

Quality Code for Higher Education

Procedure for Admissions Decisions

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Description: This document details the college procedures for admission and 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: Academic Heads & Curriculum Managers / Units
Higher Education & Skills
Student Services

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](#)

Procedure for Admission Decisions

INTRODUCTION

Whilst considering the regulations of partner Universities and the requirements of the UK Quality Code (2018) for Core Practice Q1 “The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system”, and Condition of registration B2 “The provider must support all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education about the level of support given to students”, this code of practice makes clear the processes that must be adopted in relation to the admissions of new students to Higher Education programmes. The code of practice reflects the RNN Group’s commitment to ensuring governance over academic standards and that judgments relating to admissions are carried out with rigour, fairness and probity. This code of practice applies wherever higher education is delivered by the RNN Group. The systems and policies that the College will follow when admitting Higher Education students to the College, include the following.

- Accredited prior learning (APL) – certificated (APCL) and experiential (APEL)
- English language proficiency requirements
- Parity between part and full-time study applicants
- Equal opportunities monitoring
- Applicants with disabilities
- Applicants with criminal convictions
- Informing students of programme details and requirements
- The making of applicants and offers
- Assessment of fee status
- Inducting new students
- Staff development for those making admissions decisions
- Monitoring admissions decisions
- An awareness of the groups of students which are under-represented at the college.

1. General Principles

1.1 Whilst the RNN Group welcomes applications from individuals who have the potential to succeed in Higher Education (HE), this section recognises the complexity of factors involved in the admissions process and therefore focuses on: i. identification and recruitment of prospective students; ii. selection of applicants suitable for a particular programme; iii. offer of a place on a programme of study; iv. enrolment of students onto a programme of study; v. induction and orientation of new students;

1.2 The RNN Group’s procedures for the recruitment and admission of students have been designed to be fair, clear and explicit. Applications will be treated as ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’ entries. The term ‘standard entry’ refers to applicants who obtain or expect to obtain the specified and traditional entry points or qualifications needed to progress onto a chosen award/programme of study. The term ‘non-standard entry’ refers to applicants who do not fulfil traditional entry criteria but can gain entry through other criteria as specified within approved programme documentation.

1.3 The RNN Group has the following agreed definition for Widening Participation entry to its Higher Education Provision. **Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lower income households and other under-represented groups may face barriers to entry to higher education. Widen participation schemes attempt to remove these barriers and improve**

access to education, progress within higher education and to improve graduate outcomes and employability.

1.5 The Recruitment and Events Manager will ensure that the staff within the College Admissions team are appropriately trained, supervised and updated in order to implement relevant sections of the code of practice for Higher Education Admissions.

1.6 The RNN Group will ensure regular monitoring and review of recruitment, admissions, and enrolment processes and procedures, and takes responsibility for ensuring all those involved in admissions are competent to undertake their roles.

1.7 Judgements exercised in the admissions process must be underpinned by transparent and justifiable criteria that is consistently implemented without undue variance. Prospective students will be offered support and guidance at all stages.

1.9 The RNN Group is committed to widening participation and to promoting lifelong learning in conjunction with its Equality of Opportunity policies. It actively employs strategies within its recruitment and selection procedures to fulfil these aims. TEC Partnership is committed to pursuing non-discriminatory systems and practices inclusive of the following: i. age ii. disability iii. gender reassignment iv. pregnancy and maternity v. race vi. religion or belief vii. sex viii. socio-economic group ix. sexual orientation

1.10 This Code of Practice is informed by the following:

- i. Disability Discrimination Act (1995, 2005)
- ii. Equality Act (2010)
- iii. Data Protection Act (2018)
- iv. Age Discrimination Act (2006) v. Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- vi. Human Rights Act (1998)
- vii. Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- viii. Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
- ix. Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001)
- x. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974, 2010)

1.11 Whilst the RNN Group recognises the complex judgements that are made when assessing the relative potential of all applicants, admissions processes must at all times be fair and lawful.

2. Process of Admission

2.1 Learner Advisors and Programme Leaders must process all applications received in a timely manner. Applicants must receive a response to their application within 14 days.

2.2 It is expected that in the majority of cases applicants will be invited to a formal interview, and the interview date must be arranged within 14 days of receipt of the completed application. The questions asked by the Programme Leader at interview will be defined in advance and used with every candidate

4.3 Applicants will be required to present their original certificates for inspection and the right is reserved to verify directly with the awarding bodies.

4.4 Programme Leaders are permitted to offer a place for non-standard entry applicants that is 'conditional' or 'unconditional'. 'Conditional' places must have clearly defined conditions and written in unambiguous language, normally related to gaining an entry qualification. Non-standard entry applicants usually do not meet the stated academic entry requirements of a programme, in those cases all entry essays/audition work set must be marked before an offer is made to an applicant.

4.7 The RNN Group reserves the right to refuse entry to applicants who do not meet the relevant entry criteria and if the Programme Leader is not satisfied that the applicant is academically able programme of study. Further refusal of entry or mandatory withdrawal if enrolled, may also occur if an applicant provides false information.

4.8 Programme Leaders must communicate admissions decisions to Learner Advisors within Learner Services in a timely manner. The decision must be communicated to students within 7 days of interview.

4.9 Programme Leaders and Learner Advisors must report to the School Liaisons and Admissions Manager (or equivalent) and/or HE Quality Office any matters that are unclear or that may need further consideration such as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).

4.10 In instances where a student does not achieve the results specified to gain entry onto a chosen programme with the RNN Group, students can request a meeting with the careers team for further guidance and direction.

4.11 Upon being offered a place it is RNN Group's responsibility to inform the applicant in writing and the applicant's duty to inform the RNN Group of the acceptance or refusal of a place.

4.12 Decisions on programmes being discontinued or unlikely to recruit a viable number of students will be the responsibility of the relevant college SMT. Students will be informed and advised as per the Student Protection Plan.

4.13 Where an applicant, having received a conditional offer, fails to meet the criteria specified by the Partnership for admission within the specified timescale, the RNN Group shall be under no obligation to admit the student to the original or to an alternative programme.

4.14 Students who are offered a place on any Higher Education programme within TEC Partnership must receive a copy of the Student Contract with their offer which is sent to the electronic mail address provided by the student.

3. ADMISSIONS TUTORS

The College will identify staff from the institution who will be responsible for admissions for each of the programmes offered. Tutors **may** be responsible for more than one programme, however, there **should** be no more than one named Admissions Tutor per programme. A list of nominated individuals will be held by the Higher Education & Skills Department.

Admissions tutors **must** engage in such staff development activities as are reasonably prescribed by the College.

4. REQUIREMENT FOR A WRITTEN APPLICATION AS A PRECONDITION FOR AN OFFER

A candidate **must not** be admitted to, or be registered for, a programme of study without having submitted a written application using the form approved for the purpose, and without having been made an offer in writing which accords with this Code of Practice (CoP).

5. PROGRAMME APPROVAL

A programme **must not** be advertised before the programme has been granted full approval by the awarding body. Where planning permission approval has been granted any advertising **must** explicitly indicate that the programme is 'subject to approval' until such time as full approval is granted.

6.ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

Applications which meet the entry requirements

Admissions staff have full authority to make an offer where the applicant satisfies or exceeds the entry requirements approved by a College Approval Panel and published for the programme concerned.

‘SPECIAL CASES’

Where an applicant does not meet the approved entry requirements and Awarding Body Admissions Requirements and staff wishes to make an offer, the application must be deemed a ‘special case’ and be submitted to the awarding body for decision. In this instance sufficient supporting evidence must be submitted which should be in the form of an Interview Report, detailing discussions with the applicant and indicating the admission staff’s reasons for recommending admission notwithstanding the entry requirements.

Where there are approved entry requirements that are different from the admission regulations (i.e. lower) then those programme requirements take precedence and whether a case needs to be considered is measured against those standards.

In determining whether an overseas qualification is lower than the normal standard then the College will defer to the Awarding Body or relevant HEI.

Each application must be considered on its merits by a person nominated by the Academic Head and the relevant Awarding Body.

APPLICATIONS BY INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Where an applicant has non-UK qualifications the College will make appropriate use of the guidance available from the United Kingdom National Academic Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) and / or UCAS.

APPLICATIONS FOR ‘ADVANCED STANDING’

Subject to the preceding paragraphs, all applications for ‘advanced standing’ – that is to a stage higher than the first stage of the programme – must be determined in accordance with the awarding body or relevant HEI.

APPLICATIONS AFTER THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

An application submitted on or after the first day of the commencement of the programme in any given year, must be submitted to the Awarding Body for determination by the person nominated by the assistant principal to deal with special cases. Such cases should be assessed on an individual basis to determine the effects that late arrival may have on the student, both in terms of academic and pastoral matters in accordance with the College’s requirements for induction.

CONDITIONAL OFFERS

Where an offer is made subject to conditions the College **must** ensure, by receipt of appropriate documentation, that the conditions have been satisfied **before** allowing the applicant to attend lectures and to be registered on the programme of study.

RECORD-KEEPING

The College will retain sufficient records of each admissions decision to provide an audit trail, including any advice (such as NARIC assessments) on which the decision was based. Records will at least be kept until the applicant has successfully completed the programme on to which s/he was admitted or until s/he has formally withdrawn or been failed by the appropriate Board of Examiners.

The College will take reasonable steps to ensure the authenticity of the supporting documentation and that copies are certified by a reputable body.

MONITORING OF COMPLIANCE

PARTNER INSTITUTION REPORTS

The College will ensure that any Awarding Body requirements for overseeing compliance within this CoP are met.

It will ensure that it –

- analyses the effectiveness of the procedures it has operated during that year
- identifies any strengths, examples of good practice worthy of wider dissemination
- lists any areas for development
- details the effectiveness of procedures to deal with applicants with criminal convictions
- details the effectiveness of procedures for identifying special cases
- provides details and copies of any relevant updated policies and procedures
- provides details of any significant changes in roles and responsibilities
- details the impact of any changes in relevant legislation