



Richmond upon Thames College

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Policy Responsibility:	Executive Director of Business Development and Innovation
Approved By:	Governors
For Information to:	All College staff, students and parents/carers

Admissions Policy

Scope and Purpose

The Policy applies to all staff involved with enquires, applications, enrolments and students at Richmond upon Thames College. Applicants will refer to both current students and members of the community applying to the College for a place on a programme of study on Learner Responsive, Employer Responsive, Higher Education and full cost delivery. This policy does not cover 14-16 learners.

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the process by which applicants may access learning at Richmond upon Thames College, with a view to grow a viable, innovative and responsive college; to ensure we achieve student and funding number targets and provide equality of opportunity for all in line with the Equality Act 2010. The College will make any reasonable adjustments to this policy to ensure that no protective characteristics under Equality Act 2010 are disadvantaged.

Responsibility

The administration of applications is the responsibility of the Executive Director of Innovation/Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment and Admissions Team

The data collection and protection of applications is the responsibility of Head of MIS

Curriculum teams who perform interviews are responsible for fully completing initial interview forms and ensuring every student is given appropriate impartial advice and guidance at the point of interview, to enable them to achieve their final career goals. If the student's initial course choice is not appropriate then they should be referred to the correct course, curriculum area or other provider where appropriate.

Policy Objectives

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that all applicants have equality of opportunity in accessing learning at Richmond upon Thames College and that they are not subject to discrimination. Applicants have access to free and accurate college information via publications and the College website. We also offer advice at Open Events and Careers Events held throughout the year and at enrolment sessions in August and September.

Admissions staff supported by Student Services staff and Inclusive Learning Support staff (for SEND students), can offer initial advice regarding:

- Entry requirements
- Progression routes
- Support from Counsellors and other support staff
- Advice and support for students with special educational needs or disabilities
- Facilities available
- Financial support, available including course fees
- Advanced Learner Loan application

All course enquiries are usually responded to within three working days, however at busy times such as enrolment this may not be possible.

Specific information about course content can be given by a course specialist at interview, Open Events, Careers Events and enrolment.

The applicant will be offered a place provided:

- The College offers a programme suitable to meet their needs
- They meet the entry requirements at the point of enrolment. In some cases, further information may be requested from the applicant's school or previous place of learning to assist in the College's evaluation of their suitability of a place on a chosen course. In extraordinary circumstances applicants may be requested to provide additional evidence of their suitability for a course.
- There are spaces available on the course.
- For applicants who declare that they have a criminal record or there are safeguarding concerns for other members of the college community, their placement will be subject to a risk assessment completed by the Student Liaison Manager following receipt of additional information which may include a Criminal Record Disclosure provided by the applicant.

Circumstances in which a place may not be offered:

- Applicants who declare they have been living outside of the UK for the last 3 years will be asked to bring their passport and any visa documentation and this will be checked by a college representative to assess the applicants right to live in the UK status.
- Where the applicant has declared a criminal record or pending court case and the risk assessment leads to the conclusion that they pose too great a risk to grant admission.
- Where there is a safeguarding concern for a member of the College community.
- If the applicant has previously been excluded from Richmond upon Thames College or another educational institution.
- If the College is unable to provide a suitable learning programme or the applicant does not meet the College's entry criteria and no reasonable alternative offer can be made.
- Applicants who have outstanding debts to the College.
- Applicants for programmes that require a DBS police check, such as Childcare courses. The outcome of the check will be considered.
- Failure to declare a criminal record may lead to the immediate withdrawal of any offer of a place. This duty to declare is ongoing for the duration of the student's time at the College. For enrolled student's failure to declare may result in the student being excluded under the College's Student Disciplinary Procedures.
- We may ask applicants who have indicated a recent recurring or significant health condition to provide a medical report on their condition. These reports do not form part of the selection process and will only be shared with relevant key professionals within the college. The Inclusive Learning Team Leader is responsible for advising

on reasonable adjustments for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, in line with the Equality Act 2010.

- If an applicant is in the possession of an Education and Healthcare Plan the suitability of the course, for which they applied, will be discussed with the relevant curriculum team in conjunction with Inclusive Learning Support staff

1. Enquiries

Telephone enquiries, letters, e-mails and enquiries through the website, social media are received by the Admissions Team

Admissions Team controls the enquiry by:

- Answering the query, usually by e-mail and including any appropriate website links to course details, entry requirements and application forms
- Contacting Heads of Schools or relevant curriculum staff by e-mail, phone and getting necessary information to report back to the enquirer.
- Where appropriate making an appointment for the applicant with the specialist careers advisor.

Note – Individual staff e-mails or telephone numbers will not be provided.

2. Applications

All applications for all courses must be held on the Colleges MIS database, ProSolution. Under no circumstances should curriculum individuals or teams hold their own list of applicants as this could lead to missed opportunities for potential students.

2.1 Interview Schedules

An interview schedule will be agreed by curriculum teams and should cover October to July if the academic year. All curriculum teams should hold interview sessions with prospective students. These can be online or in person.

2.2 Initial Advice and Guidance Interviews

Every student must be given appropriate impartial advice and guidance at the point of interview, so that they can achieve their final career goals. Once the appropriate course is agreed with the student, the full course name and level should be agreed and any changes to initial application should be confirmed to admissions teams.

Success at interview will be based on

- Academic ability and potential
- Motivation & suitability for the course, as well as the course matching career aspirations
- Commitment and self-discipline

2.3 Did Not Attend Interviews

Applicants who fail to attend an interview date and time. will be asked if they would wish to attend on another date. If there is no response, applicants will be invited to attend another interview time.

2.4 Entry Requirements

Entry requirements are set for all levels, whether this be for new applicants or for students who wish to progress between levels. Entry onto any course at Richmond upon Thames College is subject to final approval from the Deputy Principal of Curriculum and Quality. Where relevant, the term 'entry requirements' also includes DBS checks, references, fitness to practice, etc.

2.5 Additional Entry Requirements

If a curriculum area wishes to attach other entry criteria to their programme outside of the academic achievements such as Skills Tests, Aptitude Tests, Portfolio Reviews or Auditions these must be part of the published Entry Criteria on the College website. The curriculum area must have an agreed marking scheme for these entry criteria, which is differentiated for applicants with additional support needs.

Employer Responsive (apprenticeship) applicants will be asked to confirm their understanding of the apprentice pathway and their employment position at interview.

3. Higher Education (HE) Applications

All applicants for HE courses are required to complete an application and should be interviewed prior to enrolment. Procedures for the holding and recording of decisions are the same for HE applications as they are for FE applications. HE applicants are not subject to the same service levels for interview and offer of places. HE interviews will be held at a time/date distinct from full time FE applicants.

4. Applicants with overseas qualifications

International applicants are required to provide a Statement of Comparability from ECCTIS. www.ecctis.com. Qualifications obtained overseas must be equivalent to the UK entry requirements for each course. If applicants are unable to obtain a statement of equivalence from ECCTIS it may not be possible to offer a course. International applicants may also be required to take an external English/Maths test to confirm suitability for their chosen course.

If applicant is aged under 19 as of 31st August of the year, they join the College and they are unable to provide a ECCTIS translation of their qualifications they should automatically be put onto a Maths and English Language course alongside their main study programme in order to satisfy the Maths and English stipulation for funding. Only a ECCTIS translation which confirms the qualification's comparability for Maths and English Language GCSE can be accepted to exempt the learner from this stipulation.

It should also be noted that the College is not currently able to sponsor students for a student visa and so will be unable to accept applications from learners who require a student visa to live and study in the UK.

5. Internal Applications

Students who are studying at college and wish to progress to year 2 or the next level will have meetings with their tutor in the spring term and a progress review will take place to ascertain their plans for the following academic year. Year 2 students will be automatically enrolled. Those students who are progressing to a new level and require English or Maths to progress, or students who are transferring to another curriculum area, an application will need to be generated for the course. Details from students of all ages will be recorded on ProSolution.

For students who are progressing, there is an expectation that the student will have achieved as a minimum 80% attendance, not be subject to a live written warning or final written warning and should have achieved all units to allow for progression. In addition, to be considered for progression, students must also have the required level of English and maths qualifications and satisfy the College's internal entry requirements for their intended course.

Should students not meet the conditions above but wish to progress discussions will take place and the final decisions will be made by the Head of Schools and the Deputy Principal for Curriculum and Quality. Students will be notified of final decisions no later than the beginning of enrolment period.

5.1 Appeal/Complaint

If the College is unable to offer you a place you may appeal to the secretariat at the College address. Appeals must be received in writing within 5 working days from the decision being communicated. Applicants must explain the reasons why the College should reconsider its decision and include further evidence and any new mitigating circumstances which could influence the original decision. Appeals will be considered by a Panel, chaired by a nominated senior manager, whose decision is final. The person hearing the appeal will notify the parties of his or her decision as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 14 working days from receipt.

6. Criminal Convictions

If an applicant declares a criminal conviction, more details will be requested by Admissions Team and the applicant will be required to complete a Criminal Conviction Disclosure Form. The Criminal Conviction Risk Assessment Form will be completed by the Student Liaison Manager and the Head of School for the area applied for. If the assessment is agreed as 'no risk' or 'low risk' by both members of the assessment group named above then the application will be processed as normal. If the application is agreed to be 'medium risk', 'high risk' or 'unacceptable' by one or both of the group then the application should be escalated to the Inclusion panel.

6.1.0 Inclusion Panel

Applicants with criminal convictions and/or complex additional support needs will be referred to the College's Safeguarding Panel. Those who have been declined for reasons outside of the agreed Policy will be reviewed by the Panel it will be chaired by the Deputy Principal of Curriculum and Quality and core members in attendance will be the Student Liaison Manager Head of Student Services, Inclusive Learning Support Manager and the Head of School to which the student has applied.

All information relating to the student will be presented to the Panel. The Inclusion Panel will make a final decision about the student's application. The decision will be based on whether the medium or high risks presented can be managed appropriately with additional conditions or support from the Inclusive Learning Support.

If it is agreed that the risk is manageable the student and/or all relevant external agencies will be notified in writing. The student must respond in writing stating that they accept the conditions and/or support otherwise they will not be enrolled. If it is agreed that the risk is not manageable the student and/or all relevant external agencies will be notified in writing. Students or agencies may appeal the decision. Appeals will be considered by the Principal who will be provided with all supporting documentation. The Student and or external agency will be informed of the decision within 10 working days. The Principal's decision will be final.

7. Fee Assessment

Applicants disclosing a non-European Economic Area nationality or residence outside of the EEA in the past three years will have to be formally fee assessed by the Head of Funding and Learner Information Services. Home students will be processed in accordance with their mode of study. International applications requiring a Tier 4 visa to study are not considered by the College.

8. Inclusive Learning Support

Applicants must disclose any Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities so that the College can offer effective support. Our Inclusive Learning Support team can provide advice and support to students, parents/guardians, and members of staff.

'The college offers a number of opportunities for applicants to declare they have an Education Health & Care plan/additional support needs in the hope that it will encourage applicants to disclose. Early disclosure allows the college to plan and allocate its resources prior to the start of the academic year, making sure the support is in place for those that need it. If a declaration is made after the start of the academic year, this could result in a delay in the provision of support and in some exceptional cases, the college might be unable to provide the level of support recommended/required. Irrespective of when the declaration is made, please be assured that all reasonable adjustments will of course be made.

The Inclusive Learning Support team will assess applicants' support requirements and liaise with the Local Authority following receipt of the EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan). Applicants with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities can request a confidential interview to discuss their particular needs. They may choose to bring an advocate to that meeting. Student's transition into College is arranged flexibly according to their needs, once accepted onto a course.

9. Initial Assessment & Skills Test

Initial assessments will usually take place prior to enrolment for Access and adult GCSE students. Students with overseas qualifications may also carry out initial assessments prior to enrolling if unable to get ECCTIS translation.

However, if individual curriculum areas would like these to take place at an earlier stage with a skills test, this can be arranged in conjunction with the English and Maths teams and admissions.

All 16-18 students will sit initial assessments as part of the induction process.

All applicants included in the full-time application process, who have not previously achieved a grade 4/C/Level 2 in English/maths, will be required to complete an Initial Assessment in maths and English. This includes students who have already achieved a Functional Skills Qualification.

Students who have achieved a GCSE at Grade 4 or above (grade C or above under the previous system) in English or Mathematics may also be required to undertake an Initial Assessment.

An Initial Assessment is not a condition of entry to the College but may lead to a transfer to a more appropriate level of course or the requirement to undertake agreed additional courses.

10. Invitation to Enrol

Applicants with conditional offers or those who are yet to have an interview will be sent an email in early August informing them of the arrangements for Enrolment. This will include appointment times and dates and enrolment location. These letters will be sent by the Admissions Team.

Heads of Schools must ensure that there is adequate staffing to cover the enrolment schedule. Enrolment times and volumes may be organised via methods such as number of applications divided by the number of enrolment days available or surname alphabetical order.

Potential students who withdrew their application in year will also be sent information about attending Open Enrolment.

11. Enrolment

Students will be offered the opportunity to enrol either online or in person.....

Open Enrolment: where a student has not previously been interviewed within the monthly interview schedule, they may attend Open Enrolment and complete an Open Enrolment Pro-forma sheet and have a triage interview. The triage interview team will establish if the student is eligible for a course. If yes, the student will proceed to the curriculum interview and complete the full enrolment process. If no, the student can discuss other options with the College's careers advisors.

12. Refunds

If you cancel your enrolment within the first 14 days of the course or before the course has commenced, you may be entitled to a refund (less a £50 administration fee). After the first 14 days of the course has commenced, this will be treated as a withdrawal and full fee will be payable.

The College is unable to make refunds for absence due to changes in work commitments, personal or financial circumstances or any other reasons for not being able to attend the course. Any outstanding fees in these circumstances will remain payable.

Please note if you have applied for Students Loans to pay your fees, the Loans company will only fund on attendance of the course, any withdrawals will therefore mean that you are personally liable for the fees. In this case, our normal debt collection procedures will be applied to obtain outstanding fee.

If the College cancels a course, every effort will be made to offer an alternative. If no suitable alternative is available, a refund will be given. This may be pro-rata if the course has to be cancelled after the start date.