



# **Higher Education Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy 2021-2023 (to include Widening Participation)**

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# Harlow College of Further and Higher Education

## 1. Objective

This policy document supports Harlow College's Strategic Plan by outlining the policies pertaining to successful student recruitment, selection and admission on to higher education (HE) programmes.

We aim to ensure that all applications for HE courses are underpinned by the principles of fair admissions otherwise known as the Schwartz Report (2004).

The five Schwartz principles state that a fair admissions process should:

- Be transparent
- Enable HE providers to select students who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and potential
- Strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid
- Seek to minimise barriers for prospective students
- Be professional in every respect and underpinned by organisational structures and processes.

## 2. Scope

This document sets out the principles and practices of the recruitment, selection and admissions policy that applies to all applications for prescribed HE (OfS funded) courses received by the College. This includes the following awards at level 4 HNC and level 5 HND. Students on such courses may be attending full time, part time or by distance learning.

In providing HE the College works with the following awarding body:

- Pearson

For the purpose of this document, and as stated in Chapter B2 of the QAA Quality Code, recruitment, selection and admission includes:

- Recruitment activities to help prospective students make informed decisions about whether they wish to undertake study within HE and, if so, where, how and what they might wish to study
- Procedures employed by Harlow College to select suitably qualified prospective students for particular programmes
- Harlow College's decision making processes and subsequent communication with both successful and unsuccessful prospective students.
- Ways in which Harlow College will support those who receive and accept offers of a place to make the transition from prospective student to current student.
- Ways in which the college promotes an inclusive approach by embedding consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout.
- Linked to the Admissions Service, but not within the scope of this document, is the Information, Advice and Guidance Policy.

### 3. Definitions and Terminology

- 3.1 **Admissions:** The team responsible for receipt and processing of all College course enquiries and applications, and management of student enrolment. The Admissions team undertake initial screening exercises for particular programmes but all decision making sits within the academic teams. The Admissions team is located with the MIS department.
- 3.2 **PPO & WPO:** Placement and Progression Officers and Work Placement Officers are responsible for school, liaison, progression opportunities and work placements.
- 3.3 **ProSolution:** This is the College-wide Management Information System containing details of existing and potential learners. The Admissions Team uses ProSolution to record, track and process learner enquiries, applications and enrolments.
- 3.4 **UCAS:** The University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), through whom all applications for full-time undergraduate prescribed HE courses must be made and processed.
- 3.5 **Weblink:** UCAS's online portal for accessing UCAS applications, processing main scheme and Clearing offers, and receiving applicant decisions. Weblink also hosts a number of Management Information reports.
- 3.6 **UKNaric:** An organisation to whom the College subscribes for comparisons of international qualifications with the British education system and awards.
- 3.7 **Widening Participation** – Increasing the involvement in Higher Education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

Harlow College's HE courses are validated by Pearson. However, Harlow College is solely responsible for recruitment, selection and admission for its Higher National provision.

#### 4.1 Admissions are responsible for:

- Acting as first point of contact for all course enquiries, applications and enrolments
- Providing a personalised initial information, advice and guidance (IAG) service to all applicants from initial enquiry through to enrolment
- Receiving all applications and recording these on Pro-Solution or through the UCAS Admission system.
- Acknowledging receipt of all applications and arranging interviews and assessments as appropriate
- Notifying the Learning Support Service when an applicant declares a special learning need and/or disability and liaising with the service regarding the provision of support and reasonable adjustments to the application process

- Producing a UKNaric comparison of applicant qualifications that have been awarded outside the UK
- Notifying the Safeguarding Team and, where appropriate, the curriculum teams, when an applicant has declared a criminal conviction. The resulting action will vary depending on the course programme
- Monitoring the return of interview outcomes and informing Heads of Departments/Programme Managers of any outstanding applications or outcomes prior to the deadline dates
- Notifying applicants of the outcome of all interviews and sending offers, as specified by the Curriculum team, or discussing alternative courses as appropriate through the UCAS admission system.
- Ensuring that all offer letters comply with CMA guidance by containing the full set of information required to allow applicants to make an informed decision regarding acceptance of the offer made to them
- Contacting applicants who fail to attend their interview and withdrawing or rebooking the applicant as appropriate
- Inviting applicants to programme taster days/keeping warm activities in conjunction with the main delivery teams.
- Managing enrolments for all student year groups and notifying students of the enrolment date, location and any relevant documentation required at enrolment (certificates, passport etc.)
- Notifying students of any course fees, as detailed in the portfolio and the *Tuition Fee and Other Charges Policy*, and how and when payment should be made
- Fee assessing each applicant to determine eligibility for Home fee status
- Assessing applicant eligibility for funding with respect to the Equivalent and Lower Qualification (ELQ) Policy
- Keep up to date with UCAS policy and processes and disseminate information to curriculum teams as required
- Support recruitment activities in liaison with curriculum staff.
- Providing appropriate IAG to prospective students, including enquirers and applicants, seeking information about financial support
- Assisting prospective students in making funding applications to Student Finance England or other relevant agencies.

#### 4.2 **The Special Educational Needs (SEND) sits within the Student Services Department and is responsible for:**

- Contacting applicants by telephone to discuss their declaration of a specific learning need or disability on the course application form
- Working with the curriculum teams on request to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to interviewing conditions in order to accommodate those who have declared a learning difficulty or disability
- Ensuring that the college explores reasonable adjustments to accommodate additional needs thus enabling the student to access the

curriculum and, where this is not possible, to liaise with the curriculum team so that they can contact the applicant with the outcome.

- Support students to apply for a Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) where appropriate.
- Support internally progressing students with up to date reviews in readiness for their DSA application where possible.
- Ongoing annual review by the SEND team of any adjustments made by the College to support a learner.

#### 4.3 **The Marketing Team is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the College is meeting its obligations under Consumer Protection Law and is compliant with the guidance published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
- Quality checking and publication of pre-application course and institution promotional information
- The Marketing team incorporates the Placement & Progression Officers team (PPOs).

### 5. **Higher Education Admissions Policy**

5.1 Harlow College is committed to delivering a recruitment, selection and admissions process that has the learner at its heart. We aim to deliver a consistent and transparent service. Prospective students, applicants and current students alike can expect to receive a high quality experience.

5.2 We will select applicants on the basis of their individual suitability for the programme they have applied to. Applicants are required to demonstrate that they meet the minimum academic requirements as specified in the published course information. Entry requirements will vary by programme and may be stipulated by the validating/awarding body, an external accrediting body or Programme Manager. Individual programmes may also feature non-academic entry requirements. This will be publicised alongside academic entry requirements and will be assessed by a number of means.

5.3 Applicant merit and potential may be assessed by a variety of means;

- a. Personal statement
- b. A reference from an educator or employer
- c. Academic certificates
- d. Employment history
- e. Portfolio of work relevant to the programme applied to
- f. Audition for performance programmes
- g. Interview with the curriculum team
- h. Literacy and/or numeracy assessment

The timing and methods for such assessment are specified in the published course information and confirmed in communications from the Admissions team.

5.4 Applicants who demonstrate on their application form that they meet the minimum entry requirements, as confirmed by the curriculum teams, may be invited to attend an interview, which may incorporate testing, audition and/or

portfolio review. Initial screening of the application is undertaken by the Admissions team. Applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their application, normally via the UCAS system and those who do not meet the minimum requirements will receive an appropriate communication regarding their application, again normally via the UCAS system. Timescales for arranging interviews will vary between programmes but in all cases will comply with UCAS deadline dates. Curriculum teams are responsible for offer making.

- 5.5 Harlow College is committed to handling admissions appeals and complaints professionally, within the given framework specified in this policy.
- 5.6 All policies are approved by the Executive Team and Governors, who ensure their coherent implementation across the College. The Admissions team provide a centralised service for all campus, thus supporting the coherent practice of this policy. This policy is subject to regular review.
- 5.7 Harlow College adheres to codes and practices that are relevant to recruitment, selection and admissions.
- All relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 1998.
  - QAA's *UK Quality Code for HE*
  - UCAS's Admissions Guide for HE Providers
  - SPA's (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions) good practice guidance and the principles of fair admissions
- 5.8 Harlow College may choose to enter in to arrangements with external recruitment agencies. Such agency agreements will be subject to due diligence by the Director of Finance and Corporate Affairs. Any arrangement with an external agency must comply with the codes and practices stated in 5.7.

## **6. Recruitment Activities**

- 6.1 The Marketing team co-ordinate a number of recruitment activities that span the full curriculum and all main campuses. Recruitment activities take place on and off campus and are supported by the Admission team, the PPO team, and the curriculum teams where required.
- 6.2 Harlow College hosts at least three open events at each of the main campuses in each academic year, virtual event or a combination. The open events take place in the evening or on Saturdays in order to allow prospective students to attend without missing school, college or work. The events take place at key points throughout the year including throughout the autumn term, early in the spring term and a final event in the summer term. Prospective students are encouraged to register their interest in the event online and are welcome to bring friends and family members with them.
- 6.3 The open events provide prospective students with an opportunity to view the College campuses and the available facilities either on site by a guided tour or a virtual tour. Curriculum staff are available to provide detailed information about individual course content, structure and entry requirements. Support services will also be available to provide relevant pre- application information, advice and guidance (IAG). The services are; the Admissions team, the Learning Support Services, the Student Services team, PPOs and the Digital Team, based in our

iHub (Learning Resources Centre). Representatives for all the above are available for all the virtual events

- 6.4 The Marketing team, in collaboration with curriculum teams, attend external recruitment events, such as UCAS Exhibitions and Skills London. The purpose of attendance at these events is to make Harlow College services available to those who are unable to attend, or are unaware of, the open events. Prospective students will be given information regarding the College and its course provision, which will allow them to decide whether or not to further investigate making an application.
- 6.5 The PPO team maintain the relationships between Harlow College and the schools sector, including sixth form colleges. The team attend schools HE and Careers events, supported by the Admissions team. IAG at such events focuses on making prospective students aware of the College's course provision and the course entry requirements.
- 6.6 Prospective learners may choose to leave their contact details with College representatives. The Admissions team will contact these individuals by telephone or email to offer further information and advice.

## **7. Enquiries, information, advice and guidance (IAG) for applicants**

- 7.1 Harlow College is committed to providing high-quality IAG to applicants, parents and advisors on all aspects of recruitment, selection and admission. The college holds the matrix standard for provision of Information, Advice and Guidance.



- 7.2 Contact details for prospective student and applicants' enquiries are advertised on the College website, the prospectus, all published hard copy marketing materials and advertisements, and on social media sites.
- 7.3 Prospective students making direct contact with Harlow College for the first time are directed to the Admissions team. Enquiries are received by the team by a variety of means;
- Face to face: there is a drop-in service at Harlow College's campus between 9am and 5pm
  - Telephone: the information and admissions lines are advertised on all marketing materials and are answered by the admissions team throughout the working day, including the evenings. A voicemail facility is available and callers leaving voicemails can expect a response the next working day
  - Email: the Admissions team respond to emails within one working day of their receipt
  - Social Media: enquiries made via social media are managed by the Marketing team who forward any enquiries to Admission who respond within one working day

- Post: A response to enquiries received by post is sent within one working day
- Online application or UCAS

Standard response times will increase to three working days during peak times (August-September).

- 7.4 Course entry requirements are published on the College website, in the prospectus and on the UCAS Search Tool. Entry requirements are reviewed annually and updated at the request of the Curriculum teams, prior to the opening of the relevant admissions cycle. Prospective students and applicants wishing to seek further guidance regarding entry requirements are advised to contact the Admissions team. Competition and Marketing Authority (CMA) compliance is ensured by the Marketing team.
- 7.5 Maintaining the website and prospectus is the responsibility of the Marketing team. Requests for information to be provided in alternative formats, such as large print or braille, are forwarded to the Marketing team, who will arrange for the provision of the requested of the format.
- 7.6 The course profiles featured in the UCAS Search Tool are maintained by the Admissions team. Unistats data is maintained by the MIS department, which the Admissions team sits within.
- 7.7 In some cases it may be necessary to make changes to course profiles after the publication and distribution of printed materials. The Marketing team ensure that necessary changes are made to the website and the Admissions team communicate the change to affected applicants.

## **8. The Application Process**

- 8.1 Application routes for HE programmes at Harlow College vary depending on the programmes.
- Online application via the Harlow College website (links to UCAS system) or UCAS directly
  - Full time, undergraduate course applications must be made online through UCAS. Where an applicant applies late in the summer a direct application may be accepted but the applicant's details will be registered with UCAS upon their enrolment, in accordance with UCAS's Record of Prior Acceptance process.
  - Part time undergraduate and all postgraduate course applications must be made directly to the College. This is done using an appropriate HE application form, supplied by the Admissions team.
- 8.2 The Admissions team provide IAG on the application process and the assessment methods used in determining eligibility for an offer. Receipt of an application triggers production of an acknowledgement letter containing further information and next steps. This is sent within one working day of receipt of the application. Admissions are the main point of contact throughout the application process.

8.3 All applicants are logged on the College's Management Information System, ProSolution, which is used to track applicant history and progress from initial enquiry through to enrolment. All letters sent to the applicants can be tracked through this system and reproduced if required. Applicant data is logged and managed in the same way regardless of the course applied for. Paper-based application files are produced for use by the interviewing course team.

8.4 Where an individual has made multiple applications, they will receive equal consideration for each course. Applicants are permitted to apply for the same course in multiple years however, courses that adhere to external professional standards, such as Social Work and Teaching, may choose to limit the number of times an individual may apply. This is made clear in the pre-application information on the College website, where applicable.

#### 8.5 Entry requirements

- a. Individuals applying for any HE course at Harlow College must meet the entry requirements. They must submit a personal statement with their application and be prepared to provide an academic or employer reference upon request. Course-specific entry requirements can be found on the course search of the College website.
- b. Individual curriculum teams may waive the required level 3 qualifications specified in 8.6a (above) in the case of non-traditional or mature applicants. When an applicant presents with non-standard qualifications, their personal statement, work experience and reference is used to determine whether or not to take them forward to the next stage of the process. This is assessed on a case-by-case basis in light of the course-specific entry requirements. Non-standard applications are assessed by the curriculum team. This is known as "academic judgement", meaning that only the opinion of an academic expert is sufficient.
- c. Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning may be considered for entry to programmes. See section 8.19 for further details regarding Recognition of Prior Learning.

#### 8.6 Interviews and Auditions

- a. On occasion applicants may be invited to attend an interview/audition with a member of the curriculum team.
- b. Applicants are made aware of their interview/audition date and process by a letter sent by the Admissions team. It is the intention of the College to provide two weeks' notice of the interview appointment. In cases where this is not possible, applicants will receive a telephone call, subsequently confirmed by email.
- c. Interviews are conducted by representatives of the curriculum team who teach the course the applicant has applied for. The interview follows the set structure for that particular programme and is conducted by someone who is able to speak about the course in detail. The interviewer ensures that the interview is conducted in an appropriate environment and that the applicant is given the opportunity to speak confidentially.
- d. All interviews are conducted in line with the College Equal Opportunities Policies. Applicants seeking reasonable adjustments to their

interview/audition are invited to contact the Admissions team upon receipt of their interview/audition letter. The Admissions team will communicate the adjustment request to the interviewing tutor, who will liaise with the applicant and SEND team regarding their needs. In order to allow sufficient time to make arrangements, the applicant's request must be referred to SEND at least two weeks in advance of their interview.

- e. The curriculum teams are open to conducting interviews via Skype or Microsoft Teams, or similar video conferencing, when travel to an interview is impractical for the applicant, e.g. the applicant lives outside the UK. Auditions can be recorded and uploaded to the internet using a medium such as Youtube or DropBox. Portfolios can also be viewed online if required.
- f. The College reserves the right to insist on interview attendance for courses that must adhere to outside regulatory bodies and professional standards.

8.7 Harlow College does not use national admissions test to select learners. However, applicants may be required to complete literacy, numeracy and/or comprehension tests as part of the interview process. Applicants will be made aware of the content of any tests and assessments, as well as any preparation that is required, in their interview letter.

8.8 Programmes that require disclosure of criminal convictions request that the applicant complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The relevant programmes will do this in one of two ways:

- a. Applicants applying for programmes that require a mandatory external work placement with vulnerable people, e.g. Early Years are required to present their workplace DBS check at their interview.
- b. Applicants applying for a programme where the work placement with vulnerable people is arranged by Harlow College are asked to complete and pay for a DBS as part of their enrolment/induction process. Applicants are made aware that continuation on their programme of study is subject to the return of a satisfactory DBS check. To ward against withdrawing students post-enrolment, applicants are asked to complete a self-declaration as part of the interview process. The purpose of this is to allow any issues arising to be explored before an offer is made. Applicants are made aware of the need to complete and pay for a DBS check in the pre-application information on the College website, in their interview invitation and in their offer letter.

#### 8.9 Decision-making and Offers

- a. Applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirements are offered an interview for an appropriate alternative, where such an alternative exists. This will not necessarily be a HE course.
- b. It is not policy to routinely give reasons for rejections. However, any applicant seeking rejection reasons or interview feedback should contact the Admissions office. Applicants can expect to receive an initial response to their feedback request within one working day of that request being received. Where additional information must be sought from the relevant curriculum team, the timescale extends to ten working days from receipt of the request. Feedback requests from third parties are not accepted. Applicants are welcome to speak to an Admissions Officer for advice and guidance regarding

the qualifications and experience that will lead to a successful course application in the future.

- c. Interview outcomes are decided by the interviewing curriculum team. Applicants can expect to receive communication of the decision within five working days of completion of the full interview process.
- d. All application outcomes are communicated to the applicant in a letter sent by the Admissions office. Applicants, who have applied through UCAS, can also see their offer or rejection on UCAS Track. Offer letters list each condition (if applicable) of the offer and state when the conditions must be met by. Applicants who do not understand the conditions of their offer should contact the Admissions team for clarification.
- e. Offers are made in line with published entry requirements. However, the College may issue a non-standard offer to learners who do not meet the standard entry requirements but are able to evidence their eligibility for the programme through other means, such as work experience.
- f. Offered applicants enter into a contract with the College at the point of accepting their offer. Applicants are invited to read the College's Terms and Conditions, which are sent with the offer letter before accepting their offer. Applicants that have applied through UCAS are required to accept or decline online via UCAS Track. Applicants who have applied directly to the College are asked to email the Admissions team with their reply. In both cases the offer and applicant decision is recorded on the College's Management Information System. Applicants are advised that by accepting an offer, they are agreeing to the Terms and Conditions.
- g. Applicants that accept their offer have the standard 14 days cooling off period, during which time they can terminate their contract either by changing their decision on UCAS or contacting the Admissions office. Applicants wishing to terminate the contract after the 14 day period should refer to the Terms and Conditions of the Student Contract, which is provided with their offer letter.

8.10 Harlow College collect as many exam results as possible online through UCAS's Awarding Body Linkage (ABL). Where results are not available through the ABL, or the applicant has not applied through UCAS, the applicant is required to submit evidence that conditions have been met to the Admissions office by the deadline given in the offer letter. Scans and emails of qualifications are accepted by the Admissions team but the original certificates/results slips must be presented to the curriculum staff at enrolment.

8.11 Confirmation decisions are processed in accordance with the deadlines specified in the UCAS Admissions Guide. Applicants can access these deadlines on the UCAS website. Applicants will be notified of their Confirmation decision via UCAS Track.

8.12 Successful applicants receive a letter from the Admissions team, inviting them to enrol at the main campus before the start of classes. The purpose of the enrolment session is to allow the curriculum teams to check that all offer conditions have been met and to process the necessary data and fees required to fully register the learner on their programme. The session also provides the learners with the opportunity to ask the curriculum teams any final questions before enrolling and completing their registration on the programme.

- 8.13 Where applicants have not met their offer conditions, the Admissions team do not automatically process a Confirmation Rejection. Instead, the applicant's information is referred to the curriculum team for further guidance. It may be necessary to contact the applicant to obtain contextual information or ascertain if admission on to the programme can be granted by an alternative means. Applicants who cannot be admitted on to their chosen programme may be offered a place on a suitable level 3 course if they meet the relevant entry requirements.
- 8.14 Harlow College's ability to make Confirmation decisions is dependent on applicants demonstrating that they have met their offer conditions by the deadline specified in their offer letter. Applicants, who cannot demonstrate that they have met their offer conditions due to an unforeseen delay, or the loss of a document, should contact the Admissions team. The Admissions team will contact the relevant curriculum team to obtain further guidance regarding the applicant's next steps.
- 8.15 Applicants that have applied to Harlow College directly do not receive confirmation decisions prior to their enrolment appointment. Applicants who are concerned that they cannot meet their conditions should contact the Admissions team for further guidance.
- 8.16 Information regarding programme start dates, inductions and timetables is provided in the applicant's enrolment invitation letter. When this information is not available at the time of sending the letter, it will be provided to new students at the enrolment session. Induction packs, the Student Handbook, the Programme Handbook and Academic Regulations and reading lists can be accessed on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), called The Qube.
- 8.17 Clearing and Adjustment
- a. Harlow College is happy to consider new applications through UCAS Clearing and UCAS Adjustment. In both cases, applicants are expected to demonstrate that they meet the standard course entry requirements and complete the full interview/audition process, just as if they had applied through the UCAS main scheme.
  - b. Harlow College is bound by the terms of the UCAS code of practice and application procedure. Applicants are therefore required to ensure that they are eligible for Adjustment or Clearing before contacting the Admissions team and will be asked to provide their UCAS Personal ID number if they wish to be considered for a programme.
  - c. Adjustment and Clearing offers will be detailed in an offer letter sent by the Admissions team and will be visible on UCAS Track. The student contract is formed at the point the applicant accepts the offer by adding Harlow College and the relevant course choice to their profile on UCAS Track.
- 8.18 Deferred entry
- a. Harlow College is happy to accept applications for deferred entry for all HE programmes. Potential students may declare their wish to be considered for deferred entry in two ways: (i) by indicating on their (UCAS) application form that they wish to apply for deferred entry, or (ii) by contacting the Admissions

team to request deferred entry after receiving their offer but prior to commencing the programme.

- b. In both (i) and (ii) above, applicants must complete the full application process and meet the conditions of the offer made to them by the deadline given in the offer letter in order to secure a deferred offer.
- c. Applicants who wish to defer after receiving their offer, must send their request in writing to the Admissions team, who will seek permission to defer from the curriculum team before responding to the applicant's request. Confirmation of a deferred offer breaks any contract formed on the basis of a previous offer.
- d. Deferral requests may be refused if the curriculum team anticipate changes to the course entry requirements or programme details in the next admissions cycle. Applicants wishing to challenge a refusal may do so through the appeals process (see section 15).
- e. Applicants are permitted to defer their offer for one academic year only. The Admissions team will contact deferred applicants in the Spring of the following admissions cycle to reissue the deferred offer and request confirmation of acceptance by a specific date. Acceptance forms a new student contract.

#### 8.19 Recognition of Prior Learning - APCL and APEL

- a. Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) will not be accepted as a means of meeting entry requirements or achieving advanced standing. This is because Experiential Learning is difficult to quantify.
- b. Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) for qualifications and/or HE credits that have been achieved within the previous five academic years may be accepted for advanced standing. Applicants must provide full certificates and transcripts for consideration by the relevant Programme Manager and the Head of HE. The applicant will be notified of the outcome of their application for advanced standing by a letter sent by the Head of HE.
- c. Applications for advanced standing on HE programmes via APCL will only be considered from applicants who have secured a place on an HE programme at Harlow College. All applicants must meet the entry requirements for individual programmes before an APCL request will be considered.
- d. Applications for APCL will only be considered prior to commencement on the programme and up to 5 weeks after commencement on the programme.
- e. The most common form of advanced standing at Harlow College is internal progression from an HNC to an HND top. The College welcomes applications from students from alternative institutions wishing to apply for advanced standing or top-up programmes.
- f. Full details of the College *Accreditation of Prior (Certificated) Learning* policy and procedure can be found [here](#).

#### 8.20 Document Verification and Fraud

- a. Applicants should be aware that UCAS routinely screen applications for false, misleading and/or missing information, and personal statements for patterns of similarity. UCAS's Fraud and Similarity Detection service will

notify both the applicant and the College if an application is found to contain evidence of fraud or plagiarism. UCAS's aim in completing this exercise is to "avoid anyone gaining from an unfair advantage and securing a place by deception".

- b. Notifications from UCAS's Fraud and Similarity Detection service will be forwarded by the Admissions team to the relevant curriculum area, alongside the rest of the application form and related documents. Where a personal statement has been flagged for containing similar sentences to other personal statements, the curriculum team will take this in to consideration when assessing the application. Applicants should be aware that significant evidence of fraud or plagiarism will result in the application being rejected.
- c. All applicants, regardless of whether they applied through UCAS or directly to the College, are asked to produce their original qualification certificates and transcripts at their selection interview / assessment / audition. Applicants who cannot provide original documents during the selection process will have production of the required documents stipulated as a condition of their offer. Any applicant who does not produce the documents by the enrolment date given will not be permitted to enrol on the programme.
- d. Applicants who supply false qualification documents will have their application rejected.
- e. References submitted in support of the course application should be provided on the UCAS application form or sent directly to the Admissions office on official letter-headed paper or from an official email address. References that are not provided in the required format will be not accepted. If either the curriculum team or the Admissions office feels that a reference may not be genuine, the College will verify the reference by contacting the referee using the contact details provided. Should it emerge that the reference has been falsified, the application will be rejected.
- f. Where an application is deemed to be fraudulent, the College reserves the right to pass information to interested parties which may include, but is not restricted to; UCAS, the Student Loan Company.
- g. Applicants that wish to appeal the decision to cancel an application on the basis of fraud may do so through the Admissions Appeals and Complaints process. Please see section 15 of this document for further information.

## **9. Mature and young applications**

- 9.1 Harlow College welcomes applicants from of all ages and makes no distinction between 'standard age' and 'mature' applicants when assessing applications.
- 9.2 Courses that require work placements with young and/or vulnerable people restrict the minimum age at the point of entry to 18 years old. These courses are; Advanced Practitioner in Early Years, HNC and HND.
- 9.3 All other courses will assess learners under the age of 18 at the point of entry on a case by case basis. Note: this may have fee/funding implications.
- 9.4 This is no upper age limit on applicants. However, applicants wishing to undertake one of the courses listed in 9.2 will be asked to consider whether or

not their health places any restrictions on their ability to complete the mandatory placements.

## **10. Care Leavers**

- 10.1 Harlow College is committed to supporting students who are care leavers. Such students can access financial and/or pastoral support through the Student Services team and should contact the HE Student Advisors for further help and advice.

## **11. Applicants with disabilities or specific learning needs**

- 11.1 Harlow College is committed to welcoming applications from prospective students with disabilities or specific learning needs. All applicants are given equal consideration on the basis of their academic merit and potential.
- 11.2 Information about disabilities and specific learning needs is collected both on the UCAS application and the direct College application. This information is used to assist in identifying support needs but does not contribute to the academic decision over whether to make the applicant an offer.
- 11.3 Learning Support work with the relevant curriculum team to establish the demands of the programme and consider the applicant's support needs in light of the programme content.
- 11.4 Applicants declaring a disability or specific learning need can expect a response from Learning Support within 15 working days. Depending on the nature of the declaration, applicants will be contacted either by post or telephone in the first instance. A meeting with a member of the Learning Support team will be scheduled if the initial contact reveals that one is required. Such instances may include; where an applicant has multiple disabilities or difficulties; where an applicant requires further assessment of their needs; or where the applicant may need to apply for DSA.
- 11.5 Any applicant or student requesting special arrangements relating to exams or assessments must engage Learning Support for assessment of their eligibility for such arrangements.
- 11.6 Applicants may request special arrangements for their application interview and assessment. Reasonable adjustments will be made on an individual basis and may vary according to the chosen programme of study. It may not be reasonable to accommodate all requests for special arrangements, particularly if such an arrangement would mask or skew the curriculum team's ability to assess the applicant's academic potential. In addition to this, in the case of a course where a mandatory work placement is required, it is the responsibility of the curriculum team to determine whether or not applicants are capable of completing training for their desired career, in light of the fact that not all types of support are available in the workplace. This may mean that it is inappropriate to provide certain types of support to applicants during the student selection stage.
- 11.7 The College will only enrol applicants where it has been determined that reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure that adequate support is in place.
- 11.8 The Assistant Principal for Student Services will review the practice of the SEND on an annual basis.

## **12. International Students**

Harlow College does not hold a tier 4 licence so can only take UK/EU residents.

## **13. Applicants declaring criminal convictions**

- 13.1 Harlow College of Further and Higher Education is committed to equal opportunities and aims to provide a supportive and positive environment; however the College also has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for its staff, students, visitors and local community. Therefore all applicants seeking admission into Harlow College are required to declare any unspent criminal convictions or pending court cases as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. There is no requirement to disclose spent convictions.
- 13.2 The UCAS application form and the College application form both ask applicants if they have any criminal convictions. The details of applicants who declare that they have a criminal conviction are referred to the Safeguarding team by the Admissions team. The Safeguarding team will complete a risk assessment using background checks with relevant agencies, including the Police, by means of an Information Sharing Agreement. This risk assessment is presented with a recommendation to the VP for Quality and Curriculum for consideration.
- 13.3 The purpose of such checks is to assess whether the applicant poses a significant risk to learners or staff at the College. Risks can be categorised under Safeguarding, 'Prevent', security awareness, or other risk. The campus support team is responsible for considering various elements in order to determine the overall risk posed by a potential learner and making a recommendation to the Vice-Principal. The Vice-Principal will then make a final decision based on the evidence presented. Where it is established that the applicant poses an unacceptable risk, their application will be withdrawn.
- 13.4 All applicants should note that failure to declare information about a conviction or pending court case or supplying untrue or inaccurate information about a conviction or pending court case may lead to your offer of a place or enrolment on the course to be withdrawn at any time.
- 13.5 If an individual is unsure if their conviction is spent and should be declared they should get advice from the appropriate agency e.g. Youth Offending Team or Probation Service, or visit the online calculator [www.disclosurecalculator.org.uk](http://www.disclosurecalculator.org.uk) or [www.unlock.org.uk](http://www.unlock.org.uk) for up to date advice.
- 13.6 Paragraph 8.8 above, describes how individual courses manage DBS checks and criminal convictions declarations within the context of programme entry requirements and offer making.

## **14. Changes to and discontinuation of programmes**

- 14.1 Harlow College makes every effort to ensure that programmes are run in accordance with the information provided in both pre-application information and at the point of offer and acceptance, when the student contract is formed. However, there may be occasions when it is necessary to change a programme or discontinue it altogether. The options available to an applicant in such circumstances will vary depending on whether or not the applicant has accepted an offer.

## 14.2 Changes to programmes

- Applicants who apply for a programme on the basis of information that has substantially changed are made aware of the changes at their selection interview. The course curriculum team explain the details of the programme and respond to any applicant queries. If the interviewing tutor is aware of any possible future changes at the time of the interview, they are required to make the applicant aware at that time. The applicant is told what the changes are likely to be and when they will be finalised.
- Where a change is made to a programme after an offer has been accepted, affected applicants are notified in writing by a letter sent by the Admissions team, containing course information provided by the curriculum team. Such applicants are given the option to withdraw their acceptance, thus releasing them from the student contract. UCAS applicants can withdraw their acceptance within 14 days of making their initial decision. After 14 days they should contact the UCAS Contact Centre for assistance.
- Changes to programmes are most likely to occur when the programme is subject to validation or re-validation. Marketing materials will clearly identify such programmes.

## 14.3 Discontinuation of programmes

- Applicants who apply for a programme that is subsequently discontinued are notified by the Admissions team and via the UCAS system.
- Applicants have the option to apply for an alternative programme at Harlow College or withdraw their application altogether, thus releasing them from the student contract. Applicants who choose to apply for an alternative programme must meet the entry requirements specific to that programme in order to receive an offer.
- UCAS applicants wishing to substitute the discontinued course choice for a choice at an alternative institution can do so prior to 30<sup>th</sup> June by contacting the UCAS Contact Centre. After 30<sup>th</sup> June, UCAS applicants may need to seek an alternative institution through the UCAS Clearing system.
- Where the applicant numbers progressing from HNC to HND year no longer meet the minimum student number requirement due to HNC in year withdrawals.

## 14.4 Support available to applicants

Harlow College will support applicants in determining their next steps in the light of any changes to programmes or discontinuation of programmes. Where an applicant is holding an offer, Harlow College will assist them in securing an alternative place either internally or at another HE provider. Such assistance includes, contacting UCAS, using the UCAS course search and contacting Admissions offices at alternative HE providers.

## 14.5 Terms and Conditions

The circumstances, under which it may be necessary to make changes to a programme or discontinue a programme, are stated in the Terms and Conditions of the Student Contract. Terms and Conditions are made available to applicants at the point of offer.

## 15. Appeals and Complaints

- 15.1 Harlow College is committed to the fair and professional handling of appeals and complaints. Applicants can find the Complaints Policy and Procedures on the Harlow College website. Applicants' attention is drawn to these procedures in the offer and rejections letter.
- 15.2 An **appeal** is a request for a formal review of an admission decision or the wording/conditions of an offer. An appeal can only be lodged after the application decision has been made.
- 15.3 A **complaint** is a specific concern relating to a procedural error, irregularity or maladministration in the selection and admissions procedures or policy. It may also include an expression of dissatisfaction about the College's action, or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the College. A complaint can be lodged at any stage of the admissions process.
- 15.4 Applicants wishing to make an appeal or complaint have up to 15 working days after the disputed occurrence to make written representation to the Admissions office. Full details of the procedure and associated deadlines can be found in the full policy and procedure document.

## 16. Widening Participation

- 16.1 Harlow College's recruitment processes are designed to meet the College's strategic priorities and widen participation in higher education. All applicants are interviewed so that course content and work-based learning opportunities can be clearly communicated see section 8 – The application process.
- 16.2 At interview, prospective students are taken through each stage of the recruitment, selection and admissions process to aid understanding.
- 16.3 Recruitment from wider populations is covered in sections 9, 10 and 11.

## TRACKING and REFERENCE INFORMATION

**Date Approved: 26 June 2018, Reviewed 29 June 2021 - Standards & Curriculum Committee**

**Review Date: June 2023**

**Author/Responsibility: Executive Team Member with responsibility for Higher Education**

**Equality Impact Assessment: TBA**

**List of related policies, procedures and other documents:**

- Harlow College Terms and Conditions of the Student Contract
- Harlow College Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Harlow College Tuition Fee Policy
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2
- UCAS Admissions Guide and Decision Processing Manual
- Harlow College Academic Regulations

**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 Grievance Procedure.

**Monitoring:** The application of this policy and associated procedure will be monitored by Executive Team Member with responsibility for Higher Education

**Easy reading:** To receive this policy/procedure in a different format, please contact Executive Team Member with responsibility for Higher Education.