

***Policy on***  
***Higher Education Admissions***

***Approved on***  
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***Approved by***  
***Academic Board***

Policy Title	HE Admissions Policy
Document Owner	Julie Coverley
Directorates and Departments affected by this Procedure	All Staff
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New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

This policy has been assessed for its compliance with the principles of the OIA Good Practice Framework.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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## 1. Rationale

The reason for the development of this policy is derived from the College's commitment to demonstrating sound practice in recruitment, selection and admission of students to higher education programmes offered by the College. The admissions process extends from pre-application stage up to and including enrolment and is crucial to establishing a positive relationship between applicants and the College. The College is committed to meeting the needs of all potential students wishing to undertake higher education studies at the College. This commitment is a key focus of the College's Vision and Values.

This policy is compliant with both Office for Students B Conditions and the QAA UK Quality Code 2024.

## 2. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure an effective, efficient, centralised and coordinated admissions process for all applicants wishing to study towards a higher education award at the College.

In order to fulfil the stated aim of the policy, the College has established the following objectives which are to:

- a. ensure that applicants are treated fairly and impartially;
- b. ensure that applicants are appropriately guided and supported through the admissions process;
- c. ensure that informed and sound decision making by the applicants and the College is assured;
- d. ensure that national, regional and College strategic objectives are recognised and considered; ensure that information relating to entry criteria is up-to-date, accurate and accessible to applicants and College staff.

## 3. Applicant Entitlements

Under the terms of this policy and with alignment to the first primary regulatory objective of the OfS, all students from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education, are supported to access, progress in and continue from, higher education.

All applicants at the College are entitled to:

- a. have access to information, promotional materials and activities which are accurate (at the time of publishing), relevant, current, accessible and that will enable them to make informed decisions about their options. The College will work collaboratively with students to ensure that the information, advice and guidance that is offered, and the way that it is provided, is continually adapted to support students to make the right higher education choices for them;

- b. receive confidential and impartial advice and guidance;
- c. have access to clear and detailed information about the selection process that is used for the programme(s) they are applying to, including being provided with access to information in relation to terms and conditions and disclosure of criminal convictions;
- d. information regarding learning or support needs in advance of enrolment;
- e. have made available to them prior to the commencement of their period of study, details of the RPL regulations and process that apply to their programme of study where opportunities are identified;
- f. expect that the selection process is followed consistently and fairly and that transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process;
- g. be informed by the College, of the obligations placed on them at the time the offer of a place is made;
- h. be informed, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time an offer is made and enrolment is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances;
- i. have explained to them, once the place is accepted, the arrangements for enrolment, induction and orientation of new students;
- j. expect induction and orientation arrangements which promote the efficient and effective integration of entrants as students;
- k. be provided with feedback as to why they were not successful in gaining a place, if requested.

#### 4. Applicant Responsibilities

This policy requires applicants to fully acknowledge and actively engage in fulfilling their responsibilities by:

- a. familiarising themselves with the admissions process relevant to the programme they are applying for;
- b. adhering to College procedures associated with the admissions process relevant to the programme they are applying for;
- c. ensuring that at each stage of the application process, they provide honest and accurate information and communicate timely any changes to circumstances which could have a bearing on admission decisions;

- d. declaring any additional support needs they may have;
- e. adhering to the obligations placed upon them if the offer of a place is made;
- f. confirming acceptance or refusal of a place within the agreed time limits;
- g. engaging fully with the induction and orientation activities delivered at the College;
- h. ensuring that at each stage of the application admission process, they provide honest and accurate information and communicate timely any changes to circumstances which could have a bearing on admission decisions;
- i. ensuring they declare any learning difficulty/disability and/or support need at the earliest stage possible within their application journey, or when the need becomes apparent.

## 5. Teaching Staff Responsibilities

The policy requires teaching and support staff to ensure that:

- a. promotional materials and recruitment activities provide accurate information about the programme that will enable an applicant to make informed decisions about their options;
- b. they deal promptly with applications in accordance with College procedures and guidelines;
- c. they provide accurate and detailed information to prospective applicants about the admissions procedure for their programme;
- d. teaching staff enquire about any additional support needs potential students may require;
- e. the selection process is followed consistently and fairly and that transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, are used to underpin judgements made during the selection process;
- f. they inform an applicant of the obligations placed on them at the time the offer of a place is made;
- g. they inform applicants, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances;
- h. once an applicant has accepted a place, they are provided with information about the arrangements for enrolment, registration, induction and orientation to the College and the programme;
- i. where requested, they provide feedback to an applicant who has not been offered a place on the reason why they were unsuccessful;
- j. all applicants are given the opportunity to declare any learning difficulty/disability and/or support need at every stage of their application.

## 6. College Management Responsibilities

College Management should ensure that:

- a. all staff involved in the admissions procedure are fully conversant with this policy and the demands it places upon them;
- b. staff development is made available to staff to support them in implementing this policy and to understand the procedures which underpin the policy;
- c. the policy is implemented consistently;
- d. all programmes have accurate, relevant and current admissions strategies and that these are accessible and provide information that will enable an applicant to make informed decisions about their options.

## 7. Higher Education Admissions Appeal

The College has a policy and associated procedure for any applicant to a higher education programme who wishes to appeal against an admissions decision that has been made by the College. This includes where an applicant wishes to appeal against a decision involving Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The College will ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the Admissions Appeal policy and Admissions Appeal procedure.

## 8. Standards by which the Success of this Policy can be Evaluated

The following standards/measures will be considered when evaluating the success of this policy:

- a. positive feedback from applicants on the effectiveness of the policy and procedure through internal and external surveys including the annual National Student Survey (NSS);
- b. positive feedback from staff on the effectiveness of the policy and procedure;
- c. positive feedback received from awarding bodies and from external review activities.

## 9. Responsibility for Implementing this Policy

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy resides at all levels of the College specifically:

- a. the Vice Principals and Heads of School are responsible for overseeing the implementation of sections 4, 6 & 7;

- b. Curriculum Managers & Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that programme teams collaboratively address the requirements of this policy;
- c. teaching staff are responsible for meeting their responsibilities as described in sections 4 & 6.

## 10. Associated Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following supporting/related documentation:

- HE Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):
- Academic Regulations for the Award of Foundation Degrees: Section E
- Regulations Governing Recruitment, Admission and registration to Programmes:
- Higher Education Admissions Appeal