



**Middlesbrough
College**

Higher Education Admissions Policy

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1.0 Introduction

This admissions policy details the principles and processes that underpin the selection and recruitment practices for admission to all undergraduate and postgraduate courses of study delivered by Middlesbrough College. The policy is underpinned by the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and aligns to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education advice and guidance on the Guiding Principles, Expectations and Practices for Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.

This policy is relevant to the following:

- the general public;
- all prospective students;
- current students wishing to undertake further study;
- higher education advisers and providers.

The College welcomes applications from all people who have the potential to succeed in Higher Education and is committed to enabling students to fulfil their personal and employment potential.

For the terms and conditions of enrolment please refer to the [University Centre Middlesbrough Terms and Conditions of Enrolment](#).

2.0 Key principles

The key principles of the Admissions Policy are congruent with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and are broadly informed by the following:

1. Policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible.
2. Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully.
3. Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students.
4. Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.
5. All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.
6. Providers continually develop widening access strategies and policies in line with local and national guidance.

3.0 Responsibilities

The College Management Team has the overarching responsibility for admissions and selection processes. The annual review, monitoring and enhancement of the admissions process is delegated to the Academic Board.

The Higher Education Office is responsible for ensuring that the admission processes for all higher education applicants are clear and updated regularly.

Directors of Programme or their delegated representative are responsible for ensuring that:

- appropriate admissions criteria are developed for each course, communicated to relevant College Departments and updated annually.

- All Admissions Tutors and other staff engaged in admissions work are:
 - aware of and support the College's Admissions Policy and associated procedures; are competent to make fair and sound judgements;
 - are aware of the College's Equal Opportunities Policy and how to obtain further advice when dealing with enquiries and applications.

All admissions criteria are subject to approval at programme validation. Any subsequent changes to admissions criteria will be subject to approval through the programme modification process.

4.0 Training and Support

All staff involved in admissions processes receive appropriate training and support.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

The Academic Board will review the College Admissions Policy annually.

6.0 Transparency and Consistency

The College is committed to providing clear, accurate and accessible information on its courses, relevant entry requirements and associated admissions procedures. The College website provides information about all course fees.

The College strives to ensure that clear, accessible information for all recruitment activities is made available with regard to academic and non-academic requirements for entry to its courses. Where additional methods of assessment (e.g., interview or portfolio submission) are used to select candidates, this will be explicitly stated for the benefit of applicants on the course pages on the College website.

All admissions decisions are recorded by the College as well as those which are maintained on the UCAS system.

The College adheres to the UCAS procedures and deadlines in the communication of decisions to all undergraduate applicants. For further information on timescales and how to apply, including how to fill out the form, please see the [Universities and Colleges Application System \(UCAS\) website](#).

7.0 Entry Criteria and Selection Processes

All applications are assessed on an individual basis and admission to the College is based on an applicant's merits and abilities. The principal academic criterion for determining a candidate's suitability for admission is that there is a reasonable expectation that s/he will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course and achieve the standard required for the award. The College will look for evidence of academic achievement as well as personal and professional experiences, where relevant, that provide an indication of ability to meet the demands and professional requirements of the course.

Entry criteria for a given course are set by the Department responsible for the course and can be accessed through the College website. Where appropriate, programmes comply with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements for entry. For undergraduate courses, entry criteria are specified in terms of [UCAS tariff tables](#) and guidance is provided on the College website.

Entry criteria are reviewed by the Higher Education Office (HEO) annually and are updated as required. Minimum entry criteria for all courses entering clearing are deemed to be the same as those used at all other times unless a variance is specifically authorised by the (HEO). Academic judgement may be used in exceptional cases where a student is deemed capable to succeed in a course but may not necessarily meet all prescribed entry criteria. Such decisions will be subject to scrutiny by the HEO and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements where appropriate to ensure consistent and transparent decision-making.

8.0 Students without Conventional Entry Qualifications

Middlesbrough College welcomes applications from students who do not meet conventional entry requirements and will take into account alternative qualifications or other experience. Recognition of Prior Learning (**RPL**) is a generic term for the process by which Higher Education Providers recognise and, where appropriate, award credit for learning that has taken place before entry onto a programme of study. Recognition of Prior or Experiential Learning (RPEL) and Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL) provide opportunities for individuals to claim credit for knowledge and skills that they have obtained through experience, certified learning or uncertified learning, against courses of further study. Full details of Middlesbrough College's RPL policy are provided in the document: [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) Policy](#).

8.1 Exceptional Cases

If, in assessing an application, a Programme Leader (PL) has any uncertainty, the PL can forward the application to the HEO and request a meeting of the Exceptional Cases Panel (ECP). The ECP will meet as soon as possible to consider the application. In consultation with the PL, the ECP will make a judgment whether the applicant meets the published entry criteria. This decision will be communicated to the applicant within three days of the ECP

meeting by the PL.

The ECP will consist of the Director of Higher Education (or their nominee), the Programme Leader and the HEO administrator who will make and keep a formal record of the ECP meeting and its outcome.

9.0 Direct and Deferred Entry

Applicants may be considered for entry with advanced standing to a course, depending upon credit achieved and the relevance of content from previous study. See individual courses for details. See also the College Policy on Recognition of Prior Learning.

The College is happy to consider deferred applications where prospective students request to be admitted the year after an application is made. This request may be at the application stage or after an offer has been made.

10.0 Applicants with Criminal Convictions

The College is committed to the fair treatment of all students and welcomes applications from a wide range of individuals, including those with criminal convictions. The College is committed to the equality of opportunity and selects individuals based on their skills, qualifications and experience and not on their background or personal circumstances. Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent someone from studying at the College. The College is mindful, however, of the duty of care it owes to its students, staff and the wider community to act reasonably to protect their health, safety and welfare. As a consequence, the College requires all applicants to disclose any criminal convictions on application and re-enrolment. Where an applicant fails to declare a relevant unspent conviction, the College reserves the right to take follow up action which could result in exclusion.

If a criminal conviction is disclosed or otherwise brought to the College's attention, the College will work with that person to determine the level of risk posed by the conviction to both the individual and/or to others. The individual will be required to complete a Disclosure of Criminal Convictions providing the College with further information about the offence and contact details for any relevant third party e.g. a Probation Officer. Once received, this disclosure will be processed within 10 working days which involves the disclosure being presented to a safeguarding panel which includes the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL. This 10-day time period allows for any third party (e.g. probation officer) to be contacted, for the panel to consider the disclosure and for the applicant to be informed of the outcome. In circumstances where the College is unable to offer the applicant a place, additional signposting is provided where possible. In circumstances where the College is unable to offer the applicant a place, additional signposting is provided where possible.

The information given on the Disclosure Form will be used to assess whether there is any risk posed should the individual enrol on a course at the College. A decision will be made, and the applicant informed.

Where a successful offer has been made to the applicant, an interview must take place with one of the nominated Safeguarding Team prior to enrolment to approve the application and sign the enrolment form. This interview can take place outside of the 10-day period detailed above but must be concluded during the enrolment period.

Where medium / high risk has been identified, this will be referred to the Safeguarding Operational Group and enrolment deferred until a decision is reached. These decisions are conducted in a timely manner so that an applicant is not disadvantaged and unable to apply elsewhere if necessary. The 10- day turnaround period described above also applies to these decisions and outcomes. High risk is where there is a highly likely or likely probability that extremely harmful or very harmful activity could take place. Medium risk is where there is likely probability that slightly harmful or harmful activity could take place.

Further details including the paperwork required to submit a notification of a criminal conviction can be found in [the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy](#).

For further guidance or assistance in understanding if a disclosure needs to be made, both applicants and current students are advised to access the following websites Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) or Home - Unlock.

11.0 Fraudulent Applications

The College reserves the right to withdraw any offer made on the basis of an application which has been found to contain fraudulent information. If an applicant is found to have omitted key information, the offer of a place may be withdrawn. If a student has been admitted onto a course and it is discovered that they provided fraudulent information, the College has the right to terminate their studies.

12.0 Application Processes

The stages and timeline involved in the application and enrolment process are identified in the table below.

Stage	Responsible	Time
Interview confirmation letter	Admissions Team	10 days from receipt of application
Interview booking	Admissions Team in consultation with PL and student	Window commences 15 days from receipt of application
Offer confirmation/rejection letter	Admissions Team	10 days from confirmation of decision (provided by Programme Team)

Enrolment	Programme Team/Registry	Commences on A-levels results day
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All applications for full-time first degrees, Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and foundation degrees should be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Courses are listed and applications are made through the [UCAS website](#). Students who do not wish to apply through UCAS, can make a direct application to the College, but all direct applicant information will be shared with UCAS through the Record of Prior Acceptance process.

Applications for part-time undergraduate courses are made directly to the College. Details are available on the website.

Applications for postgraduate courses are made directly to the College through the website.

Applicants wishing to discuss eligibility for a course before application should call the number provided in the course details on the website.

13.0 Informing Applicants

13.1 Successful Applicants

Successful applicants will be informed via UCAS or direct communication from the College as appropriate. Information will be issued providing full details of the enrolment process.

13.2 Course Changes

If it becomes necessary to withdraw a course, this will be communicated to applicants at the earliest possible opportunity. Applicants will be given the chance to be considered for an alternative course where possible. Where this is not possible, or where an applicant does not wish to be considered for an alternative course at the College, applicants are able to request a substitute choice through UCAS. The relevant Directorate is responsible for co-ordinating the process of communicating with applicants affected by significant changes to courses. The Directorate should assist the students to identify suitable alternative courses that may be available at other institutions.

13.3 Unsuccessful Applicants

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed via UCAS or direct communication from the College as appropriate. Feedback to unsuccessful applicants will be provided on request and will usually only be provided to the applicant themselves and not to any third party e.g., parent, teacher unless specific permission has been granted. Where a student has been unsuccessful, consideration for other courses will be actively undertaken by the College.

13.4 Admissions Appeals

In order to safeguard the interests of prospective students, the College has established an Admissions Appeals Procedure for use when an applicant believes that their application has not been dealt with in accordance with the College's policies, principles and procedures. Prospective students who wish to appeal a decision on the grounds mentioned above should refer to the guidance and application form contained in the [Admissions Appeals Procedure](#) available from the College website which details the process and timescales for appeals. All outcomes of appeal are recorded and monitored by the Higher Education Office.

14.0 Accessibility

If you share information about a health condition, disability, or other support need, we will explain the support available to you. This aligns with our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 in England, Scotland, and Wales, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 for Northern Ireland, or any other relevant legal obligations. 3.8 Should you require any reasonable adjustments during the application process or throughout your studies, we encourage you to communicate your needs. We are dedicated to facilitating an inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

Notifying the College of required reasonable adjustments does not mean they will be accepted or provided and you may be asked to provide documentary or medical evidence of any specified disability in support of your request.

The costs of additional support to assist with any disability will be discussed with you prior to confirmation of an offer, and you may be required to agree to submit an application to be assessed for Disabled Student's Allowance.

For further guidance on the reasonable adjustments process, please see section 17 of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

15.0 Under 18 Applicants

We will consider applications from individuals who will be under 18 years of age on the date of enrolment provided that they meet normal course entry criteria. If you are in full-time education, you must get permission from your school or college before registering with us. This permission must be in writing and submitted with your application.

For further advice and guidance on the admissions process as an under 18 year old, please contact the HE Office: heoffice@mbro.ac.uk, +44 (0)1642 333534).

Revision History		
Version	Date	Detail
1.0	September 2017	
1.1	May 2018	Document edited for clarity and to homogenise presentation. QAA URLs updated. References to HESC changed to AB. Implement URLs to College website HE Essential Information page.
1.2	Sep 2019	Added section 8.1.
1.3	January 2022	Checked for accuracy.
1.4	June 2023	Updated reference to the UK Quality code in section 1.0. Updated reference to the UK Quality Code in section 2.0 Updated hyperlinks in section 6.0, 8.0 and 12.0 Updated references to titles in Section 7.0 and 8.1 Updated section 12.0 to include timeline of application/enrolment process and updated statement on direct full-time applicants. General updates to ensure titles are consistent and current. Correction of any typographical errors.
1.5	January 2024	External references updated.
1.6	September 2024	Paragraph 10 of the policy has been updated to clarify the management of criminal conviction within the admission procedures. Section 14 of the policy has been added to include a statement about the College's approach to accessibility duty and reasonable adjustment to support application to HE courses. Section 15 of the policy has been added to clarify the college approach to under 18 HE applications. No further detail has been added about international students or students in secure environments as the College does not have the capacity to manage applications from either group of students.