required to comply with any such request. Disabled students should, however, bear in mind that the College will need to know about the full extent and nature of their disability if it is to discharge its additional duties towards them.

CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

As a general rule, the only relevant criteria to be applied in assessing an application will be the applicant's academic ability and determination to benefit from the chosen programme of study. In relation to programmes leading to professional qualifications, however, questions of fitness for the particular profession may also have to be taken into account, though where appropriate; the College will offer disabled applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to make use of alternative means of meeting programme requirements.

In making judgements about academic ability, those areas responsible for the programme/s applied for will ensure that criteria and procedures used for selecting students are relevant to the requirements of the programme, including any professional requirements, and do not unjustifiably disadvantage or debar any class of applicant.

APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

Applicants should be aware that the information provided on their application will be retained on the College's records and made available to all involved in the admissions process and those concerned with student welfare in order for the College to discharge its duties. The College will try to ensure that applicants who have declared a disability will have full information about the support available to them so that they may make an informed choice regarding the best place for their studies. Those with impaired mobility are advised to visit the locations where their studies are going to take place in order to assess the suitability of the premises and their surroundings.

The application by those applicants who have declared a disability will be referred to Additional Learning Support and those responsible for considering the applications are asked to contact that office for advice before recommending an offer. Such applicants are consulted about their needs and given advice as to how the College might meet those needs. Upon admission, students will be afforded an opportunity to provide additional information about their needs.

The Additional Learning Support team can advise students on making an application for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) (where eligible) or accessing other opportunities for appropriate support.

Age on admission

There is no restriction on age for any applicant other than for certain healthcare programmes that require all new students to be at least 18 years of age on entry due to restrictions within integral professional training placements.

The College has a certain duty of care towards younger students and will expect to have direct contact with and full support from the designated guardian in order to discharge those duties.

Applicants with criminal convictions

All those who apply for admission are required to declare whether they have any relevant criminal convictions that are deemed not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. For admission to certain professional training programmes that are exempted under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act applicants will be asked for further information about all convictions, bindovers and cautions. In addition applicants are advised to make their own checks as to whether a previous conviction (whether or not deemed to be spent) may have an effect on future study or professional career progression, for example, the ability to undertake a period of study overseas or to join a professional body.

In order to ensure that all applicants are treated in an equitable and fair manner, while paying due regard to the interests of others in the College community, the College reserves the right to request further information from any applicant. Applicants who make a relevant declaration will have their case considered in the first instance by a Risk Assessment Panel undertaken by Student Services. It will be determined whether the applicant may proceed to an academic decision. If not, or if further information is required, or in the event of an adverse/unfavourable decision the applicant will be advised accordingly and will be given the opportunity to present his/her case to a panel of at least two persons.

For programmes of professional training the academic area concerned will undertake any additional checks required by the professional body(ies) concerned and, where appropriate, partner agencies will be involved in the consideration of individual cases to meet the demands of professional regulation. Applicants will be informed when this is the case.

MONITORING

Any decision to reject an application will be scrutinised by Student Services to ensure adherence to this CoP.

Higher Education Learning & Teaching Committee has a responsibility to monitor the pattern of applications, offers and admissions.

COMPLAINTS

Under the Complaints Procedure for Student Admissions an applicant who believes that the College has failed to follow its Equal Opportunities Policy should write to the Director of Quality stating the ground/s on which the complaint is made.

Any complaint relating to a decision made in connection with a declaration of a criminal conviction should be made in writing to the Director of Higher Education & Skills.