

Higher Education Admissions Procedures

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to detail the admissions procedure for new students applying to study a full-time or part-time higher education course at the college. The procedure has been aligned with the QAA UK Quality Code.

The Admissions process has been developed to ensure:

- A fair, consistent and impartial admissions process
- Impartial information, advice and guidance is provided to all applicants.
- A process where individual learning needs are identified and effective support mechanisms are in place to ensure applicants are appropriately matched to a course.
- A process which is consistent with the college's need to ensure its obligations regarding child protection and safeguarding are met and that its duty of care to staff, students are discharged
- A process which is accessible to all applicants and is consistent with the college's commitment to equality and diversity.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all applicants applying to study a higher education course.

3. Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for this policy within the college lies with the Director of Marketing & Admissions.

4. Service commitment

4.1.1 The college will provide all applicants with:

- A comprehensive range of up-to-date information about courses on offer, including all costs involved
- Detailed information on facilities and services available
- A dedicated customer service from qualified staff
- Ease of access through a well-managed, comprehensive and flexible admissions system
- Efficiency of service, allowing for a prompt response and rapid processing of applications
- Accurate mapping of an appropriate course to individual need, potential and aspiration
- Equality of opportunity.

4.1.2 Learner Services will:

- Provide high quality information, advice and guidance in-line with the matrix quality kite mark
- Provide accurate and timely course information
- Operate within all college policy guidelines
- Process all applications via the central admissions system
- Liaise closely with the Curriculum Directors and Curriculum Managers, staff and students to ensure all applications are processed within agreed service standards
- Monitor service standards on a regular basis
- Process applications and arrange interviews
- Refer applicants to the college careers staff, where appropriate, to receive further advice and guidance
- Refer applicants to the Student Wellbeing Team, where appropriate, to receive further advice & guidance
- Identify those who require further support via Additional Learning Support (ALS)
- Provide statistics of enquiry and application trends
- Ensure that all applicants follow the college entry requirements.

4.1.3 The Marketing team will:

- Provide accurate admissions and course information which is clear, comprehensive and easily accessible for enquirers and applicants
- Admissions and course information, including detailed information on entry requirements and how we assess applicants, is published in our adult promotional materials and on our website
- Marketing aim to provide accurate and up-to date information in all of our publications, but some printed materials are often produced months in advance, applicants should refer to our website for the most up to date admissions and course information.

4.1.4 Programme Leaders will:

- Provide high quality, impartial advice and guidance to applicants
- Ensure that course information is up-to-date and relevant
- Ask appropriate questions during the applicant's interview and challenge reference content, previous studies – where appropriate
- Defer offering a place to the applicant if the applicant needs time to reflect and/or the tutor feels improvements needs to be made before deciding whether to offer a place to the applicant

- Accurately and timely recording of interview outcomes to enable the Admissions Team to communicate with applicants in a fair and transparent way
- Ensure applicants are referred to Learner Services if a particular course or area of study is unsuitable. Learner Services will then offer additional advice and guidance or follow the referral procedures if necessary
- Operate within all college policy guidelines
- Ensure all applicants meet the agreed entry requirements
- Identify those who require further support via Additional Learning Support (ALS).

5. Admissions Process

External applicants (those that are not currently studying at the college), interested studying a full-time or part-time course apply directly to the college online or by requesting an application form from Admissions.

Internal applicants (those that enrolled in the preceding academic year), interested in studying a full-time or part-time course will need to submit an application online or by requesting an application form from Admissions.

All external and internal applicants will be required to attend an interview with the course Programme Leader.

Each applicant is assessed on an individual basis, with academic discretion used in assessing the range of evidence presented by applicants. In assessing the academic suitability and potential of applicants, we consider the following information:

- achievement in awarded qualifications
- predicted achievement in qualifications which are being studied
- references for confirmation of academic potential and personal qualities
- interview
- portfolio of work
- pre-course assessment or audition.

Internal students will be assessed on performance, attendance and behaviours displayed on their current course.

Successful applicants will receive an offer, the offer will either be conditional on the basis of qualifications or requirements yet to be completed or unconditional.

Applicants with an offer will receive confirmation in writing via email which will include information on the terms and conditions.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification via a letter. If an applicant believes they have grounds for a formal review of the admissions decision, they can appeal in writing, see section 12.

6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to admissions practices which positively promote equality, diversity, inclusion and fairness. We do not discriminate directly or indirectly against an applicant. In exercising our decision-making powers, we are not influenced by an applicant's characteristics.

We have a responsibility to ensure that those with a disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term health condition are not prevented from equal access to all aspects of the admissions process.

Applicants are encouraged to disclose a disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term health condition at application stage, this will not influence any decision made on academic grounds. Where an applicant has disclosed a disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term health condition, details will be forwarded to the relevant support team who will discuss the support we can provide.

7. Entry Requirements

- All courses have clear and robust entry requirements.
- College entry requirements are applied consistently across all levels.
- Entry requirements are outlined within college prospectuses and course information sheets.
- All applicants will be asked to provide evidence of their academic qualifications. If no evidence in the required format is provided, this may prevent applicants enrolling at the college.
- If it is found that an applicant has wilfully or negligently misrepresented their qualifications or other information in their application form, the offer may be withdrawn or the student's contract with the college may be terminated.

In some cases, the college may give credit for previous certificated learning or relevant experience and this may be used to contribute to the credits for the new qualification, this is referred to as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or experiential learning (APEL). The applicant will be advised by the Programme Leader on the nature of the evidence that will be required to support their claim for the accreditation of prior learning or prior experiential learning. When making an offer for admission where exemption from assessment has been offered based on APL or APEL, the Programme Leader must have seen evidence of prior learning (certification) or evidence of prior experience to confirm that the required knowledge and skills for which exemption is awarded is in place and therefore their ability to follow the rest of the programme will not be jeopardised.

8. Oversubscribed Courses

Courses that we deliver are popular and can attract a high volume of applications, therefore some courses can become oversubscribed. If this occurs applicants will be notified and advised they will be placed on a waiting list. Allocation of places to those on a waiting list will be based on the date of the offer.

If you have applied for multiple courses it is important that you inform Admissions of your first-choice application. If you change your mind and the course you wish to transfer to is operating a waiting list you will be added to the list. You can however, keep the original course as an active application in the event places do not become available on your first choice.

Where an application is made to a course which is full or operating a waiting list no advantage can be offered to any individual. Offers will be awarded on a sequential basis.

9. Refusing Entry/Delaying Offer

The college may refuse an application to study at the college if an applicant:

- Is unable to demonstrate the minimum entry requirements or if requested to do so, provide satisfactory references
- Has been previously excluded from the college. If the applicant has previously been a student at the College and has been excluded on disciplinary grounds, an application must be made in writing to the Vice Principal: Curriculum
- Has a criminal conviction or has a pending criminal prosecution, which prevents them from undertaking the course or programme applied for
- Potentially endangers or poses a risk of harm to staff or students of the college
- Has specific physical, medical, social or curriculum needs which the college considers, in its reasonable opinion is unable to meet
- Has previously been a student at the college and has any outstanding monies owing to the college (e.g. not all fees have been paid). The applicant's application will not proceed until all outstanding debts are cleared
- Demonstrates rude or abusive behaviours towards staff.

The above is a non-exhaustive list and there may be other reasons or circumstances for which the college may consider an applicant unsuitable to study on a particular course, or at the college.

If the college considers that it is unable to admit an applicant to the course they have applied for, the college will explore with the applicant whether there is a suitable alternative programme and offer appropriate advice and guidance to enable applicants to make alternative choices.

8. Overseas Applications

The college does not accept overseas applications.

9. Applications from Ex-Offenders

Applications from ex-offenders are welcomed and disclosure must be made at the point of application.

Current students must disclose at their progression review any criminal convictions or pending prosecutions that have occurred since enrolling as a student.

A rigorous risk assessment will be conducted by the college's Safeguarding & Welfare Manager, in liaison with external agencies (Probation Services, Social Services, Police, etc.) to assess, without prejudice, the applicant's suitability to attend college. This is to ensure that we protect all of our learners and staff, as well as the applicant.

Recommendations are then made to the Executive Leadership Team who will accept or decline the application based on the findings of the risk assessment.

10. Student Transfer Policy

Warrington & Vale Royal College recognises that the initial selection of a course and institution is a major decision for all students and in some cases, individual needs and aspirations may change over time, which may result in a desire to change course and/or education provider.

Transferring is the process whereby a current student at Warrington & Vale Royal College or at another institution, moves from one higher education programme to another, or one mode of study. This includes:

- An external student transferring from another institution to the college
- A current Warrington & Vale Royal College student transferring to another institution
- A student transferring to a different mode of study, for example full-time to part-time

10.1 Process for students transferring to Warrington & Vale Royal College from another institution

The eligibility of a student from another institution to transfer to a Warrington & Vale Royal College higher education programme is determined by the relevant programme's entry criteria and the timing of the request.

Students from another institution wishing to transfer should contact Admissions at applications@wvr.ac.uk who will, following a preliminary check, advise the prospective student if they should apply. Once the application is received, an interview will be arranged with the Programme Leader.

The college may give credit for previous certificated learning or relevant experience and this may be used to contribute to the credits for the new qualification, this is referred to as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or experiential learning (APEL). In order to assess Accreditation of Prior Learning

(APL) a transcript from the institution they are transferring from is required, it is the student's responsibility to obtain this.

Prior to making an offer the Programme Leader in conjunction with the awarding body will confirm that the required knowledge and skills for which exemption is awarded is in place and therefore the student's ability to follow the rest of the programme will not be jeopardised.

Tuition fees will be proportionate to the start date and teaching requirements, full fee may be applicable and any fees that are not covered by the student loan will be the student's responsibility. An additional fee for re-registering with the awarding body may be applicable.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the institution they are transferring from withdraws them so their student loan can be collected by the college. Liability for tuition fees resides with the students.

10.2 Process for Warrington & Vale Royal College students transferring to another institution

Where a current student wishes to transfer to another higher education provider, the student is required to meet with the Programme Leader to discuss their intentions. The Programme Leader will raise the request to withdraw the student from the programme.

Following completion of one or more modules the students can request a transcript. This transcript will be provided in an electronic or hard copy, and will provide details on all modules and assessments undertaken by the student whilst registered on their current programme, including the number of credits and grades achieved. Requests for a transcript must be made in the academic year the student was enrolled at the college.

A request for a transcript will close the student's registration with the awarding body and they will need to be re-registered by the institution they are transferring to.

Students are advised to confirm their continued eligibility for a student loan with the Student Loans Company.

10.3 Process for students transferring between modes of study (full-time/part-time)

Where a student wishes to transfer to a different mode of study (full-time/part-time) on the same programme, the student is required to request the change via their Programme Leader.

A change in mode of attendance will affect a student's loan entitlement. A new loan application will need to be submitted by the student notifying SLC of the change.

Students are advised to contact the Student Loans Company to confirm how any change in attendance will affect their loan.

10.4 Additional Advice and Guidance

For additional guidance regarding the transfer process prospective and current students should contact applications@wvr.ac.uk

11.Changes to Courses

The college makes all reasonable efforts to deliver the programmes of study described in publications and other college documents. However, on occasion the college may be required to make changes, which may include but not limited to:

- The course curriculum/modules (e.g. replacement of core and/or optional modules)
- Additions/changes to mode(s) of delivery; altering the location of the course. For example, following campus consolidation to allow college to provide the best facilities and academic provision to students, or in the event of a pandemic and national lockdown where we may be required to move teaching online
- Suspension or cessation of a course.

The college will only close courses when it is not financially viable to do so or when the student experience will be compromised. Normally for a course to run there must be a minimum of 10 firm enrolments.

The college will inform applicants and students at the earliest opportunity of any significant changes to, or suspension/cessation of a course, particularly when this occurs between the offer of admission and enrolment. Higher education applicants will be notified 5 days after A 'Level results day.

If required, the college will assist applicants in identifying similar programmes of study, both internally and externally if there are course changes.

12.Appeals

If an applicant wishes to appeal against an admissions decision, then they must do so in writing to the Admissions Manager, within 10 working days of the date on the refusal letter.

We will consider all appeals and inform applicants of the decision within 10 working days of receipt of the letter.

If you continue to be dissatisfied with the response then you can submit a formal complaint. All complaints must be made in writing, by letter or email to the Quality Department quality@wvr.ac.uk, please refer to our Complaints and Compliments Policy.

There is no right of appeal where the application has already been considered by the Principal and Executive Leadership Team due to safeguarding concerns.

13. Quality Assurance & Monitoring

The admissions procedure is quality assured via the Director of Marketing & Admissions, recorded observation of the interview/advice sessions, user feedback, and evaluation forms and through compliance with Office for Students (OfS) and the external accreditation the Matrix quality kitemark

The college was re-accredited with the Matrix standard, whole organisation in June 2022 and received an OFSTED rating of good in November 2019.