

Higher Education 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

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• AMT	Yes	11 Feb 2020
• CCMT	Yes	11 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 higher education courses regardless of background or characteristic with the exception of higher and degree apprenticeships and maritime as outlined below.

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 higher education.

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 There may be occasions where this procedure will be superseded by the relevant policies and procedures relating to these obligations and requirements.

Applications from individuals for maritime degree-level courses including those requiring a Tier 2 visa are managed separately by the Student Administration Manager for Fleetwood or Head of Student Administration.

Higher and degree apprenticeships are covered separately under B13 of the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship Regulations which may be found on our website:

https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/sites/default/files/regs/B13-Higher_and_Degree_Apprenticeship_Regulations.pdf

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. The Admissions Manager is 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 higher education courses. Applications come from a variety of channels including UCAS, the College website, instruction (verbal or electronic) from current students wishing to progress from Level 3 to our HE provision and paper forms.

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Team to enter accurate data onto the College's Management and Information System, EBS, and where applicable, UCAS. Admissions Officers assess all applications against 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 published admissions criteria, as set out in the programme specification, and to make initial decisions on all standard applications within five working days
- To liaise with designated academic staff on non-standard entry requirements including relevant work/life experience and/or knowledge
- To correspond directly with applicants on admissions matters, where appropriate, in consultation with designated academic staff within agreed timeframes
- To liaise with the Head of Student Administration or Student Administration Manager for Fleetwood on any international applications regarding UKVI requirements and funding eligibility following the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration UKVI Tier 4 Policy
- To be responsible, in liaison with UCAS and other agencies, for checking applications for evidence of fraud/plagiarism and for investigating and resolving such cases
- 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 Consumer Market Authority legislation
- To keep accurate and thorough records with a full audit trail
- To proactively liaise with curriculum involved throughout 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 which may have a bearing on HE selection and recruitment, and to participate in relevant training and development
- To monitor application data and update the UCAS system and other relevant sites to ensure that published course information is both accurate and consistent

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 approved as part of the College’s validation process and are set out in the programme specification and published on the College website. 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:

- Academic qualifications (including prior and predicted grades)
- Relevant work/life experience and/or knowledge (where appropriate)
- Programme-specific criteria (e.g. audition, satisfactory DBS)
- International applicants requiring a Tier 4 visa – against requirements outlined in the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration UKVI Tier 4 Policy.

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 in programme specification documentation where found.

Our Admissions assessment framework supports a fair and transparent process and includes the following three stages culminating with enrolment as stage 4:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Achieved and predicted qualifications and/or relevant work life experience and/or knowledge	Additional requirements such as successful interview/audition	Confirmation (achieving entry requirements in final exam results and non-academic entry requirements such as satisfactory DBS)	Enrolment

4.3 Special Cases

4.3.1 Transfer to B&FC for part of an undergraduate course

B&FC will consider applications from students wishing to transfer to B&FC for part of an undergraduate programme. In this instance the Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure should be followed: [https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/sites/default/files/regs/B8-Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-\(RPL\)-Procedure-1.2-2019-2020.pdf](https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/sites/default/files/regs/B8-Recognition-of-Prior-Learning-(RPL)-Procedure-1.2-2019-2020.pdf) A Recognition of Prior Learning form must be completed and submitted to the HE Academic Registrar for consideration.

4.3.2 Applications to B&FC Top-Up Degrees

Applications to B&FC Top-Up degrees from students who have completed a foundation degree elsewhere will not be accepted.

For graduates who have not immediately progressed to a B&FC Top-Up Degree we will consider their application on a case-by-case basis. A Recognition of Prior Learning form must be completed and submitted to the HE Academic Registrar for consideration.

4.3.3 International applicants

B&FC welcomes applications from international applicants. When an application is received, it is checked to see if the course has the appropriate number of hours required by UKVI. If so, the applicant is contacted to request further information such as a copy of their passport and any UK visa(s), copies of relevant certificates and qualifications, copies of their IELTS or TOEFL certificate and a copy of the follow-up international application. When returned, it is assessed by the Senior Admissions Officer in liaison with the relevant programme leader.

4.3.4 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.

4.3.4.1 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>

4.3.4.2 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. We are 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>

4.4 Decisions

Applicants will normally receive a decision within 5 working days (for standard applications) to 10 working days (for non-standard applications). Regular monitoring of admissions decisions take place to ensure continued compliance and fairness and alignment to relevant policies and procedures.

The following decisions may be made:

Standard offers - Admissions selectors will assess applications to higher education against published entry criteria. Where an applicant meets the criteria an offer will be made pending final confirmation of exam results and non-academic requirements.

Non-Standard offers – Where an applicant does not meet published entry requirements or relevant work/life experience needs to be assessed, admissions will liaise with the appropriate programme leader with a decision being made within 10 working days (where the applicant has provided all information required to make a decision).

If an offer can be made it 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 the requirements such as not yet achieving a specified result with their current qualification
2. **Unconditional** – where an applicant has met all entry criteria an unconditional offer will be made. B&FC does not issue unconditional offers to applicants who have not yet met their entry requirements.

All applicants receiving an offer will receive a letter outlining in details 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, the Admissions Appeals procedure and the Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy.

Reject – A standard rejection decision may be made – but is not limited to – the following reasons:

- Failure to complete the application form correctly
- Knowingly providing false or fraudulent information at any point of the application process
- Failure to attend an audition, workshop or interview or provide a portfolio (electronically or in person)
- 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)

- Failure to provide evidence of qualifications they have achieved within a reasonable timeframe as requested by B&FC.

All non-standard 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.

Admissions will also record any decisions with UCAS (where applicable). UCAS will then notify the applicant advising them that a decision has been made and to log into UCAS Track.

4.5 Non- academic considerations

4.5.1 Criminal Convictions

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

4.5.2 Disclosure and Barring Service

Some courses mandate a satisfactory DBS before starting the programme. This is set out in the programme specification as part of the validation process. In such cases, this will be made clear in any published entry requirements and in any resulting offers.

4.6 Offer holder next steps

Non-UCAS applicants may accept or withdraw their offer at any time. This will be recorded in EBS by Admissions.

UCAS applicants wishing to select us as their firm (first) choice, insurance (second) choice or decline our offer must do so through UCAS Track by the relevant deadline. UCAS will advise them of their deadline.

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

4.7 Confirmation

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

Non-UCAS applicants must provide copies of exam results and any other required documentation set out in their offer directly to Admissions or the relevant course tutor. This will be made clear in the offer letter. Admissions will then update EBS confirming or rejecting their application.

In some cases, exam results will be sent to us by UCAS where an applicant has applied through UCAS and the relevant awarding bodies have shared this information with UCAS for us to access. Where this is the case, Admissions will update both EBS and UCAS either confirming or rejecting the application.

Current B&FC students who have applied to progress to a degree-level course with us will have their results checked by Admissions in liaison with the Achievements Team.

5. UCAS Extra, Adjustment and Clearing

Applications received via UCAS Extra, Adjustment and Clearing will be considered in the same manner as any other application made throughout the cycle. However, there may be instances where there is insufficient time to complete all requirements (e.g. satisfactory DBS check) for applications received late in the cycle. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If it is too late to fulfil all requirements, applicants will be advised on the next start date for the course and when to reapply.

6. Applicants wishing to reapply

Applicants who are unsuccessful or who do not take up their place with us 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.

7. 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, higher education. Our Access and Participation Plan outlines how we will improve access to higher education and will continue to ensure different student groups are provided with the opportunity to perform the same as their peers.

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 scholarships that might be of interest.

8. 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 UCAS, HESA and Student Finance England.

9. Appeals and Complaints

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

Higher Education: <https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/he-regulations>