



ADMISSIONS POLICY

Author: Executive Team Member with Responsibility for Admissions

Approved: 13 March 2025, Standards and Curriculum Committee

Review: March 2026

1. PURPOSE

The College is committed to offering a fair and transparent admissions policy and process. It serves to ensure that all potential learners have access to impartial information, advice and guidance and to support individuals in identifying the course/programme of study which most meets their skills and aspirations in an appropriate and confidential environment.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The policy works within the framework of the College's mission statement and Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 2.2 The policy relates to all applicants who:
 - a) Are aged 16 or over on the 1st Sept of the relevant academic year.
 - b) Are seeking to re-enter the education system after a period away from study.
 - c) Are applying to the College following study or training at other institutions or place of employment.
- 2.3 The College will apply the principles inherent in this policy statement to all learners, including full and part time FE and HE, those on Apprenticeship programmes or other work-based learning schemes, e-learners, distance learners and those on partnership/franchise schemes.
- 2.4 Students aged 14-16 are admitted to the College through partnership agreements and processes will vary from those stated in this policy. No student under the school leaving age can be admitted to College without prior consultation with the Principalship.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Harlow and Stansted Airport College affirms the right of all potential learners to receive:
 - Full and detailed information about their course/programme provision and any additional support including personal and financial
 - Appropriate guidance, where necessary or requested
 - Access to transparent entry criteria
 - An induction to the College services and facilities and to their chosen course programme, once they have enrolled.
- 3.2 All decisions relating to admissions will be based on:
 - Transparency
 - Equality of opportunity
 - Respect for the rights of the individual
 - Consistency of practice and procedures
 - Confidentiality and disclosure protocols
- 3.3 All applicants will be offered the opportunity to declare a disability or learning need. All such requests will be treated as confidential, and permission will be sought to pass relevant information on to other relevant members of staff.

- 3.4 The College will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to both services and curriculum delivery in order to meet the needs of students requiring additional support. Our ability to make reasonable adjustments may be limited if permission is not granted to disclose details of the additional need.
- 3.5 In order to ensure compliance with the objectives stated above, the following will be in place:

A) Pre-Entry information

The College affirms the right of all potential learners, and where appropriate their employers, to full and detailed information about course provision. Such information will be given impartially and without prejudice.

Course information will include details about:

- Entry requirements
- Course/Programme contents and structure
- Teaching and learning strategies employed on the course and assessment procedures
- The qualifications or accreditation to be gained
- Industry placement opportunities
- Exemptions or credits which can be claimed against previous experience
- Progression opportunities
- Course fee, where appropriate
- Other requirements e.g. work experience
- Access to childcare funds
- Financial help available
- Transport help available
- Other grants, benefits or allowances to which learners may be entitled
- Additional Learning Support which may be available to learners
- Other forms of additional support available, including college wide services such as:
 - Counselling
 - Sign-posting to appropriate Mental Health support where possible

Information to local school leavers will be made available through schools' liaison activities and in partnership with local schools.

Information to others who are interested in learning will be made available through College publications, the College websites and other outreach activities.

The College will aim to ensure all of its information is easily accessible, by providing it in different formats, when needed and where possible. The potential learner will be fully informed of any course costs, both implicit and explicit of the course they wish to undertake and methods of payment available. For more information on course costs, please contact the STAR Agency.

B) Interview and Admission

All potential learners for full-time FE and for Apprenticeships will be invited to interview.

Guidelines and training on the interview procedures are provided for nominated staff in order to meet standards and ensure consistency.

Admissions staff are expected to be aware of any barriers which may affect the interview for example a disability, learning difference or language need. Where appropriate the College will make best endeavours to provide language interpretation, a communicator, or other forms of support which may be required.

Any learner with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who regards him/herself as having a physical disability or mental health condition will be encouraged to disclose this at interview and provide any relevant documentation so that appropriate adjustments or arrangements can be discussed, applied for and arranged wherever possible. The application of any adjustments or accessibility requests will be processed by the SEND and Exams teams as soon as possible after enrolment and registration. Where any adjustments are made due to additional learning or social needs the College will seek approval from the relevant awarding body prior to making these changes, in accordance with their procedures. Failure to make full disclosure of your needs either prior or whilst on programme may hinder support, adversely affect the learning experience and attainment or invalidate your enrolment on your programme.

Learners who hold an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) must ensure that this is declared on their application, and this application must be submitted to the College by 31st March of the academic year before the intended course begins. This is to ensure support needs are fully understood and the necessary arrangements can be made before the course starts.

Subject to a successful consultation with the relevant Local Authority, an interview will be arranged and if appropriate an offer made. If applicable, funding for support will then be made to the relevant Local Authority.

For learners who have high levels of support requirements and do not hold an EHCP, we will work with them to ensure appropriate support is implemented.

Where you have medical health and mental health needs that may need additional support, we will work with relevant professionals to assess the need and levels of support required. We will ask for supporting documentation to assist with this process.

The interviewer will recognise and take into consideration any prior achievement or accreditation. The guidance from awarding organisations must always be followed and, not all qualifications allow the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Where the use of RPL is permitted, this will be stated within the qualification specification. Recognition of prior learning is an assessment process whereby evidence from a learner's previous achievements can be assessed and used to demonstrate competency for their qualification and/or units being studied. RPL is categorised into two distinct types:

- Recognition of certificated prior learning- learning that has taken place that has been certificated either by the organisation or an awarding body.
- Recognition of experiential learning- learning that has been gained through experience but has not been certificated.

Evidence for RPL can be drawn from multiple different avenues which can include:

- Education and training.
- Work activities.
- Community or voluntary activities.

Any RPL that is used within a qualification must still adhere to the strict assessment and quality practices upheld by the College and the assessment of this evidence must comply with VACSR:

- Valid.
- Authentic.
- Reliable.
- Current.
- Sufficient.

Any evidence that is submitted under the RPL policy must be no more than 5 years old from the date of application.

Learners must declare at point of enrolment if they wish to submit an application for recognition of prior learning to their Teacher, this will then initiate the RPL process as outlined below:

- Full and original certificates need to be made available at enrolment in order for the college to claim the credit value of the RPL from the awarding body.
- These should be photocopied or electronic copies made/photo taken and saved at enrolment.
- The staff member/manager should submit the RPL request to Exam with the copies of the certificates via email.
- Immediately after the Exams team have registered the student with the awarding body, the RPL request should be made following the Awarding body procedure, via the Exams team.

Learners are required to declare if they have been convicted of or are under investigation for a criminal offence as part of the application process, this is to enable a risk assessment to be undertaken. This will be processed by admissions and the safeguarding team and learners will be contacted for further information. A learner will only be refused admission on the basis of a safeguarding risk to other campus users, themselves or to college property. If a learner commits any offence whilst on programme, they are also required to disclose this to the safeguarding team so an assessment can take place to ensure the risk can be mitigated and managed. Learners failing to declare criminal convictions or investigations will be considered under the disciplinary policy.

Where a learner is enrolling on a course with a significant work placement they will be provided with any specific employer/sector requirements that are mandatory for completing their course. For example, Disclosure & Barring requirements or medical requirements. The College will support the learner to identify an alternative course should they be unable to meet these requirements prior to starting the course.

Learners who require further advice or guidance following the interview or who are unlikely to meet the set entry criteria, will be offered a referral to other services either internally or externally.

Learners that have been previously involved in any disciplinary matters or have been previously withdrawn from any programme with the College, will be subject to continued monitoring/sanctions in line with the relevant policy.

For new applicants where a criminal conviction is declared, an offer of a course place will only be made once a risk assessment has been completed. In the event that the chosen course is operating a waiting list during the risk assessment period, the date of the waiting list confirmation letter will determine the position that the applicant is placed on the waiting list (refer to further information in relation to course waiting lists).

Refusal of admission will be based on the College's inability to provide an appropriate learning programme, relevant and appropriate support to meet identified needs, or where a person's record shows a persistent refusal to adhere to appropriate regulations and policies, and/or the College believes they present risk to themselves or others.

Failure to disclose anything that may have an impact on your ability to undertake a programme could affect continuation of your place on the course.

The College accepts that it is not possible to legislate for every circumstance which might arise in the Admission process, but strives to ensure that it provides a fair and equitable service to all learners.

Prioritising Admission of New Applicants

Applicants will be prioritised in the below order:

1. 16-19-year-old funded learners (including learners up to 25 with EHCPs)
2. Offers made during scheduled partner school interviews
3. Offer date (early applications will be prioritised first)
4. Proximity to the College (this will be as the crow flies' distance in miles from the learner postcode on the application)

This will be done in the curriculum pathway that the learner has applied to as their first choice at the College.

Learners must meet the entry criteria within the pathway they are applying to in order to take up their place. Learners will be required to provide evidence of exam results to demonstrate that they meet the entry criteria and provide any other evidence required in line with the conditions set out in their offer.

Invitations to enrolment will be prioritised in this order and therefore failure to attend your appointment may result in the loss of your place.

Prioritising Admission of Existing Learners onto Further Courses

Existing learners will take priority over new where they are continuing on the same course (Year 1 to Year 2), course area (Level 1 to Level 2 in same subject) or wishing to go to a new area in the college. The priority over new students will be through the 'Moving On Process', should a learner not engage in this process or not wish to return to the College in this process they will not get priority over other applicants should they subsequently apply as a new applicant through the website.

Where the College has to limit the number of places on any one course, applicants will be prioritised in the order of the below criteria:

- Attitude.
- Attendance.
- Attainment.

For learners to return to the College, consideration will be given to the appropriateness of the programme they are looking to return onto so that we are assured that this will lead them to their intended career goals. Returning learners will have the same access to information, advice and guidance as new applicants.

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists will apply to both New and Existing learners and prioritised as above.

Where programme areas have exceeded their capacity, applicants will be placed on a waiting and advised to identify a second-choice course. All applicants placed on a waiting list will be informed in writing and will be provided with an opportunity to discuss alternative courses with a College Careers Advisor.

Learners on waiting lists will be kept in order of interview date, and should places become available learners will be contacted accordingly.

You can be added to a waiting list even if you have been offered a place at another school/college. You can still accept the offer even if you have already started at another school/college.

Where an offer of a place is paused due to additional information being required, for example due to an EHCP delay or criminal conviction assessment, an applicant will be placed on a waiting list from the date the waiting list confirmation letter is sent by the Admissions team.

Learners who take up a place elsewhere would be required to inform us that they do not intend to take up a place as soon as possible.

Course Changes or Closures

Course Changes or Closures Harlow College will aim to deliver course content and teaching provision as described in course handbooks, module guides, timetable information, website information and other available information provided. However, on occasion it may be necessary to change this provision either before or after enrolment due to developments in the subject, changes in staffing, or student numbers.

Where this is the case, you will be informed at the earliest opportunity, either verbally or by email. Changes before you start your course will be communicated to you by letter or email.

C) General Information, Advice and Guidance

The STAR agency offers a drop-in enquiry point for potential and existing students which is open at published times throughout the year.

Individual appointments for detailed advice and guidance are available. Such interviews will adhere to the national guidelines set out in the Matrix Standards

Outreach guidance and advice activities take place throughout the year at a range of venues.

Learners are entitled to pre-entry and exit guidance in order to ensure that personal choices match career aspirations.

All information collated during the Admissions process is regarded as confidential and will not be disclosed to other parties without the prior agreement of the learner. Records will be stored securely.

D) Appeals

Should the Member of Executive responsible for Admissions make the decision that Enrolment is to be refused and an applicant is dissatisfied with this decision they may lodge an appeal against the decision. A member of Principalship will then review the documentation and will carry out any further investigation deemed necessary, and will decide to either endorse or modify the decision, and will inform the individual making the appeal, accordingly.

An appeal may be made on one or more of the following grounds:

- there is new additional information which was not reasonably available at the time of the original decision;
- proper procedures were not followed
- the decision is unreasonable and/or the sanction disproportionate.

The applicant must appeal (in writing) within 15 working days of receiving notification that Enrolment has been refused. The formal appeal should set out clearly the grounds for their appeal.

In the event that an applicant remains dissatisfied, they will be advised of their right to appeal to the relevant agency and will be given all necessary contact details.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

4.1 The policy will be monitored on an annual basis by the College Executive and managers responsible for the admissions process.

4.2 The effectiveness of admissions processes will be reviewed through:

- Regular analysis of applications by school and subject area.
- Annual analysis of conversion rates from application to enrolment.
- Monitoring of adherence to performance indicators set by the College Executive.
- Feedback from stakeholders i.e. schools, employers, referral agencies.
- Analysis of compliments and complaints.

5. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- 5.1 This policy forms part of the suite of student support policies overseen by the Principalship and is responsible for ensuring the admissions policies and procedures are effectively implemented and monitored.
- 5.2 Admissions staff are responsible for updating the applicant's record and for maintaining communications with each applicant prior to enrolment. Contact with people who disclose a disability will be made by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team. This is to ensure support needs are discussed during the admissions process.
- 5.3 The College reserves the right to make changes to this policy or change its course offering in year.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This policy has been assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect learners on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

Tracking and Reference Information

Date Approved: 29 June 2021 - Standards & Curriculum Committee

Reviewed and approved by Corporation 24 March 2022, Standards and Curriculum Committee 14 March 2023, Standards and Curriculum Committee 14 March 2024, Standards and Curriculum Committee 13 March 2025

Review Date: March 2026 (Annually)

Author/Responsibility: Executive Team member responsible for Admissions

Equality Impact Assessment:

This policy has been assessed to ensure that it does not adversely affect learners on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

Related Documents:

Complaints Policy
Equality & Diversity Policy
CEIAG Policy
Student Code of Conduct
Fitness to Study Policy
Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy, Procedures
Fee Policy and Student Terms and Conditions

Complaints:

If you wish to submit a complaint about the application of this policy or the procedure of it, please send your request in accordance with the provisions of the Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring:

The application of this policy and associated procedure will be monitored by the Executive member responsible for Admissions

Easy Reading:

To receive this policy/procedure in a different format, please contact HR Services