



DERBY COLLEGE GROUP POLICY

HE Admissions Policy

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Owning Strategy / Department:	Higher Education Department
Approval Board / Committee / Group:	HE Academic Board
User Group:	Higher Education
Relevant To:	Higher Education students
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POLICY - PROCEDURES - GUIDELINES - RELATED DOCUMENTS

Policy Accountability and Implementation

Policy Title:	HE Admissions Policy
Policy Author / Reviewers:	Head of Higher Education
Policy Implementation:	Head of Higher Education, Director of Services for Students
Policy Monitoring and Compliance:	Head of Higher Education, Director of Services for Students
Policy Review Timeline:	Annual

Synopsis:

Admissions policy to admit students on to courses in Higher Education at DCG.

Policy Classification and Publication

Classification

- Not Classified (NA)

Publication

- Intranet – Policy portal
- Website – HE page

Empowering/related legislative and/or authoritative references:

Periodic Policy Review / Change History

Note: Please make it clear if change/review relates to procedures, guidelines and associated documents only or it is a rational for a new or substantive policy review

Version	Reviewed / Modified by:	Change History	Advisory committee / groups or specialists	Review / Meeting Date/s
1	Director of Higher Education and Director of Services for Students	Agreed new policy	HE Academic Board HE Strategic Board	Oct 2019
2	Director of Higher Education and Director of Services for Students	Minor amendments	HE Academic Board	June 2021
3	Office for Students Compliance and Policy Officer	Minor amendments made to job roles to reflect changes in job titles Removed reference to the Open University (OU) from paragraph 9.53 - stage 3 – point 1	NA	May 2022
4	Head of Higher Education	Reviewed and no changes	To be ratified at HE Quality Standards Committee April 2023	March 2023

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The College is committed to a fair and open admission system that considers all applicants on their individual merits. The College is committed to raising student aspirations, widening participation and promoting equal access to programmes of study. The College aims to offer a broad range of programmes to students of all abilities and to ensure that students are appropriately matched to a programme of study. The College will apply the principles inherent in this policy to all applicants, including applicants for full-time and part-time higher education programmes. The underlying principle of the Admissions Policy is that all individual students seeking a place at the College are appropriately matched to a suitable programme of study.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. This document sets out the policy and procedures governing initial student enquiries, information advice and guidance (IAG) provision, formal application, selection interview, and offers for students on taught programmes validated by an awarding organisation or partner institution.

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. This admissions policy aims to:

- create a student body that is balanced and diverse in terms of cultural background and experience;
- recruit students with a genuine intention to study and fully complete their programme of study;
- recruit students who have the ability to successfully complete their chosen programme at threshold and beyond, whatever their background;
- recognise the need for inclusivity, diversity and equal opportunity;
- ensure that disability does not prevent someone from making an application to or being accepted by the College and/or completing the programme successfully.

- 3.2. The College will endeavour to achieve these aims by:

- encouraging applications from all those with the motivation and academic ability to succeed at the College;
- assessing each application on an individual basis and interview face-to-face/online wherever possible;
- offering places to applicants who have the potential to successfully complete their programme of study;
- maintaining transparency in the recruitment and admissions process.

- 3.3. The College is committed to quality of access to learning for all, and to widening the participation of students from under-represented, disadvantaged and previously excluded groups. This policy governs the admission of individuals to the College as students.

- 3.4. The College will ensure that it meets its requirements under the Equality Act. This means that that all applicants are treated fairly and given equal opportunities to apply for programmes of study. Within the Equality Act attention is given to ensure the following protected characteristics are supported:

- Age
- Sex

- Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
- 3.5 The College offers a broad range of programmes to a varied student population. This policy determines the principles of the College admissions and enrolment systems. The arrangements for admissions to programmes may vary, dependent upon the programme, experience, programme requirements and funding available.
- 3.6 The College ensures all promotional materials are accurate, relevant, current, and accessible in order to provide information that will enable prospective students to make informed decisions about their options. On occasion, it is necessary to amend programme titles, content or entry criteria after the details have been published and in these circumstances the College will take reasonable steps to ensure the changes are communicated to relevant stakeholders.
- 3.7 All courses have a comprehensive programme profile on the College's website, and where applicable a UCAS Entry Profile, detailing the qualifications, subject knowledge, qualities and skills required for the course along with the details of any non-academic (pre-enrolment) requirements such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- 3.8 Applicants may access information about their programmes directly from the College website and/or request information, advice and guidance to help them decide on the programme of study best suited to their needs. Applicants may also contact the Admission Tutors for an informal discussion. Services available to applicants include an impartial, confidential IAG appointment with Inclusion and Support advice.
- 3.9 For full-time programmes, applicants can access information from UCAS. Additional information can be accessed via Key Information Sets (KIS), where available, from the UNISTATS web site www.discoveruni.gov.uk or from the College website.
- 3.10 Applications to the College will be processed in a timely manner on receipt.
- 3.11 Applicants are asked to declare any long-term health condition or inclusion need. All applications are reviewed for academic suitability first and foremost. If an applicant is suitable for an offer their support needs will be assessed in relation to their disability/learning difference and the requirements of the programme/profession the applicant is applying for. The College is committed to equal opportunities and this policy aims to ensure that individuals with disabilities and learning differences receive fair treatment, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.12 All applicants are entitled to receive a clear indication, prior to enrolment, of all likely expenses associated with their chosen programme of study (costs may be subject to change).
- 3.13 All applicants should be informed of the College admissions entry criteria required for their programme of study. Entry criteria for programme is reviewed annually to keep in line with the academic demand of the programme and any internal or external regulatory requirements e.g. for accreditation, subject to approval by the awarding organisation. Entry criteria considerations form part of the programme validation process at the College also, but as criteria is reviewed annually this does not necessarily entail re-validation of a programme.

- 3.14 The College welcomes applications from appropriately qualified applicants offering a wide range of qualifications. Specific details can be found on individual programme pages on the College website. International and European qualifications will be considered and evaluated by referring to independently published guides recognised within the United Kingdom higher education sector such as UK NARIC.
- 3.15 The College reserves the right not to enrol an applicant who has outstanding debts with the College. When identified, the Finance Team will be notified by a member of the Admissions Team to liaise with the applicant.
- 3.16 The College reserves the right to refuse admission to an applicant who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution. Persons previously excluded will be interviewed by the appropriate Team Manager prior to their re-entry. The College will only refuse admission if they feel that they are unable to provide a satisfactory risk assessment and/or if it is felt that the student has made no progress from the previous exclusion.
- 3.17 The College recognises it has a duty of care to students, staff and visitors and therefore reserves the right not to admit an applicant where there is evidence that they could pose a risk to themselves or others, which cannot be managed through a risk management plan.
- 3.18 All data submitted to the College during the admissions process is used to assess the suitability of an applicant for study at the College. Data may also be used by the College for statistical and reporting purposes. The application data forms part of a student's record when they are admitted to the College, and where relevant, partner universities. Personal data of applicants who are not admitted to the College are archived and normally removed after one academic year. The College complies with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 in its use of applicant data. Further information about Data Protection at the College can be found on our website, <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/gdpr>.

4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

4.1. This policy is applicable to all Higher Education programmes that are not subject to an Admissions policy set by an awarding organisation/institution, *although final approval of admissions may be the responsibility of the awarding organisation/institution*. This applies to:

- Higher National programmes
- Honours degrees
- Degrees (non honours)
- Foundation degrees
- Short course at HE Levels 4 to 7
- Higher Education Apprenticeships (see section 6)

4.2. This policy has been developed to ensure that the College practices a clear, fair, explicit and consistent admissions procedure and has been guided by the UK Quality Code, *Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access* and meets the following Core Practice:

- (a) *The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.*
- (b) *The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.*
- (c) *The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the*

quality of their educational experience.

- (d) *The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.*

4.3. The admission of students into higher education programmes at the College will typically include the following activities:

- promotion and marketing of courses to prospective students, their parents, employers and advisers;
- identification and recruitment of prospective students to the College and specific programmes of study through, for example, open days; recruitment fairs; seminars, etc;
- selection of applicants suitable for a particular programme;
- assessment of suitability based on academic grounds, intentions of study, and fit with career aspirations;
- make reasonable adjustments for students with inclusion needs;
- conditional offer of a place on a programme of study;
- enrolment of students onto a programme of study (unconditional offer);
- induction and orientation of new students to the College, department and programme of study;
- promote retention, student success and equality of opportunity.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. The Deputy Chief Executive Office (Deputy CEO) has the executive responsibility and strategic oversight of the Admissions Policy.
- 5.2. The Director of Services for Students is responsible for the effective development, implementation and review of the policy and procedures.
- 5.3. The Student Services team are responsible for the day to day administration and implementation of the procedures described in this document.
- 5.4. The Senior Leadership Team, Head of HE, College Heads and Team Managers all have a responsibility to give full and active support to the policy by ensuring the policy is known, understood and implemented.

6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1. The arrangements that outlined below build on previous good practice and seek to provide additional impetus and coherence.
- 6.2. **The Admissions Leadership Group** – chaired by the Director of Services for Students. This group will lead on the strategic direction and development of the admissions process. Group membership will consist of the Senior Leadership Team, Assistant Principals and support managers.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1. The Admissions Leadership Group along with the HE Academic Board will maintain oversight of the effectiveness of these arrangements. This policy and the implementation arrangements which underpin it will be reviewed annually by the Deputy CEO and the Director of Services for Students.
- 7.2. The policy is reviewed in light of its operation in the current cycle (including applied learning from complaints or issues which may have arisen), any new or upcoming Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements or good practice

statements by bodies such as the OfS and QAA.

- 7.3. This policy is operational for a full academic cycle starting in the September of each year.
- 7.4. Individual exceptions to this policy can only be authorised by the Head of Higher Education. Such exceptions will not be regarded as setting a precedent but should be reviewed on an annual basis when the policy is being updated. Any individual exceptions that are made will be captured and clearly communicated to the degree awarding power.

8. GUIDELINES

N/A

9. PROCEDURES

Applications Via UCAS

- 9.1. Applicants can apply via Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Please see the UCAS website (www.ucas.com) for specific deadlines. Students are signposted to the UCAS website from the College website, which includes accurate course information and the College's Higher Education Terms and Conditions: https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/documents/he/terms_conditions.pdf

Applications to DCG

- 9.2. Applicants can apply directly to the College.
- 9.3. Online applicants will receive an automatic reply from the College website confirming receipt of their application.
- 9.4. Handwritten applications are not routinely accepted at DCG. Should an applicant require assistance in completing an application form or cannot access an online version, they should contact the Student Services Team. The Student Services Team can be accessed on 01332 387473 for course information and admissions enquires.
- 9.5. The application will be made available to the appropriate Admissions Tutor.

Assessing Applications

- 9.6. The full application is assessed by the Admissions Tutor to determine the suitability of an applicant and their potential to succeed on the programme. Applications are first assessed against the entry requirements of the programme applied for. The reason for assessing this aspect first is to avoid applicants needing to undergo further procedures unnecessarily.
- 9.7. In determining whether any offer is possible a number of regulatory checks are undertaken including age to determine any under 18s, fee status assessment to determine the fee to charge and funding eligibility, criminal convictions or inclusion need. These checks must be completed before the College is able to proceed to short list for an interview.
- 9.8. During this assessment phase applicants may be contacted for further information or clarification on any aspect. Where an applicant does not respond to information requests in a timely fashion or as requested, the application will be withdrawn on the

assumption that there is no longer any interest to continue or information is being deliberately withheld.

- 9.9. Following an initial assessment of the application form prospective students meeting the entry criteria will be made an offer or invited for interview if it is a requirement of the programme. If an interview is not required, applicants be contacted for an informal discussion in order to enable the Admissions Tutor (someone who is familiar with the programme e.g. Programme Leader, Team Manager) to make a decision regarding an application. All admissions decisions are recorded within a central CRM system.
- 9.10. After all checks have been completed, following an interview as required, and where the outcomes have been established a decision to offer or reject an application will be made. The outcome will be one of the following:
- Unconditional offer – where the applicant already meets all entry criteria required, i.e. where the student has already received their examination grades or qualification result.
 - Conditional offer – where the applicant will be required to meet specific entry criteria
 - Rejected – where unfortunately the applicant has not met course- specific entry requirements

Offers are made in good faith taking into account information as supplied by the applicant and/or referee at the time of the application.

- 9.11. In the event that an offer is made via UCAS, applicants will also receive an email to form the full offer contract. Applicants who have applied directly to the College will receive their full offer by email.
- 9.12. Conditional offers are usually based on academic requirements but may also include non-academic conditions to be satisfied such as work experience or the completion of a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service check. After required conditions have been met, an applicants' status will progress from conditional to unconditional. However, there may still be some non-academic conditions carried over that need to be satisfied in advance of enrolment.
- 9.13. Applicants who have submitted an application via UCAS will be able to track the progress of this offer through "UCAS track". Once examination results become available the College will review and update any 'Conditional' offers making them either 'Unconditional' or 'Reject.'
- 9.14. Such conditions will only be applied where the application is very strong and it is felt that it is realistic in terms of time frame for the applicant to achieve these additional requirements. If it is not realistic as the application has been submitted late and such requirements are imperative for consistency and potential to succeed on the programme, then most likely the application will be rejected.
- 9.15. Unconditional offers will not have any academic conditions stipulated, but the offer may still expect an applicant to meet non-academic conditions such as criminal records and occupational health clearances. All such conditions including those where qualifications or other information needs to be verified will be expected to be met satisfactorily in advance of enrolment.
- 9.16. Where a Degree Awarding Power (DAP) or Awarding Organisation (OA) imposes specific entry requirements, the College will assist the applicant to check whether they meet those requirements. The responsibility of the accuracy of the information supplied to the validating body rests with the applicant.

Responding to the Offer

- 9.17. When a student has been made an offer they will be sent an information pack including a link to view the College's terms and conditions, programme information and accommodation information in compliance with the requirements set by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). Applicants can view the Terms and Conditions at any point on the website: https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/documents/he/terms_conditions.pdf
- 9.18. Applicants must accept their offer (whether conditional or unconditional) In order to secure their place on a course.
- 9.19. Where applicants have applied directly and received an offer, a response to the offer is expected to be received within 14 days of it being sent. The response should either be to accept or decline. Applicants will have a further 14 days as a cooling off period to change their decision.
- 9.20. UCAS applicants will have varying deadlines to respond to an offer.
- 9.21. No response will result in the offer being automatically declined by the UCAS system. If this happens applicants will still have a 14-day cooling off period during which an applicant can override the automated decline.
- 9.22. UCAS applicants will be able to make three types of responses: Firm acceptance, Insurance acceptance and Decline. Firm acceptance means this is the preferred offer. Insurance acceptance usually means that this is the back-up choice. It is up to the applicant to decide on what merits the Firm and Insurance acceptances are made.
- 9.23. Where an applicant has made an institution/programme their Insurance choice, the institution is obliged to hold the place on the programme until results have been received. If the results meet the offer conditions (if there are any) then the offer will progress to unconditional status.
- 9.24. At this point, if an applicant's Firm choice rejects their application based on results, then they will automatically move to Unconditional Firm status with what was originally their Insurance choice.
- 9.25. There may of course still be non-academic conditions to be satisfied in order to be eligible to enrol or remain on the programme.
- 9.26. Applicants are able to withdraw their application any time before enrolment by making a request in writing to the relevant admissions office. After enrolment Student Withdrawal rules would apply.
- 9.27. The College may also withdraw the application if an applicant does not attend interview, provide requested information or complete enrolment.

Internal Applicants

- 9.28. Internal applicants are defined as current students who are registered at DCG in the academic year prior to the year they intend to study on a Higher Education programme. Internal applicants will be subject to meeting the same entry criteria as external applicants.
- 9.29. Where an internal applicant has had poor attendance, performance or behaviour or has a current disciplinary sanction, it may impact the decision of the Admissions Tutor. Alternatively, it may be deemed appropriate to decline a place at this time. Admissions decisions will be reviewed by DCG and all decisions made available for scrutiny by the degree awarding institution.

Recognition of Prior Learning

- 9.30. The purpose of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is to assess an individual's previous educational attainment or experiential learning against the curriculum of the programme being applied for. In doing so, the student may be able to reduce the modules required to be taken to achieve the award and thus reduce the length of their programme and fee payable.
- 9.31. Applicants wishing to be considered under this procedure will need to notify the Admissions Team in writing where then the application will be shared with the programme leader for further consideration in this respect.
- 9.32. The RPL process is always officiated at the point of enrolment, therefore the offer letter will still state the full course and fee or pro-rata fee if on a part-time basis.
- 9.33. For more details, please refer to the College's procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning.

Higher Education Apprenticeships

General Entry Criteria

- 9.34. Eligibility for entry will consider residency in accordance with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules for apprenticeship funding.

Specific requirements at GCSE or equivalent

- 9.35. Where an apprentice does not hold at least a grade 4 (or C) GCSE (or equivalent) qualification in maths and/or English they will be required (in most cases) to undertake and achieve at least level 2 alongside their apprenticeship. Where an apprentice does not hold the remaining required grades in line with the entry criteria their entry will be determined by the employer and admissions tutor.

Audition and Portfolio Requirements

- 9.36. Apprentices may be required to undertake an interview with the employer and/or the College to determine eligibility for entry.

Other Criteria

- 9.37. Apprentices who have previously been awarded a qualification at the same level or within the same subject area can undertake a new qualification at the same level or within the same subject area, however, eligibility will be determined in accordance with the ESFA funding rules. For further details, please visit the governments ['Become an apprentice' webpages](#).

Qualification verification

- 9.38. Apprentices are required to provide copies of certificates of qualifications prior to commencement of the apprenticeship.

Applying

- 9.39. Apprentices can only apply to the College via a dedicated URL provided to the employer upon confirmation to the University that the apprenticeship will take place.

Fees and Fee Status Assessment

- 9.40. Where the applicant is undertaking an apprenticeship it is the employers'

responsibility to ensure all tuition fees and all other expenses relating to the academic programme are paid. Apprentices are not eligible to apply for funding support from the Student Loans Company.

Residency Requirements

- 9.41. An apprentice must demonstrate the same residency criteria to that of a UK applicant, however, this status determines eligibility for the apprenticeship, not fee status.

Appeals Procedure

- 9.42. The College expects that all interactions between prospective students, students, supporters and staff will be conducted with mutual understanding and respect. Any unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated and may prejudice an application or appeal. In exceptional cases, where the seriousness of the behaviour has breached accepted norms, further action may be taken including, but not limited to, withdrawing an offer and cancelling an accommodation application.
- 9.43. For UCAS prospective students, where inappropriate behaviour leads to the withdrawal of any offer, the College will report its actions to UCAS.
- 9.44. In exceptional circumstances, the College may feel morally or legally obliged to report its findings to other authorities.
- 9.45. The College is committed to the provision of an admissions service to all prospective students which is fair, efficient and transparent. However, the College recognises that there may be instances where a prospective student feels aggrieved with the College's admissions decisions or processes and wishes to bring their concerns to our attention either formally or informally.
- 9.46. This Procedure is for the use by applicants applying for admission to the College (where the admissions procedure is the sole responsibility of the College) and should not be confused with the complaints procedure for students which is not open to applicants.
- 9.47. The College, where possible and whilst being sensitive to the concerns of the prospective student, will aim to deal with issues informally. Many issues can be dealt with appropriately in this manner and the College's appeals procedure has been designed with this in mind. This is not to say they will be treated with less importance and will still form an important part of the University's regular review of its service delivery.
- 9.48. Any appeal will be handled in isolation from the application and will not prejudice current or future applications.
- 9.49. The College will only normally accept an appeal directly from the prospective student, unless a third party has the explicit consent to act on their behalf.
- 9.50. Prospective students who feel that they have grounds for appeal should raise the matter within 20 working days' of the admission decision of the College being communicated to the applicant.
- 9.51. For the purposes of this procedure an appeal is defined as a request from an unsuccessful prospective student to review the outcome of an admissions decision and should only be submitted on the following grounds:
- (a) they can demonstrate/evidence that the College has deviated from its own

- policy, procedures and practice; or
- (b) further information, which was not available at the time of application, is presented to the College; or
- (c) there is a perception or indication that the prospective student has been treated differently to another applicant in a similar situation.

9.52. The high level of competition for some programmes means that it is unavoidable that the College will disappoint some prospective students with a selection decision. It should be noted that prospective students have no right of appeal against decisions that are based on the academic or professional judgement of the College about suitability for admission. For example, academic judgement may be used to determine the suitability of prior learning (accredited or otherwise) for entry in lieu of formal qualifications, or an assessment of the suitability of subject knowledge from less traditional qualifications.

Procedure for Submitting an Appeal

9.53. **Stage 1:** request for feedback or clarification: Before submitting an appeal a prospective student should normally contact The Admissions Team by telephone or in writing (email is accepted), to request feedback or to discuss their concerns.

Stage 2: Before submitting an appeal the prospective student should ensure that they have read the grounds outlined above. An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Director of Services for Students, Admissions, Derby College Group, The Roundhouse, Roundhouse Road, Pride Park, Derby, DE24 8JE. Alternatively, appeals can be emailed via <https://intouch.derby-college.ac.uk/Forms/Enquiry>. An appeal must be submitted within four weeks of the date of the original decision.

Stage 3: Where the prospective student remains dissatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, the prospective student may request a review of the Stage 2 decision. The prospective student must provide clear reasons/evidence for requesting a review (for example, evidencing that information had not been taken into account at stage 2). The outcome of Stage 3 will be considered final and therefore the prospective student is unable to take the matter further with the College. A review can be requested in writing to The Higher Education and Higher -Level Skills Manager. Following the completion of Stage 3, if still dissatisfied with the outcome, the student has the right to appeal to:

- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), Second Floor, Abbey Gate, 57-75 Kings Road Reading RG1 3AB.

9.54. As a minimum guideline an Appeal (Stage 2) should include the following information:

- a. Prospective student name and any relevant application reference numbers provided either by the College or third parties such as UCAS;
- b. Contact details;
- c. Details of the grounds for the appeal;
- d. Any further information that the prospective student feels relevant to their case.

9.55. An acknowledgement of an appeal (Stage 2) or review of an appeal (Stage 3) will normally be made within five working days. The Admissions Manager or their nominee, will investigate in conjunction with any relevant Department(s) and the outcome will be communicated within 10 working days from acknowledgement. If for any reason these timescales for response cannot be met, the prospective student will be updated of expected timescales within the 10 working days from acknowledgement.

9.56. Where the appeal relates to a selection decision, and is upheld, the College cannot guarantee admissions to the academic year initially requested, however where

possible an alternative point of entry may be offered.

10. TEMPLATES/FORMS

N/A

11. RELATED DOCUMENT

11.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Enrolment and Registration Policy (Higher Education)
- Student Criminal Convictions Policy