

FULL-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

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Admissions Policy for Further Education for Applications to the 2022/23 Academic Year

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1. Overview

The aim of this policy is to provide a comprehensive, transparent and customer-focused approach for applications to Colchester Institute, from initial application to admission as a student.

Colchester Institute is a college of further and higher education which welcomes applications for its full and part-time courses from all sections of the community. Further Education relates to courses that are below the level of a university degree for people who are older than compulsory school age

This policy covers full-time prospective Further Education (FE) students from the UK and EEA. Separate arrangements apply for applications to some entry level courses, apprenticeships, part time and full cost programmes, and to Higher Education.

The College is committed to ensuring that every student is on the most appropriate course relevant to their academic ability and aspirations for their future. All offers of places are made subject to the specific entry requirements, adherence to College policies and there being sufficient demand for the course offered. The College may withdraw an offer if an applicant submits false or misleading information that is instrumental in securing an offer of a place.

College staff will follow the admissions process to ensure consistent and high standards of customer care. The College admissions policy is subject to annual review as part of the College's quality improvement and self-assessment cycle.

2. Use of Applicant Data and Data Protection

The Colchester Institute on-line application form feeds directly into the College management information system, with information added to it by staff during the admissions process.

All information gathered on the application form, and collected through the application process, will be retained and processed in line with the Colchester Institute [Privacy Notice](#) for relevant purposes connected with the application in accordance with data protection legislation.

Colchester Institute may be required to share data and information about all applications with Local Authorities, the Department for Education, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, or current schools/providers /colleges where necessary.

By submitting an application form all applicants confirm the following statements:

- I agree to abide by Colchester Institute expectations, policies and procedures.
- Where relevant, I authorise my current school/provider/college to provide Colchester Institute with relevant information to support my application, including my predicted grades.
- Following my enrolment (where relevant), I authorise my current school/provider/college to release information to Colchester Institute where this is needed to ensure my support needs are met and/or where this information is needed for my safety and wellbeing at Colchester Institute.
- If I am aged 18 years or under on 31st August 2021 I provide consent for Colchester Institute to liaise with my named next of kin where relevant to my application.

Following the enrolment process, Colchester Institute will provide the names of enrolled students to Essex County Council under the September Guarantee process. They will also send lists of enrolled students to most recent schools and other providers for their destination information, and to request confidential safeguarding files and student JCQ Form 8s to support Exams Access Arrangements.

3. Publicity and Information

The College will outline its FE course provision in the annual prospectus, published in September, with further information on the Colchester Institute website. The publicity will provide the minimum entry requirements for each course and applicants will be considered on the basis of their ability to meet those criteria plus any specified additional elements.

School careers coordinators, guidance advisers and other Information Advice and Guidance professionals, will be invited into the College for an annual briefing every September, which provides information on the range of courses available, updates and changes to the curriculum offer, and the admissions process.

Prospective students and their families have the opportunity to visit the College at a number of

Open Events during the academic year to talk to staff and students and receive more information on courses. In exceptional circumstances, for example due to COVID-19 restrictions, these events may be offered in a different format, such as online and over video-conferencing platforms. Progression opportunities will be publicised to existing students via tutorials and progression events.

Colchester Institute will take reasonable steps to provide the programmes of study listed in publications but may have to modify or withdraw a particular course depending on customer demand and other factors. The College will take reasonable steps to cause as little disruption to applicants as possible, but cannot be held responsible for any subsequent loss.

4. Applying

Applications will be accepted from 1st October 2021 online through the links at the Colchester Institute website. In exceptional circumstances where a potential student cannot access the website, a hard copy application form will be available.

Applicants applying on or before by 31st January 2022 will be guaranteed a place on their chosen programme, subject to them satisfying the published entry requirements, and where the College continues to run the programme. Applications will be accepted after this date, but there will be no guarantee of a place.

Applications received after Friday 30th July 2021 will not be processed, instead applicants will be advised to book to attend one of the Advice days in August to discuss their options and programme choices.

5. Offers Made at Open Events

Where an applicant attends an Open Event and demonstrates their interest in and suitability for a programme, it is possible for a conditional offer to be made during the event. This does not apply to all course areas. The applicant will be given an open event offer proforma to take to the application station and they must complete their online application at the same event. If they do this they will not be required to attend a subject specific interview.

All open event offers are conditional subject to academic and/or non-academic requirements, including information received from the applicant's current education provider. Where a student has a SEND need and / or an Education Health and Care Plan the conditional offer may also be subject to the College being able to meet the individual's needs, in these cases the applicant will still be interviewed and assessed by the Additional Learning Support team, please see section 9.

6. Applications to Apprenticeship Programmes

Applicants are able to make an application either just for an apprenticeship, or to be considered initially for both an apprenticeship and a full time Further Education Programme.

To be considered for an apprenticeship the applicant will need to secure an employer, which they can source themselves or the College can support them with. The College will liaise with the employer to establish their suitability, and that of the applicant, before taking this further to an apprenticeship sign up.

In these instances an applicant's full time Further Education Programme choice will be prioritised until such time as the apprenticeship is fully confirmed.

7. Application and Interview Process

All applications are checked for accuracy and completeness; where information is missing the applicant will be emailed and asked to provide additional information or clarification. All communications will be made through the applicant's provided email address, and it is their responsibility to ensure emails are regularly checked and responded to. Reminders will be sent for missing information but failure to reply may lead to an application being withdrawn at any point in the admissions process.

Once a complete application has been received and processed, applicants will be invited to book their interview slot to discuss the details of their chosen programme of study, the applicant's interest in this area and the relevant entry requirements. Interviews will be conducted by phone, at a time and date chosen by the applicant. For applicants applying for Art and Design, Access to Higher Education or Music and Performing Arts the interview will also include a portfolio review, audition or pre-interview task which will either be online or take place in person on campus.

Applicants to the area of Foundation and Supported Learning will follow an adapted admissions process which includes a phone interview to establish the applicant's support needs, and an interview which will be offered on campus, following any existing COVID-19 secure measures. This will form part of the applicant's transition to College.

Following the interview, tutors will consider each applicant fairly and decisions whether or not to make an offer will be made based on the full profile of an applicant, including their predicted/achieved GCSE grades. Tutors will be required to demonstrate that admissions decisions have been based on objective criteria equally applied to all.

The majority of programmes will require applicants to have obtained, or to be predicted to achieve, specified entry requirements including certain GCSE grades. Some programmes are also subject to other conditions, including obtaining a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS). All entry criteria will be published on the website and within the published Prospectus.

If an applicant does not respond to their phone call for interview, they will be invited to book a further date. Failure to attend three arranged phone calls, without prior notification or request to rearrange, will result in the application being withdrawn from the process. Applicants will be notified of this by email and if they wish to have their application reinstated they can request this, after which they will only have one more opportunity to attend an interview event before being finally withdrawn.

8. Confirming Predicted and Achieved GCSE grades

Applicants are asked to provide their predicted or actual GCSE grades at application, and their application will be processed using this information. Where applicants are currently at school, or at another education provider, the College will liaise with that school/provider to confirm predicted and achieved grades, information on their progress and to request any other information that the College may need to know to inform the decision making process. Where information is provided that raises a cause for concern about the applicant's suitability, the College reserves the right to review the application, and any offer made, and if required to refer to an Admissions Review Panel.

Applicants who have had a non-traditional school education, including being home educated, will be considered on an individual basis. This includes applicants who have studied other qualifications, such as functional skills, pre-entry and entry level qualifications at school and within the Colchester Institute Foundation and Supported Learning area. In these cases, the applications will be referred to the subject Area Head who should review these in terms of their equivalence to GCSEs where possible.

Please note that specific GCSE qualifications and grades will be required for certain courses.

9. Applicants with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Colchester Institute welcomes applications from people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Where an applicant identifies on their application that they have SEND needs, their application will be referred to the Additional Learning Support Team so that further enquiries can be made with the applicant, and parents/carers where required, about their needs and how these can be supported during the admissions process and on programme. If the applicant is still at school then this information will be discussed with the school to ensure any relevant SEND assessments and information are shared.

For students with SEND who are offered a place on a programme, all SEND information (including an Education Health and Care Plan) will be shared with the curriculum leaders for their subject area, and with Additional Learning Support staff to ensure appropriate provisions are in place and that reasonable adjustments can be made to their programme of study.

Applicants who previously had Exam Access Arrangements, such as extra time, a reader or a scribe, due to their SEND will be asked to liaise with their previous school / College to obtain copies of their JCQ form 8 which would be used to apply for Exam Access Arrangements at College.

8.1 Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

All applicants are asked to state on their application form if they have an EHCP. If an EHCP is declared, the applicant will be informed that their application cannot be processed until the College

has been provided with a copy of their EHCP, this is so that the College can take account of all support needs and consider how these can be met. The parent/carer, current school / education provider and relevant Local Authority will also be informed and copies of the current EHCP will be requested.

Colchester Institute should be consulted in advance by the Local Authority if the intention is to name the College in an applicant's EHCP; any applicant whose EHCP does not name Colchester Institute should contact their local authority and school to discuss the matter as soon as possible. In certain circumstances, Colchester Institute may use the consultation process to object to being named in an EHCP. This might happen if there are very significant concerns that the college may be incompatible with that particular learner's needs, or that by enrolling them, the education of other students would be adversely affected. In these cases, the decision will be referred to an Admissions Review panel, see section 13.

Applicants with an (EHCP) which names Colchester Institute will have their annual EHCP reviews (after enrolment) co-ordinated by Colchester Institute on behalf of the local authority.

EHCP annual reviews will be scheduled to take place at times and dates that are convenient for students and their families and in line with the 0 – 25 SEND Code of Practice. It may be necessary for the college to share information and work with other professionals such as social workers or healthcare practitioners during the EHCP annual review process. Applicants and their parents/carers should visit <http://www.essexlocaloffer.org.uk/> for the latest information on their rights and responsibilities relating to the EHCP process.

For students with SEND who are offered a place on programme, all SEND information (including an EHCP) will be shared with the curriculum leaders for their subject area, and with Additional Learning Support staff to ensure appropriate provisions are in place and that reasonable adjustments can be made to their programme of study.

10. Offers

Following the phone interview event and / or review of audition, portfolio or pre-interview materials, applicants will receive a decision within 2 weeks. This will usually be a conditional offer subject to academic and/or non-academic requirements, including information received from their current education provider.

Where an applicant is unlikely to meet the entry criteria for their chosen programme of study this should be discussed at their interview, and wherever possible the applicant should be given the opportunity to discuss other options. Applicants will also be signposted for further Information, Advice and Guidance on their options, either at their current school, Colchester Institute Careers team or the National Careers Service.

Where no offer can be made

If, following the interview event, no suitable offer of a place can be made the application will be

referred to the Area Head of the chosen subject area to be reviewed, or to be referred to another suitable programme area.

All 'no offers' will be referred to the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support for authorisation. Where there are doubts or concerns about an applicant's suitability the case may be referred to an Admissions Review Panel for decision, see section 13.

11. Fee Assessments

If an applicant declares that their normal country of residence is outside of the UK, or that they are not a UK National but live and work in the UK, they will need to complete a fee assessment. The Fee Assessment will determine the type of fee an applicant may need to pay.

12. Course Closure and Centre Approval Withdrawal

The College reserves the right to withdraw a course at its discretion, including for example, where a course is under-subscribed or there is a significant change to how a course is funded. In such cases, applicants will be offered advice on the availability of alternative courses, which may include an alternative campus. However, the offer of a place cannot be guaranteed.

If for any reason an external regulatory body withdraws Colchester Institute's Centre Approval then we will be unable to deliver the specified qualification. Should this happen we will suggest alternative training providers which are authorised to deliver this qualification.

13. Oversubscribed Courses

If the number of offers made to a particular course suggests that it is likely to be oversubscribed then we reserve the right to close the course to further applications. In these cases the course will be removed from the website so that no further applications can be made.

Where conditional offers have been made to an oversubscribed course, offers will only be confirmed once GCSE results have been published and places will be given to applicants who have achieved the published entry criteria in the following priority order until the College Leadership determines the course is full:

- Applicants who applied before the 31 January 2022 application deadline, who uploaded their confirmed GCSE results before the cut off time stated on their individual enrolment information.
- Applicants who applied before 30th July 2022, who uploaded their confirmed GCSE results before the cut off time stated on their individual enrolment information.
- Applicants who achieved the published entry criteria and attended a late advice event.
- All other applicants, including those who uploaded GCSE results after the stated cut off time. Where enrolment numbers are close to the curriculum plan, these will be prioritised in date and time order.

After the August advice events, if there are still places available on a course, curriculum

managers may agree to hold a waiting list and accept some applicants who have just missed the entry criteria based on the date of their application and how well they have met the published entry criteria. Such acceptances are at the discretion of College Leadership.

14. Internal Progression Progress

All decisions on a current students' suitability to progress onto the next level of study in their current subject area, will be made through the College Progress Boards. Progress Boards are held twice a year, with mid-year boards in and around January, and end of year boards meeting in and around June.

All communications about progress boards will be made by email to the students' college email address. It is the responsibility of all students to check their college email accounts on a regular basis, and to ensure that the College has up to date email contact information for their parent / carer / next of kin.

The College cannot take responsibility for progress board communications which have not been received due to incorrect email address addresses, or for emails which have not been read in a timely manner, if these were sent to the addresses held on the College management information system.

14.1 Mid-Year Progress Boards

After the mid-year boards, all students will be advised whether or not they are on track to be supported to progress to the next level, based on their progress to date, attendance and commitment to study. Where a student is supported to progress at that point, they will not need to make an application to the next academic year, a conditional offer will be made on the College management information system by the Admissions and Curriculum Support Team.

If a student is not yet supported to progress they will be informed of this, inviting them to make an appointment to talk to their curriculum Head of Area to discuss the mid-year progress board decision and agree actions to recover their position. A conditional offer will still be made on the College management information system by the Admissions and Curriculum Support Team.

If the student was born on or after 1st September 2003, these decisions will be sent to their parent / carer as part of the annual parent report process. Reports will be sent to the to the Next of Kin email address recorded on the college management information system.

14.2 End of Year Progress Boards

At the end of year progress boards, all mid-year board decisions will be reviewed and a final decision made on each individual student about their suitability to progress to the next level of

study. Tutors will be required to demonstrate that all progression decisions have been based on objective criteria equally applied to all. All progress board decisions are approved by the subject Area Head and by the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.

For students who are supported to progress, they will be sent information by email inviting them to complete their re-enrolment on-line to the next level of study. In some course areas there may be conditions which relate to students achieving exams results, including GCSE English and / or Maths where these are being taken, in line with published entry criteria.

If a student is not supported to progress, they must have been previously made aware of their unsatisfactory progress, and attempts must have been made to support them to improve. Evidence of these conversations and interventions, where relevant, must be documented on the College management information system. The student will be informed of this decision by letter, sent via email to their college email address. This will outline the reasons for this decision, which must be based on objective criteria equally applied to all.

For students who are not supported to progress, and they were born on or after 1st September 2002, these decisions will be copied to their parent / carer, sent to the to the Next of Kin email address recorded on the college management information system.

It is the responsibility of all students to check their college email accounts, and to ensure that the College has up to date email contact information of their parent / carer / next of kin.

14.3 Appeals against Progress Board Decisions

A student may ask for a review of the outcome of a progress board decision by emailing the subject Area Head within 10 days of the outcome decision email being sent, and must be copied in to the Admissions and Curriculum Support team, whose contact details will be provided in the decision email. This email request must include the reasons for the review, including providing any additional information or evidence to support the request to review

The subject Area Head will revisit the progress board notes and consider whether substantive reasons have been provided which would support the amendment of the original decision. The outcome of this review will normally be communicated back to the student by email within 7 days of the receipt of the request. If, due to term dates and the summer break, the subject Area Head is not available within the 7 day period, the Admissions and Curriculum Support team will refer the review to another suitable member of curriculum management.

A student may submit a final appeal against the outcome of this review in writing to the Quality Team within 10 days of the review outcome decision email being sent. This request must include the reasons for the appeal, including providing any additional information or supporting evidence. An appeal cannot be considered if specific reasons for the appeal are not provided.

The Quality team will convene a progress board appeal panel to consider the appeal. This panel will be comprised of managers who are independent of previous decisions related to their

progression. The outcome will normally be communicated to the student by email within 10 days of the receipt of the appeal. This decision will be final.

15. Admissions Review Panels

The Admissions Review Panel makes decisions regarding admission of students in cases of a complex nature and where coordination of admission and support processes are required.

The Admissions Review Panel will also hear cases of a complex nature where students have been admitted and are on-course and where decisions are required relating to continuation or progression which cannot be dealt with by any other committee.

An Admissions Review Panel could be convened for a number of reasons, see below for a non-exhaustive list:

- Concerns raised through the application process, either through information provided from other education providers, previous programme areas within the College or behaviors exhibited through the interview events or Welcome and Induction days.
- Disclosure of Criminal Convictions through application, enrolment or on programme, including on the return of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check
- Identified Safeguarding concerns
- An individual's fitness to study through health or mental health grounds

15.1 Operation and Reporting

The Panel operates to:

- A) ensure a supportive and fair admissions process for applicants;
- B) provide assistance and support to admissions staff in carrying out their duties; and
- C) provide guidance on current issues that may impact on an admissions decision, or on the continuation of a current student

An Admissions Review Panel is required to explore all relevant issues and obtain information from all appropriate sources pertaining to each case to reach a collective agreement on whether a student is accepted onto, or retained at, a course at Colchester Institute.

The Admissions Review Panel operates in respect of both further and higher education. In the case of higher education reference may also be made to UCAS, the relevant awarding organisation and external contract procedures.

The Admissions Review Panel meets on an ad hoc basis and a request to initiate a meeting may be made by a member of staff to the Vice Principal: Student Services and Support. Notes of the meeting will be kept and the Admissions Review Panel decision will be communicated to the

Applicant / Student in writing.

15.2 Appeals

A student may appeal against the outcome of the Admission Review Panel to the Vice Principal: Curriculum Delivery and Performance in writing within 10 working days of receiving written notification of the ARP decision. The letter must outline the grounds of the appeal. The appeal will normally be heard within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal. This decision will be final.

15.3 Membership

The Admissions Review Panel shall comprise:

Vice Principal: Student Services and Support
Area Head from relevant subject area
Head of Student Services & Additional Learning Support
Additional members will be co-opted where required.

16. Exceptions to the Normal Admissions Process

Colchester Institute reserves the right to refuse admission to an applicant at the Principal's discretion. This could be for a number of reasons, examples would include an applicant who has previously been refused admission or excluded from this or any other educational institution, or where there is reason to believe that the admission of an individual could present a risk to him or herself, other students, staff or other college visitors.

In these cases the Principal's decision is final and there is no right to appeal.

Whilst Colchester Institute is committed to widening participation and to providing opportunities to all students who will benefit from its programmes and services, it must be noted that Further Education Colleges are under no statutory obligations to admit any individual student or to provide any specific programme of study. Ultimately decisions regarding the admission of individual students and the provision, or continuation, of specific programmes rest with College leadership.

17. Associated Policies

Safeguarding Policy

Criminal Conviction Disclosure Policy

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

SEND Policy

Data Protection Policy