

Further Education and Apprenticeships/Traineeships Admissions Procedure



Date approved:	11 Feb 2020
Approved by:	AMT/CCMT
Responsible Manager:	Admissions Manager
Executive Lead:	Vice Principal – Engagement

Applicable to staff:	Yes
Applicable to students:	Yes
Accessible to students:	Yes
Accessible to general public: (including clients)	Yes

Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:		Date:
• AMT	Yes	11 Feb 2020
• CCMT	Yes	11 Feb 2020
• Students	Yes	Feb 2020

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1. Scope and purpose of the procedure

This procedure applies to all applications made by prospective students to any of our full or part time further education courses, apprenticeships or traineeships excluding higher and degree apprenticeships regardless of background or characteristic.

This procedure identifies the College's approach to delivering a fair, accessible, transparent, consistent and professional admissions service to all applicants who have the potential to benefit from further education or an apprenticeship.

This procedure takes into account sector best practice, statutory and legislative obligations. There may be occasions where this procedure will be superseded by the relevant policies and procedures relating to these obligations and requirements.

2. Accountability and Responsibilities

2.1 The Admissions Manager is responsible for ensuring the College has appropriate admissions procedures in place in line with best practice, statutory and legal requirements and that these are effectively implemented and monitored. They are also responsible for ensuring this procedure is accessible to staff and students and that appropriate training is in place for staff involved in making admissions decisions.

All staff involved in any aspect of the admissions process are responsible for following this procedure.

2.2 Admissions Team

B&FC's Admissions Team are responsible for receiving and processing applications to our further education courses, traineeships and apprenticeships (excluding higher and degree apprenticeships). Applications come from a variety of channels including the College website, instruction (verbal or electronic) from current students and paper forms.

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Team to enter accurate data onto the College's Management and Information System, EBS. Admissions Officers assess all applications against approved, published entry criteria as part of the decision making process and liaise with designated academic staff if a decision cannot be made on the basis of formal qualifications (referred to as non-standard applications).

The main responsibilities of the Admissions Team include:

- To assess applications using agreed admissions criteria, and to make decisions on all standard applications within agreed timescales outlined below
- To liaise with designated academic staff on non-standard entry requirements including relevant work/life experience
- To liaise with the apprenticeship team on any apprenticeship applications and update EBS when any decisions or changes in status occur
- To respond to applicants within agreed timeframes including:
 - Acknowledging all online applications immediately

- All other applications (e.g. paper/verbal or written request from current students) normally within five to seven working days
- To correspond directly with applicants on admissions matters, and, where appropriate, in consultation with designated academic staff
- To provide timely and relevant information at various stages of the process, to ensure applicants remain involved, updated and motivated prior to the start of the academic year
- To correspond with applicants in a timely manner when any changes to their programme of application occurs (such as those made during revalidation) in line with Admissions best practice and Consumer Market Authority legislation
- To keep accurate and thorough records to ensure a clear audit log is maintained
- To proactively liaise with curriculum involved in the admissions process to ensure admissions policies and procedures are strictly adhered to
- To be involved in the organising of any auditions, interviews, and open days as appropriate
- To be proactively involved in keeping up to date with developments in education and to participate in training and development appropriate to their role
- To monitor application data ensuring that published entry requirements are both accurate and consistent

2.3 Apprenticeships Team

The Head of Apprenticeships is responsible for ensuring the College has appropriate procedures in place in line with best practice, statutory and legal requirements for the sign up process for traineeships and apprenticeships.

The Apprenticeships Team are responsible for the organisation and delivery of apprenticeship recruitment and sign up events and for liaising with the Admissions team to obtain an up-to-date list of applicants. They are also responsible for proactively reporting any updates to Admissions so that EBS can be updated in a timely manner.

3. Admissions Principles

This procedure is underpinned by a number of principles including:

- B&FC is committed to operating at all times a transparent, accessible, professional, consistent and clear admissions experience for all applicants regardless of gender, ethnic or national origin, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic
- All applicants will be treated with respect and fairness during all stages of the admissions process.
- Applicants will be kept informed throughout the application process and all decisions will be clearly articulated in a transparent and timely manner.
- B&FC will always aim to reduce or remove any unnecessary barriers in the application process and the Admissions Team will work with relevant colleagues to provide appropriate support

- Assessment methods will be fair, reliable and appropriate to support B&FC in selecting students with the potential to enrol on, and complete their courses successfully.
- Clear, timely information will be provided to applicants to support them in making informed choices that support their career goals.
- All staff involved in the admissions process will be appropriately trained to perform their role
- B&FC will always aim provide the right support so that applicants can ultimately benefit from, and succeed in, their programme or apprenticeship.
- Relevant regulations and legislation will be complied with at all times.

4. Procedure

4.1 Entry Requirements

Criteria for admissions are set by the Admissions Team in liaison with curriculum and the Apprenticeships Team. They are reviewed and approved annually and bi-annually are benchmarked against other providers to ensure they remain clear, reasonable and consistent. Entry requirements are approved by AMT.

Entry criteria are aligned to the College's vision and values and those outlined in the Admissions Policy.

4.2 Assessing Applications

Applications are assessed and places offered on the basis of the academic and professional judgement of appropriately trained staff. Admissions selectors typically use the following criteria to assess an application received via the application itself or through interview:

- Academic qualifications (including prior and predicted grades)
- Relevant work/life experience and/or knowledge (where appropriate)
- Keen interest in their chosen subject
- Programme-specific criteria (e.g. audition, satisfactory DBS, employer secured)

Programme specific criteria

In addition to the basic criteria described above there will be specific entry criteria for some programmes. These are listed on the College's website and published material such as prospectuses.

Our Admissions assessment framework supports a fair, accessible and transparent process and includes the following three stages with the fourth culminating in enrolment/sign up:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Achieved and predicted qualifications and/or	Additional requirements such as a successful interview or	Confirmation (achieving entry requirements in final exam results and all other	Enrolment/Sign Up

relevant work/life experience/knowledge and/or keen interest in their chosen subject	audition or securing an employer	academic or non-academic entry requirements such as satisfactory DBS)	
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4.3 Special Cases

Transfer to B&FC for part of a further education course or apprenticeships

B&FC will consider applications from students wishing to transfer to B&FC for part of a further education course e.g. completing one year at another provider and wishing to complete the second year with us. Applicants should initially contact admissions to discuss their individual circumstances. Requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

16 year old apprenticeship applicants

All 16 year old apprenticeship applicants have a full time programme added to their record. They are then invited into interview to speak to both the Apprenticeship Team and full time equivalent to fully understand their options. An applicant may request that the full time option is removed from their record following interview. Admissions will update EBS accordingly.

Applicants requiring additional support

B&FC are committed to providing an accessible admissions process for all. Where an applicant has declared a disability or need for additional support, Admissions liaise with the relevant colleagues to provide information to applicants and support at events held throughout the admissions process such as open events, interviews and auditions.

4.4 Interviews

Interviews are an integral part of the B&FC admissions process to ensure that applicants are placed onto a course that is appropriate, meets their careers goals and enables them to succeed.

At B&FC all further education applicants are offered an assessment interview whereby they can have a face-to-face discussion to assess their suitability for the course, demonstrate their ability in a subject (e.g. music, art or performance), discuss any non-standard or experiential learning or experience and determine any additional support that might be provided to improve student success.

4.4.1 16-18 further education interviews

All 16-18 applicants are typically invited to attend an informal interview within three weeks of applying. The interview is their opportunity to speak to a tutor about their career goals, chosen course or apprenticeship, understand the entry requirements needed and learn about their next steps. If they have applied for both a full time programme and an apprenticeship they are directed to speak to both options during their interview.

16-18 interviews may involve a presentation about the College, group or one-to-one

discussions with a course tutor or member of the apprenticeship team, a brief assessment/activity or an audition/performance.

Following interview, outcomes including whether or not an offer is to be made are documented and sent to Admissions for updating in EBS.

4.4.2 19+ further education interviews

We consider applications from people holding a wide range of qualifications and experience. Therefore all applicants aged 19 and over are invited to attend an event where they can speak to a course tutor about their chosen course, qualifications and/or relevant work/life experience, understand entry requirements, learn about funding and support available and find out about next steps.

Following interview, outcomes including whether or not an offer is to be made are documented and sent to Admissions for updating in EBS.

4.4.3 Apprenticeship events

All apprenticeship applicants are invited to an event or series of events where they can:

- find out more about life as an apprentice
- understand the steps in becoming an apprentice such as securing an employer
- interview with an apprenticeship skills coach
- take an online maths, English and ICT assessment
- create or improve their CV

The Apprenticeships Team are responsible for informing Admissions to any updates, decisions or changes to applications following these events.

4.5 Decisions and offers

4.5.1 16-18 further education

Following interview, applicants will normally receive an offer letter within 7 working days. In cases where a follow up interview is required or they are referred to Gateway, applicants are informed at the event and is followed up with a letter, email or phone call within 5 working days to confirm their next steps.

4.5.2 19+ further education

Applicants will normally receive a conditional offer within 14 working days of applying.

4.5.3 Offers

An offer will be one of the following:

1. **Conditional** – where an applicant has been initially assessed as suitable for the course but still needs to meet some academic and non-academic requirements such as not yet achieving a specified result with their current qualification, taking a

BKSB assessment or providing further information about their work/life experience related to the course.

2. **Unconditional** – where an applicant has met all entry criteria an unconditional offer will be made.

All applicants receiving an offer will receive a letter outlining in detail the conditions of the offer. This will include the details of any specific criteria that needs to be fulfilled before an applicant can enrol onto their programme. It will include a link to the College's Terms and Conditions and the Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy.

4.5.4 Reject decisions

Reject decisions are only made in very limited cases for B&FC further education courses. Every effort is made to find an alternate, suitable course or apprenticeship where the original course/apprenticeship is not appropriate.

Reject decisions will be made – but are not limited to – the following reasons:

- Knowingly providing false or fraudulent information at any point of the application process
- Failure to fulfil academic or non-academic entry requirements (for example, a satisfactory DBS disclosure or medical clearance before starting a course or providing evidence of securing relevant employment or placement)

All rejections are reviewed by the Admissions Manager in liaison with the Head of Curriculum. All applicants who receive a reject decision will be provided with feedback as to why their application was unsuccessful.

4.6 Non- academic considerations

4.6.1 Criminal Convictions

Applicants declaring a criminal conviction will be assessed according to the Appropriateness of Study Policy.

4.6.2 Disclosure and Barring Service

Some courses mandate a satisfactory DBS before starting the programme. In such cases, this will be made clear in any published entry requirements and in any resulting offers.

4.7 Offer holder next steps

Applicants wishing to confirm their place with us can do so in a number of ways and at any point after receiving an offer:

- Returning any FREEPOST reply cards to Admissions enclosed in their offer letter or other mailings to
Admissions
Blackpool and the Fylde College
FREEPOST SCE155559

Bispham Campus
Blackpool FY2 0UR

- Sending an email or text to the Admissions Team at admissions@blackpool.ac.uk
- Phoning the Admissions Team at 01253 504322
- Replying to an email or text sent from the Admissions Team

4.8 Confirmation

Before an applicant can enrol they must produce evidence that they have fully met the academic and non-academic conditions outlined in their initial offer. This could include, for example, copies of exam certificates or a satisfactory DBS check.

5. Applicants wishing to reapply

Applicants who are unsuccessful are welcome to reapply. Previous admissions decisions will not be taken into account, however, there will be circumstances where the Appropriateness to Study Policy will take precedence.

6. Widening access

Widening access and supporting social mobility are integral to our ethos and mission and we welcome applications from everyone who could benefit from and be successful in, further education or an apprenticeship.

Whilst applicants can disclose information at any point in the admissions process we encourage them to provide this information at the point of application to ensure we can contact them to discuss what adjustments can be made, what support they will require once they arrive and information about support such as bursaries that might be of interest.

6.1 Applicants with a Disability

We welcome applications from disabled students and those with specific learning difficulties and their applications will be considered on the same academic grounds as those of other students. We will contact applicants who indicate a disability on their application and subsequently accept an offer of a place to study with us. We will invite them to discuss their support needs with a member of the Student Support and Wellbeing team so that any necessary support can be arranged.

Further information may be found at : <https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/student-services#higher-education-learning-support>

6.2 Applicants who have been in Local Authority Care (Looked After Children/In Care)

We welcome applications from students who have had experience of being in local authority care. Applicants who indicate they have been in care on their application will be contacted by the Student Support and Wellbeing Team to discuss any support or needs they may have. Further information may be found at: <https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/localoffer/lookedafter>

7. Reporting

Information we process about applicants will be used to manage their application and provide information about funding and/or finance they may be entitled to, and may be shared with organisations that have either statutory or regulatory responsibilities for the educational sector and for analytical purposes.

This includes but is not limited to organisations such as ESFA and Student Finance England.

8. Appeals and Complaints

An appeal is defined as a challenge to admissions decision. This may be a decision to reject your application or on the conditions of your offer.

An appeal is not:

- general feedback
- an expression of dissatisfaction with a service you have received from B&FC

Applicants wishing to appeal an admissions decision should follow the Admissions Appeals Procedure.

The Compliments, Complaints and Feedback procedure should be followed in the above instances. Further information may be found on our website at www.blackpool.ac.uk/info/feedback

Academic appeals for current students are covered under separate procedures which may be found on our website:

Further Education and Work Based Learning: <https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/college-policies>