Admissions Procedures for Students to Higher Education Programmes, subject to QAA review AY 2013/14

1 Introduction

1.1 These procedures are intended as a summary to support admissions tutors and staff involved in the admissions procedure for applicants to Higher Education (HE) courses in City of Bristol College. The following documents have been consulted: The Quality Assurance Agency UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B2: Admissions and SPA Good Practice in Admissions: Guidance for further education colleges offering higher education

1.2 Where appropriate these procedures are supported by, and in agreement with admissions guidelines of the universities with whom City of Bristol College has partnerships.

1.3 Our admissions procedures must be fair and transparent. The college is committed to the elimination of all kinds of discrimination. Admissions procedures will conform to legislation on age discrimination, human rights, data protection, race relations and equality of opportunity.

1.4 Applicants will be considered for their ability and aptitude to meet the demands of the course for which they have applied.

2 Promotion

2.1 Information for potential students is available on the college website and (for full time programmes) on the UCAS website. The information will be reviewed regularly and formally updated annually in consultation with university partners and referenced to course information by Edexcel. The information must be consistent and that approved for use by HEI validators. Final copy of publicity must be approved by the HE Unit and Marketing. Any marketing materials should include the logos of relevant partner universities following previous approval by the University partners.

2.2 All publicity material must conform to the College’s Equality and Diversity Policy.

2.3 Information on the website will include details of all programmes offered to include the programme specification, mode of attendance and duration, entry requirements, tuition fees, methods of application and assessment. In addition a new document ‘Guide for Applicants to HE Courses’ will be produced by
Marketing and HE unit, this will be available on the College website. This will be maintained by the HE Unit.

2.4 Information for the KIS, will come from a number of sources, including programme leaders who will be responsible for summarising course hours and assessment details. The Data Management team will ensure that the required information is returned to the appropriate bodies.

2.5 Information pertaining to support of the application process, student fees, learner support and accommodation is available on the website and is maintained by Learner Services.

2.6 Open Days are publicised on the website by Marketing and Communications

2.7 The responsibility for the UCAS entry for the College lies within the HE Unit. Details are checked against the validated documentation.

3 Application process

3.1 Applicants for full time programmes must apply through UCAS. Applications will be coordinated by the Central Admissions Office (with the exception of those for the Foundation Year courses with UWE) These are forwarded to the HE programme administrator who works in liaison with the programme leader.

3.2 In the case of the UWE Foundation Years, applications are made through UCAS and are handled by UWE. Selection is overseen by the university. Links are maintained between UWE Admissions and the College via the designated administrative lead UWE contact in the HE Unit.

3.3 Part time applications will be made on a HE part-time application form, available on the website, which mirrors most aspects of a UCAS form. For those courses which are in UCAS these applications are dealt with by the central admissions team. The programme administrator will deal with the applications for courses offered on a part time only basis.

4 Selection of applicants

4.1 Applicants will need to be considered not only on their existing or potential qualifications, but also on their potential to succeed on the programme demonstrated, for example, by relevant work and/or life experience and supported with appropriate supporting written evidence.

4.2 Applicants will be considered if there is a match between their aptitude or ability and the demands of the course for which they have applied. In the absence of standard qualifications which meet the published requirements, an additional diagnostic task of an appropriate level should be undertaken and used to substantiate the decision making. The decisions arising from this must be recorded as part of the applicant’s records.
4.3 In the case of International students, who are subject to statutory controls, selection must conform to the regulations set by the government. The IELTS requirements or equivalent of each course is clearly outlined on the website and UCAS. This is an overall IELTS at level 6, to include a minimum of 5.5 in the Writing and Reading components. The International Office will only forward applications for consideration who have met the minimum specified IELTS level and hold at least equivalent level 3 qualifications. Specified alternative TOFL equivalence is also acceptable.

Applicants for whom English is not their first language and whose qualifications were taken in a language other than English, but who are not subject to visa controls, are required to evidence IELTS level 6, GGCE English minimum grade C or can demonstrate that their level 3 qualification obtained in their country of origin contains substantial equivalent evidence of achievement in English. This will be verified using the Naric database by the Admissions Office. An additional opportunity to demonstrate minimum standards of English can be accessed through the Equivalency Testing website, www.equivalencytesting.com. There is a charge for this. In addition there are fortnightly opportunities to sit the IELTS test at International House, Bristol. There is a charge for this. Preparation courses are available at the College. Any offers to such applicants must be conditional on their achievement of the appropriate standard prior to enrolment on the programme.

4.5 Applicants for most programmes will normally be interviewed as part of the decision making process, this may be face to face, phone or computer link. It is important that applicants are given the opportunity to visit the college where appropriate to help their decision making. Interviews may be individual or held in groups with one or more admissions tutor familiar with the relevant programme.

4.6 All students to be invited to a personal interview will receive notification of the arrangements in advance and any information pertaining to the nature of the interview, its purpose, any tasks to be undertaken and items to be brought to the event. Applicants unable to attend will be offered alternative dates.

4.7 An interview check list will form part of the HE Interview/ Student progress sheet for full and part time applicants. This checklist will include: mention of the need to check that students have considered the financial implications, that evidence of qualifications will be required and that any additional support opportunities have been covered.

Any discussions regarding progression routes must be carefully conducted and noted to ensure that there is a clear understanding on the applicant’s part as to the certainty or otherwise of the progression opportunities discussed.

Discussions re APCL, APEL will need to be in accordance with the appropriate regulations, any advice should be recorded.
For those courses requiring an Enhanced DBS, the interviewer should record that this matter has been discussed and the interviewee has been given the opportunity to disclose.

4.8 A careful record on the HE Interview /Student progress sheet and the rationale for those decisions should be kept to facilitate feedback to applicants if requested, for both full and part time applicants. This should be returned to Central Admissions or the administrator of the Pt HE course.

4.9 Applications for previous experience or qualification to be used towards the award of credit on the programme should be discussed as part of the interview procedure. The college policy for Accreditation of Prior Learning and requirements of the relevant awarding body must be adhered to; the HE Quality Manager and the Programme leader must review the evidence and make a decision about the award prior to the student enrolling on the programme.

5.0 In the unusual event of an application being highlighted by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service as being plagiarised, the applicant will be rejected.

5.1 Some courses require an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) formerly known as CRB. Applicants will be made aware of this necessity on any published material. Applicants declaring criminal convictions will be considered for their suitability to undertake study but may be refused entry where the requirements of an external body will not allow the admission of ex-offenders or where the applicant poses a risk to others. All applicants who make a disclosure must be referred to City of Bristol College Higher Education DBS Panel. Offers cannot be formalised until after the panel process has been completed.

Where an applicant has failed to disclose until after an offer has been made, the offer will need to be rescinded and the matter will then be referred to the DBS Panel.

An appendix will be added to this document outlining the process, following further clarification by government of the DBS process.

6 Late applications

6.1 Clearing/ late applicants for all courses will be handled in line with these principles. Where appropriate telephone or ‘Skype’ interview will be offered as an alternative to face to face interview. All staff working during Clearing will receive additional training.

6.2 Applications for full time programmes can still be made through UCAS after their closing date of 30th June; these applications will then go through Clearing and will be processed by the Central Admissions office.
6.3 If there are vacancies then courses will normally remain open until the end of September or until clarification by the Head of HE.

7 Notification of a decision

7.1 Applicants for full time programmes will be notified of a decision via UCAS directly. A follow up letter will then be sent from the Central Admissions office. Students will be informed of the decision which will be either Unconditional, Conditional or Reject.

7.2 Part time students will be sent a formal offer letter from the appropriate administrator in the HE unit.

7.3 Once an applicant to a full time course has received confirmation of acceptance of the offer, information about accommodation, support services, Preparation for HE course and a ‘good luck with finishing your qualification card’, where appropriate will be sent to the applicant in a series of mailings from the Central Admissions office.

7.4 Successful part time applicants will receive this information through the HE Unit administrative team.

7.5 Applicants who are rejected are entitled to enquire about the reason for the rejection. This will be entered on the Student Progress Sheet to enable the appropriate administrator to reply to any such enquiries.

7.6 Successful applicants for full time programmes who have applied after 30 June, who do not have a UCAS registration and are being made an unconditional offer can be offered Record of Prior Acceptance (RPA).

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