

University Centre Colchester

Recruitment and Admissions Policy

Version 3.0
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1 Overview and Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to all admissions to University Centre Colchester programmes and covers all stages of an applicant's relationship from enquiry through to enrolment and progression opportunities.
- 1.2 University Centre Colchester is a sub-brand of Colchester Institute and relates to students studying on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In this document the organisation may be referenced by either name or the term 'College'.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to provide an applicant focussed framework for admissions and to promote a consistent approach to student recruitment.
- 1.4 University Centre Colchester offers a centralised admissions service through the UCC Academic Services office to all applicants.
- 1.5 University Centre Colchester is committed to ensuring that every student is on the most appropriate course relevant to their academic ability and aspirations for their future.
- 1.6 University Centre Colchester admissions processes are subject to annual review.
- 1.7 Applications statistics are monitored by the UCC Academic Services office.

2 Publicity and Information on Admissions

- 2.1 University Centre Colchester will outline its course provision within the relevant prospectus and on the University Centre Colchester and UCAS websites. Guidance on how to apply, entry requirements, and the process will be made available within these media. Prospective students have the opportunity to visit Open Events to consult with staff and receive information on courses and tour the premises and learning environment.

3 Entry Requirements

- 3.1 Entry requirements for University Centre Colchester courses are stipulated on the University Centre Colchester and UCAS websites.
- 3.2 Entry requirements are defined within a programme validation document, which has been approved by the validating provider. All applicants will be made aware of any assessment criteria prior to interview.
- 3.3 Each subject area will adhere to equality legislation in its assessment and offer-making for all applicants.
- 3.4 University Centre Colchester reserves the right to amend its entry requirements up to 12 months in advance of the date of admission.

4 Application Process

- 4.1 Colchester Institute (University Centre Colchester) is a member of UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). Its full-time courses are processed in accordance with the UCAS Applications Recruitment Policy. Applications for part-time and postgraduate courses are made directly to University Centre Colchester.
- 4.2 On completion of an application the applicant is agreeing to their information being shared with Local Authorities, the Department for Education, the Office for Students, and the applicant is giving permission for University Centre Colchester to contact previous schools and colleges or referees for information relating to predicted grades and any other relevant information regarding the application. All data obtained from applicants, or other relevant people, is stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Law.
- 4.3 Full time applications are received online from UCAS and are checked for completeness prior to submission to Admission Tutors. University Centre Colchester aims to acknowledge all applications no later than 10 working days after receipt of the completed application. The content of the application, personal statements, and references will be considered carefully by the Admission Tutor. Applicants will be invited to attend an interview/audition. University Centre Colchester will consider all aspects of an individual's application before making a decision. Communication of offers will set out the terms of an offer clearly, unambiguously, and will set out what the procedure is for responding. University Centre Colchester recognises that the provision of constructive feedback is an element of good practice, and will provide such feedback to applicants who have been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place of study on request from that applicant. Requests for feedback must be made by the applicant in writing within three months of the date that the application was unsuccessful.
- 4.4 Applicants will be sent information on specific topics i.e. open events, finance, disability support, accommodation, and the local area during the application process and as deemed appropriate to foster a UCC/applicant relationship. Applicants will receive confirmation of the tuition fee to be charged for the first year of their programme of study with their offer. Fees will also be published on the University Centre Colchester website. Applicants will also be advised about financial support and where to obtain further information.
- 4.5 Where an applicant has been made an unconditional offer or where a conditional offer subsequently becomes unconditional during the confirmation process, the applicant will receive information on enrolment, fees and induction in August. (For courses that recruit during February and September, information will be sent to the applicant in January and August).
- 4.6 Applicants will be made aware during the application process of the options available to them if they wish to make a change to the status of an offer. The UCC Academic Services office follows UCAS guidelines on course withdrawal.

4.7 University Centre Colchester will accept applications through UCAS Extra and UCAS Clearing where course vacancies exist.

4.8 Part-time courses that commence at different periods during the academic year are processed as they are received.

5 Interview/Audition Policy

5.1 University Centre Colchester will normally require an interview/audition to assess an applicant's suitability to undertake a course.

5.2 The UCC Academic Services office is responsible for inviting selected applicants for interview/audition. Wherever possible, a range of dates will be offered to an applicant to give them the opportunity to choose when they have their interview/audition but this may not always be possible. Upon invitation, the following information will be sent to the interviewee:

- date, duration, and location of the interview/audition;
- an interview/audition information sheet providing information on the format of the interview and advice on how to prepare;
- if necessary, a request for any information needed from the applicant either before they arrive or to bring with them on the day (essay/written work, qualifications, ID, audition piece);
- details of any online assessments required prior to interview, including a web link to the assessment and unique log-in details;
- details of where to report and a phone number in case of emergencies on the day;
- travel information.

5.3 In the interests of equity, all selection interviews for a particular course are structured in a consistent manner, following an agreed format. There may be the need to ask questions that do not influence the outcome of the interview (e.g. placements, module choices). A clear distinction is made between the two, and the interviewer should indicate when this is the case. A decision sheet will be completed for each interview/audition. At the end of an interview/audition or Interview Day, the applicant will be given an indication of when they will hear the outcome (but they must not be given the decision in the interview).

5.4 In certain circumstances, an interview/audition will be conducted online via Zoom. In such cases, every effort must be made to recreate the length and format of the interview to mirror an interview conducted in person.

5.5 University Centre Colchester reserves the right to make academic and non-academic judgements outside of the published guidelines in complex and exceptional cases, but the reasons must be documented and relate to an applicants potential suitability to study.

6 Criminal Convictions Policy

6.1 University Centre Colchester is part of Colchester Institute which is an institution with a concentration of young and potentially vulnerable people. In considering whether to admit a student, University Centre Colchester seeks to ensure that an applicant would not constitute an unreasonable risk to its staff or student members or property. Consequently, it requires all applicants to declare whether they have a criminal conviction. Relevant criminal convictions are currently defined as:

- Any kind of violence including (but not limited to) threatening behaviour, offences concerning the intention to harm or offences which resulted in actual bodily harm;
- Offences listed in the Sex Offenders Act 2003;
- The unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing or trafficking;
- Offences involving firearms;
- Offences involving arson;
- Offences listed in the Terrorism Act 2006.

6.2 Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant and should not be revealed. However applicants should be aware that for programmes in teaching, health and social work, or programmes involving work with children or vulnerable adults, any criminal convictions, including sentences and cautions (including verbal cautions), reprimands, final warnings and bind-over orders are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Individuals applying for those subjects will be asked to secure a disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or Disclosure Scotland, or an overseas police check, whichever is relevant.

6.3 Applicants must inform University Centre Colchester if they are convicted of a relevant criminal offence at the point of application. Applicants can do this either through UCAS for full-time Undergraduate courses or via the University Centre Colchester direct application form for part-time Undergraduate courses and Postgraduate courses.

6.4 Failure to declare a criminal conviction at point of application may result in a student's place on a course being withdrawn when the conviction is disclosed subsequently.

- 6.5 Where an applicant enters 'yes' or leaves the box blank to the Criminal Convictions question on their application form the UCC Academic Services office will:
- a. Obtain confirmation from the Admission Tutor that the student is suitable for the programme on academic grounds;
 - b. Send a Self-Disclosure form to the applicant requesting further information;
 - c. On receipt of the completed Self-Disclosure form, the Head of UCC Academic Services will review the content in liaison with the Head of School and may convene and administer the Panel Review process in accordance with the Colchester Institute Pre-Admission Criminal Convictions Background Screening Policy: Students.

7 Applicants with Additional Support Needs

- 7.1 Applicants are encouraged by UCAS and on all University Centre Colchester application forms to disclose their disabilities, although they have a legal right to choose not to do so.
- 7.2 University Centre Colchester uses information regarding a disclosed ability in the following ways:
- To identify those students who require "reasonable adjustments" to access the learning and social opportunities offered by University Centre Colchester and to ensure that they are provided with any information and advice which would help them make an informed choice of programme and institution;
 - To ensure that there are no disability-related factors which would make it unlikely, despite the provision of "reasonable adjustments", that applicants could meet the learning outcomes of the particular programme(s) for which they have applied. In relation to certain programmes which also lead to professional registration, this would include consideration of the impact of the disability on applicants' ability to meet the additional requirements of the relevant professional bodies;
 - To identify non-trivial health and safety issues;
 - To alert applicants to any actions they need to take before taking up their places, including applications for funding for disability-related costs for which they may be eligible.
- 7.3 At all stages of the application process an applicant is encouraged to make contact with UCC Academic Services to discuss any personal requirements; this information will be treated in confidence. All offer holders are contacted by email to encourage contact with the Student Support Services and to find out more about the support that can be provided.

8 Applications from Staff or their Near Relatives

8.1 All members of staff have a responsibility to disclose to the relevant Head of School and Admissions team at University Centre Colchester that they are related to a prospective student. Where it has been identified that an applicant is a member staff or a near relative of a member of staff, the applicant will be invited in for interview/audition to assess their suitability for the course. The Admissions team must make provision so that any potential conflict of interest is avoided. In particular, members of staff must not participate in the interview and admission of any student to whom they are related. Arrangements must be recorded in writing.

8.2 The decision as to whether or not to admit and whether special conditions shall apply to that admission will take into account:

- whether the applicant or a near relative of the applicant will have access to sensitive student records;
- whether the applicant or a relative of the applicant would be party to the assessment process or teaching or administration of the course in any way.

9 Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning

9.1 Applicants seeking recognition for prior or experiential learning are handled in accordance with University Centre Colchester's procedure on AP(E)L. If the AP(E)L request is approved, the offer will note the volume of credit which has been accredited and the changes to the applicant's planned course structure which result from the approval. Applications for second, third or final year entry are submitted via UCAS or directly to University Centre Colchester.

9.2 AP(E)L admissions are subject to the regulations of the validating University.

10 Verification of Qualifications

10.1 University Centre Colchester will seek evidence from applicants of the result of any qualification that is not received from UCAS through the Awarding Bodies Linkage (ABL). Details of verification of qualifications and examination results are sent to applicants at the initial offer and at the confirmation stage of the admissions cycle.

11 Discontinuation, suspension or change of course titles

11.1 University Centre Colchester reserves the right to discontinue or suspend a course for which offers have already been issued, but undertakes to do this in exceptional circumstances only. Where a course is discontinued, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible; where possible and appropriate, applicants are offered a place on an alternative course offered by University Centre Colchester, or given the opportunity to add a new course choice on UCAS Track. Where the title of the course is changed, applicants holding offers are informed as soon as possible of the change.

12 Legal Issues

12.1 Colchester Institute will abide by its legal and statutory obligations in the processing of applications.

13 International Applications

- 13.1 University Centre Colchester welcomes applications from those living in countries outside the UK, and aims to provide a consistent and co-ordinated response to international students by experienced and appropriately trained staff.
- 13.2 Applications received from outside of the UK will be considered by the Admission Tutors. Qualifications obtained outside of the UK will be checked with UK Naric for their equivalence with our general entry requirements. All students are required to have a minimum of IELTS 6.0 (with a minimum of 5.5 in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening) or equivalent prior to acceptance on to a University Centre Colchester course.
- 13.3 Colchester Institute holds a Tier 4 Licence and Highly Trusted Sponsor Status from the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

14 Fee Assessments

- 14.1 If an applicant declares a non-EEA nationality on their application, or that their normal country of residence is outside the UK, or that they have not been living in the EEA for the last 3 years they will be asked to complete a Fee Assessment. The Fee Assessment will determine the fees a student should pay.

15 Admissions Review Panels

- 15.1 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.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 An Admissions Review Panel could be convened for a number of reasons. Please 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 behaviours exhibited through the interview events or Welcome/Open 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.

- 15.4 The Panel operates to:
- ensure the provision of a supportive and fair admissions process for applicants;
 - offer assistance and support to admissions staff in carrying out their duties;
 - provide guidance on current issues that may impact on an admissions decision, or on the continuation of a current student.
- 15.5 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 University Centre Colchester.
- 15.6 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.
- 15.7 A student may appeal against the outcome of the Admissions Review Panel to the Vice Principal: Curriculum Planning and Quality 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.
- 15.8 The Admissions Review Panel shall comprise:
- Vice Principal: Curriculum, Planning and Quality (or a nominated member of College Executive);
 - Head of School from relevant subject area;
 - Dean of Higher Education or their nominee;
 - Additional Learning Support, where appropriate;
 - Additional members will be co-opted where required.

16 Re-admissions

- 16.1 It is policy that applicants cannot normally be considered for re-admission to the same programme from which an individual has been required to withdraw, or a similar programme which contained modules already taken, for a minimum of two years after leaving (with the exception of students who have been required to withdraw for debt).

- 16.2 Applicants can be considered for immediate re-admission to a completely different area of study if there are good reasons to indicate that the wrong course was chosen originally and there is evidence that an applicant could be successful in a new area.

17 Appeals and Complaints

- 17.1 In the event that an applicant is dissatisfied with any aspect of the admissions process, they may submit an appeal. Applicants should write to the Head of Academic Services at ucc.academicsservices@colchester.ac.uk within 14 days of the decision. **The appeal should outline the nature and details of the appeal.**
- 17.2 The Head of Academic Services will check that all information on the application had been taken into account, that there was no misinterpretation of the information, and that procedures were followed correctly. The Head of Academic Services will then confirm within 15 working days whether the appeal has been rejected or upheld. Applicants should note that if the appeal has been rejected on academic grounds, they cannot appeal the decision.

18 Exceptions to the Normal Admissions Process

- 18.1 University Centre Colchester 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, where a student's behaviour during the recruitment process could be considered as misconduct under the colleges disciplinary policies or where there is reason to believe that the admission of an individual could present a risk to the applicant, other students, staff, or other College visitors. Where an applicant is refused admission under Principal's discretion the applicant becomes ineligible for the appeal arrangements detailed in section 17.