

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

Policy/Procedure Title and Number	Admissions Policy
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## **1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to all applicants for courses at Abingdon and Witney College. We also take account of admission criteria stipulated by partner organisations, such as university partners, as applicable.

For the purpose of this policy the terms 'admissions' 'applicant' and 'application' includes 'enrol' 'enrollee' and 'enrolment'.

## **2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

### **2.1 Equality**

Abingdon and Witney College is committed to increasing and widening participation in education and training. Applications to attend college courses are encouraged from all interested individuals. Abingdon and Witney College is proud to be an inclusive organisation.

The college is committed to ensuring that the admissions process will be open and transparent and that no individual or group receives less favourable treatment by virtue of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion / belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy / maternity and marriage / civil partnership.

The college will actively combat discrimination in all its forms by implementing effective policies and empowering staff and students to take appropriate action. The college is committed to ensuring fair treatment for all. All reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that individuals with disabilities, particularly, are not disadvantaged.

The college aims to extend the diversity of its student population through the development of an inclusive learning environment.

### **2.2 Safeguarding**

This college is committed to safeguarding, preventing extremism, and promoting the welfare of students, and expects everyone to share this commitment. As part of this responsibility, the college must carefully consider any concerns regarding an applicant's potential involvement in criminal or extremist activity. Such involvement could pose a risk to the safety and well-being of the student body and wider campus community.

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Colleges serve as diverse and inclusive environments where students from various backgrounds come together to learn and grow. Ensuring a safe and supportive

atmosphere is essential for academic success, personal development, and the protection of fundamental values such as respect, tolerance, and the rule of law. If an applicant has a history of engaging in activities that contradict these values—such as promoting extremist ideologies, engaging in violent or illegal behaviour, or being associated with groups that pose a security risk—it may raise concerns about their suitability for admission.

Additionally, colleges have a legal and ethical duty to prevent radicalisation and criminal activities on campus. The college works in partnership with law enforcement, local authorities, and safeguarding bodies to ensure that the learning environment remains free from harm. Admitting an individual with a concerning background could undermine these efforts and potentially create an unsafe or disruptive atmosphere for other students and staff.

While each applicant is considered on a case-by-case basis, the college takes these concerns seriously and carefully evaluates any potential risks. The decision to deny admission based on such concerns is not taken lightly but is made in the best interests of the entire college community.

### **2.3 Data Protection**

All data will be handled in line with the college's Data Protection Policy which complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Student applications are recorded on the college student database. This allows electronic reports to be produced and viewed by relevant college staff to ensure our curriculum offer is refreshed according to demand.

Data is securely backed up in line with current electronic storage laws.

### **3. INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

#### **3.1 Impartial advice**

The college is committed to providing impartial advice and guidance as part of the admissions process to help applicants to choose the course which is right for them. Students who are not sure about the level or type of course they want to do are referred to the careers team or to other organisations as appropriate.

#### **3.2 Course information**

The college is committed to providing accurate, comprehensive and timely course information. This information is made available via the college prospectus and the college website. Further information or direct discussions with course tutors can be arranged on request, through the admissions team or by attendance at one of the regular college open days.

Where information is unknown (such as fees for the following year) the college will clearly indicate that this information is to follow or subject to review and will indicate a date when this information is likely to be made available.

The college makes every effort to ensure that courses are delivered in line with the course information issued. However, we may alter the content of the course from that advertised in order to respond to changing industry requirements or practices, to take advantage of expertise from a new member of staff, or in line with awarding body requirements.

In the unlikely event of course information changing after individuals have applied for the course, the college will ensure that all individuals are provided with updated information and given the opportunity to discuss or change their choice of course.

Course information is available in large print format or Braille on request from the Admissions Team - 01235 216400, [enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk).

### **4. APPLICATIONS**

Applications to the college can be made online via the website or using a hard copy application form. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application is accurate and that no significant information has been withheld. The college will help applicants who are unable to complete the application form themselves. Applicants will be kept up to date about the status of their application. The college may withdraw an offer of a place if information is later made available that should have been discussed at interview, or otherwise considered during the application process. Applications for most HE (Higher Education) courses should be made via UCAS. Some part-time HE courses require direct application to the college. The application method will be indicated on the course information.

## **5. INTERVIEWS**

### **5.1 Overview of the interview process**

Applicants for full time and some part-time courses will be interviewed by a member of staff from the relevant curriculum area, or the Admissions Team. The course information and entry requirements for the course will indicate whether an interview is required. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the interview process where applicants have needs that need to be considered.

The aim of the interview is to help an applicant consider a range of options and choose a course that matches their aspirations and potential and which builds on their prior attainment and experience. The process focuses on the needs and interests of the individual applicant and will determine the suitability of the applicant for the course, or courses, applied for. Should further information, advice and guidance be needed, applicants will be referred to the college's appropriate team.

After the interview, applicants will receive a written offer, which may be conditional or unconditional. The record of the decisions taken and any conditions of acceptance will be recorded on the interview record and on the college student database.

Details of any additional support required will be recorded and referred to the Student Engagement Team.

Where the interviewing tutor is unable to make an immediate conditional or unconditional offer, for example pending further investigation of support needs or the requirement for an individual risk assessment, then the applicant will be informed of the next steps in the process and when they are likely to receive a decision.

The college will make every effort to make a prompt decision whilst ensuring that a fair and transparent process is followed that does not disadvantage applicants.

### **5.2 Criteria for admission**

Abingdon and Witney College is an inclusive organisation and we will do our best to ensure that applicants are offered a place on their course of choice. If we believe that an applicant's prior knowledge, skills or experience would make successful completion of their preferred course unlikely, we will make every effort to identify a suitable alternative utilising independent advice and guidance where needed.

Applicants will need to:

- Meet the entry requirements of a course. By exception, applicants who do not meet the entry requirements, but have appropriate experience, will be considered on merit.
- Provide a satisfactory reference if one is requested by the college.
- Attend and pass an interview, where required for a specific course.
- Pay any fees required including materials and other course costs as detailed in the course information.
- Agree to the Terms and Conditions of the College at the time of accepting an offer of a place. These are available via the college website or on request from the Admissions Team – 01235 555585, [enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk). Please see section 7.2 for further detail.

Applicants who do not meet published entry requirements for a particular course may be given a place subject to specified conditions. These conditions will be made explicit to the applicant. A decision to admit an applicant under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Principal or their nominee(s).

## **6. ADMISSIONS UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **6.1 Applicants with learning difficulties/disabilities**

The application form provides the opportunity for applicants to identify whether they would like any additional support at college. Parents, guardians or carers are welcome to attend the interview to offer support to the applicant or to talk directly to the college about support needs if required.

The college Student Engagement team will work with parents, guardians and carers to identify any support required and will, wherever reasonable, make arrangements to put this support in place. Applicants who have an Education, Health and Care Plan should indicate this on the application form so that the college can make transition to further study as straight forward as possible.

### **6.2 Applicants with prior convictions**

All applicants are asked to declare any unspent criminal conviction (including cautions, reprimands and spent convictions). Spent convictions may need to be declared when applying for a specific curriculum area. Where such a conviction is declared, a risk assessment will be undertaken to establish if the application can be approved without risk to the college or its students.

### **6.3 Applicants for courses preparing students for working with children or vulnerable adults**

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be undertaken in respect of applications for all courses involving direct contact with children and vulnerable adults. Failure to disclose any criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands and spent convictions) may result in applications being declined. Where a previous conviction would prevent the applicant from working in the profession concerned, the college

would usually advise the applicant to consider a course more likely to deliver positive employment outcomes. If a prior conviction would prevent the applicant from fully participating in the course (for example, attending work experience) then the college is likely to refuse admission.

#### **6.4 Applications from students who have previously been excluded from the college**

Students excluded from college may re-apply for admission from the next academic year following the date of exclusion. Applications will be considered on merit and within the guidelines of this policy. The college reserves the right to refuse admission; please see Section 8 below.

#### **6.5 Applicants who are under 16 years of age**

Applicants under the age of 16 (as at 31 August) will not usually be permitted entry to a full-time course at the college and must have a supporting letter from their Local Education Authority or their school (if the applicant is attending a school).

The college does offer a range of learning opportunities to those under the age of 16, both as part of a school programme or as part of a home education plan. Specific conditions and approvals are required to access these opportunities.

If the applicant is not attending a school, a supporting letter from a parent will be required. The College will liaise with the Lead Elective Home Education (EHE) Officer in cases where applicants are home schooled.

Sufficient funding must be identified for applicants under the age of 16 prior to admission.

No students will be admitted under the age of 14 unless the course has been specifically designed for this age group.

### **7. OFFERS**

#### **7.1 Making an offer**

Offers of a place will be made to applicants by email, following their interview. Every effort will be made to make offers as quickly as possible. HE students applying through UCAS will also be notified through the UCAS system.

The offer letter will confirm on which course an offer has been made, provide confirmation of course information, and will outline any conditions attached to the offer (such as achieving certain exam results). The letter will confirm any tuition or other fees for the course, detail when such fees are due and will also provide a web link to the terms and conditions of the college.

The college will also advise applicants of their right to change their mind about an offer. Please see section 7.3 below.

#### **7.2 Accepting an offer**

By accepting an offer, applicants agree that when they enrol they will comply with the college's terms and conditions. These are outlined in the following policies, available on our website:

- Admissions Policy
- Tuition Fee Policy
- Student Performance Management & Disciplinary Policy
- IT Use of Systems Regulations
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Complaints Procedure

### **7.3 Applicants who change their mind about an offer**

If an applicant changes their mind about accepting a place before they enrol, they have a right to cancel and simply need to contact the college to advise that they no longer wish to accept their offered place.

Once the course has started the college refund policy will apply. This can be found within the college Tuition Fee Policy.

### **7.4 Withdrawing an offer**

If the college decides it must cancel a course, it will withdraw any offers made to applicants for the course in question. Applicants will be advised as soon as possible and at least 1 week before the start of the course. All applicants will be provided with advice and guidance to support them to find alternative provision.

## **8. RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION**

### **8.1 The College reserves the right to refuse admission to an applicant:**

- Who does not meet the specified admission criteria for a course
- Who has convictions that have not been spent or can never become spent following a risk assessment which demonstrates the level of risk remains too high
- Where information is available concerning activities outside the law or the expression of beliefs which prima facie present a clear and immediate danger of infraction of the law
- Who has previously been excluded from Abingdon and Witney College or another educational institution
- Who has previously attended this or other educational establishments and not completed courses
- Who has outstanding debts to the college

### **8.2 Internal review of all refused applications**

All applicants who are at risk of not being offered a place after their interview are referred to the college Fair Access Panel. This panel meets regularly to review and potentially challenge rejected applications to ensure this policy has been carefully



followed.

## **9. RIGHT TO APPEAL AN APPLICATION DECISION**

Every applicant has the right to appeal to any application decision. This should be made direct to the Personal Assistant to the Senior Management Team (smtpas@abingdon-witney.ac.uk) within 10 working days of communication of the decision.