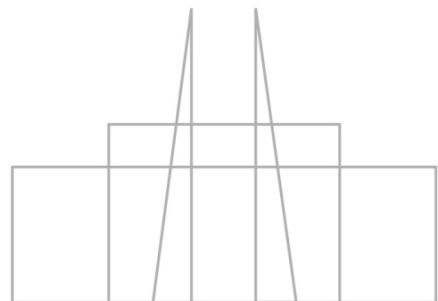
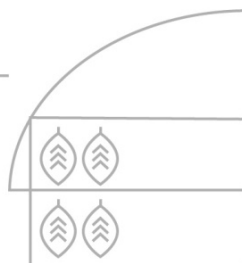


Higher Education

Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy

4 Excellent Campuses
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One Incredible City



Higher Education Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy

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1 Policy Statement

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'the Sheffield College Admissions Policy', which contains our values and strategic aims, and of which this policy forms a part, in order to cater for the specific needs of our higher education students. The policy complies with the expectation and indicators of the UK Quality Code Chapter B2.¹

Sound practice in recruitment, selection and admission to higher education, is underpinned by the 'principles of fair admissions', first set out in *Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice* (2004)

The five Schwartz principles state that a fair admissions system should:

- be transparent
- enable higher education providers to select students who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and their potential
- strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid
- seek to minimise barriers for applicants
- be professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes.

2 Scope of the Policy

For the purposes of this policy, recruitment, selection and admission includes:

- recruitment activities to help prospective students make informed decisions about whether they wish to undertake study within higher education at the college, and, if so, what they might wish to study
- policies and procedures employed by the college to select suitably qualified applicants for particular programmes
- our decision-making processes and their subsequent communication with both successful and unsuccessful applicants
- ways in which the college supports those who receive and accept offers of a place to make the transition from prospective student to current student.

3 The Expectation

The UK Quality Code, (chapter B2) sets out the following Expectation about recruitment, selection and admission to higher education, which we are required to meet and against which this policy is aligned.

“Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.”²

This policy is designed to assist those staff involved in recruitment, selection and admission to meet the expectation of sound practice within the college’s strategic commitment to make a major long term contribution to the social and economic outlook of the city, the region, and the communities we serve.

4 Planned student numbers

The Head of HE and Access is responsible for allocating the number of places for each course for directly funded courses, in consultation with the curriculum Head of Learning. The planned numbers are submitted to the Assistant Principal, Planning and Curriculum for approval and planning. The Head of HE and Access is authorized to make any changes necessary during the annual cycle in order to maximise student recruitment.

Places on courses franchised from Sheffield Hallam University provision, are agreed between Sheffield Hallam University and the relevant Head of Learning.

5 Recruitment activities

All promotional material used for events designed to attract and inform prospective students is taken from the information provided on the college website. This ensures that the information is both accurate and complete in compliance with the college public Information Policy.

The college holds open evenings during which prospective students can see the facilities, meet the staff and current students and ask questions. In addition some curriculum areas invite applicants in to take part in sample classes. Teaching staff have, by invitation, given taster sessions in local schools.

Since more than half our intake is through internal progression, prospective students have ample opportunity to ask questions and gain information and are often taught at level 3 by the same tutors who teach at levels 4 and 5.

Information about fees and other sources of financial help to students is published on the college website, as is course specific financial information eg cost of field trips.

In addition the University Centre, will on request, explain to groups of prospective students the process of applying for financial support. Where students need help completing the application form, support is available through student services and the University Centre. In addition, disabled students have access to the HE Disability Advisor, who will explain the process of applying for help with study and provide 1-2-1 support as required.

6 Minimum Entry Requirements

The minimum entry requirements for all courses are stipulated on the pertinent course information pages on the college website. The responsibility for determining entry requirements differs according to the awarding body or organization as follows:

- BA Honours Degrees, BA top-up Degrees and Foundation Degrees - the entry requirements are agreed with relevant University at validation (the Open University or Sheffield Hallam University), and require their agreement before any changes are made
- Pearson Higher Nationals - the relevant curriculum Department determine the minimum entry requirements
- It is the applicant's responsibility to check the course information on the college website for any additional requirements eg criminal record checks for those working with children, or securing part time employment for work based learning. These additional requirements may apply on application, be part of any offer made to applicants or be a requirement post enrolment.
- If applicants are in any doubt regarding the entry requirements for a particular

course they should contact the University Centre before applying.

All publicity material used in the process of recruitment, selection and admission is generated from the information on the college website. The entry requirements are checked annually by the Curriculum Leader and signed off as accurate by the University Centre. The process is monitored and marketing authorized to publish, by The Head of HE and Access, as detailed in the 'Higher Education Public Information Policy'

Entry requirements are input into the University and Colleges Admissions System (UCAS), and checked for accuracy annually, by the University Centre.

7 Applying for a course

Applicants are responsible for:

- Seeking careers advice to ensure the course they wish to apply for is appropriate for them
- Accessing all the information needed to decide on the suitability of the course to meet their needs
- Ascertaining that they meet, or expect to meet, the minimum entry requirements, or that they will be considered as a mature applicant.

If in doubt applicants should contact the University Centre for further information. Please note that the University Centre does not provide careers advice.

In the event that any significant changes to an advertised course become necessary, all applicants will be informed in writing, either electronically or via letter.

Full-time applicants

Applications for a place at the college are made through UCAS. Information about how to apply for a place on a course using UCAS is given on the college website. The deadline for applications is given on the UCAS website.

Part time candidates

Applications for a place are made through the college 'Higher Education Part – Time application form' available on the college website and through student services at local colleges. Information about how to apply for a course is given on the college website. The deadline for applications is the end of April preceding the start of the course.

8 Data Protection

The college has an Information Strategy concerning the management of information in electronic environment to which student data is subject. Student data is securely held within the college management information system and returned to the data service as the Individualised Learner Record. This data is held for as long as required by the relevant government departments. In addition, pre-enrolment data is held on the college customer relationship management system. Applicants may be contacted by the college at any point in the application process with additional information about the college, course or any other aspect of student life deemed helpful in the decision making process.

Information is shared within the college by authorized users of these systems to provide managers with the data needed to make decisions. Data is provided to government departments and agencies, such as the Student Loan Company and HEFCE as required.

9 Staff training and development

The Head of HE and Access is responsible for ensuring all Curriculum Leaders are supported in the decision making process throughout the admissions cycle. This is done through a briefing session held at the beginning of the decision making process to explain the procedure, which is re-enforced by telephone support provided as required.

Staff whose role involves advising students, for example, careers advisors, tutor mentors, pro-tutors, have training to advise and support students through the recruitment, selection and admissions process whether they are applying to study at the college or elsewhere through continuing Professional development (CPD). In addition the Head of HE and Access provides briefing sessions to update these staff regarding our provision.

10 Selection criteria

For directly funded provision, The Curriculum Leader is responsible for:

- securing a good match between the achievements and potential of applicants and the demands of programmes
- setting transparent and justifiable criteria for selection
- making judgements about relative potential where there is a diverse population of applicants

An offer of a place is made after consideration of applicants application form. This involves consideration of evidence of ability and aptitude in the subject, together with attitude and commitment to study. In addition some subjects require applicants to attend an interview, audition, or other form of assessment for suitability for the course. Sometimes, if applicants have difficulty attending interview due to individual circumstances, particularly during the UCAS clearing process, interviews may be conducted over the telephone.

Applicants are required to at least meet the minimum entry requirements in order to secure a place on their chosen course. In addition, offers of a place may be made subject to attaining above the minimum requirements where demand for places is high. Priority for places is given to those students progressing from our own level 3 provision.

If places remain available at the end of the cycle, candidates may apply through Extra and Clearing. Offers of places may then be made on lower entry criteria, provided there is evidence that candidates will benefit from and be successful at study at this level.

11 The selection process

Full time students

Once applications come in through UCAS, potential students are sent an acknowledgement by Learner Recruitment thanking them for their application and informing them that they will be sent a date for interview, audition or other departmental process within the next 3 weeks. Curriculum Leaders will be alerted to view applications and given an interview schedule. Records must be kept of attendance at interview and a decision about the offer made. Learner recruitment will then make the offer via UCAS and by letter to the student. The process continues until the Head of HE and Access, in consultation with the Head of Learning, determines that the course is full. This will usually mean admissions continue beyond the UCAS deadline in January. Following this deadline, decisions will be made on any necessary course closures.

Curriculum Leaders use their professional judgement to make offers to those students who would benefit from study at levels 4, 5 and 6, subject to the minimum entry requirements, evidence of commitment to study and estimated, or actual, grades at level 3.

Preference for places is given to students meeting the admissions criteria who have studied previously at the college.

Entry requirements may be waived in the case of mature students with substantial work experience at an appropriate level.

The Curriculum Leader will decide whether the information contained in the application form is sufficient to either make an offer, or reject a student. If additional information is required to make a decision, students may provide this at interview, audition or other appropriate form of assessment of suitability for the course. If an applicant is invited to attend an interview/audition but fails to attend on 2 separate dates we reserve the right to reject the applicant.

The selection process continues until the course has filled the maximum number of places allocated by the Head of Learning and the Head of HE and Access. Curriculum Leaders use historical data on admissions to make a judgement on the number of offers to make. If, once students have made decisions about whether or not to accept the offer, places remain, then the course stays open for late applications.

Applicants should familiarize themselves with the process of accepting or rejecting an offer from the college by accessing the information on the UCAS website. Particular attention should be paid to the deadlines for decisions, as if applicants do not respond by the deadline the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

Similarly, Curriculum Leaders must ensure that the selection process is completed in a timely fashion to avoid candidates being 'declined by default'.

The Head of HE and Access re-distributes any unfilled places to curriculum departments through the UCAS clearing process. For this purpose an appropriate member of staff is assigned by the Head of Learning to make decisions in cases where the Curriculum Leader is on annual leave during the clearing period.

Part time students

Curriculum Leaders make offers from March onwards.

Curriculum Leaders use their professional judgment to make offers to those students who would benefit from study at levels 4 and 5, subject to the minimum entry requirements, evidence of commitment to study and estimated, or actual, grades at level 3.

Preference for places is given to students meeting the admissions criteria who have studied previously at the college.

Entry requirements may be waved in the case of mature students with substantial work experience at an appropriate level.

The Curriculum Leader will decide whether the information contained in the application form is sufficient to either make an offer, or reject a student. If additional information is required to make a decision, students are invited for interview.

The selection process continues until the course has filled the maximum number of places allocated by the Head of HE and Access. Curriculum Leaders use historical data on admissions to make a judgment on the number of offers to make. If, once students have made decisions about whether or not to accept the offer, places remain, then the course stays open for late applications.

There is no clearing process for part time students, therefore the course remains open to applications until no places remain, or until 2 weeks after the start date of the course.

If the demand is unexpectedly high, the Head of Learning may decide, following discussion with the Head of HE and Access, to increase the number of places available.

12 The offer

Applicants who receive an offer of a place may be given a deadline by which to accept or reject the offer. If they do not reply by the deadline the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

Unconditional offers are made if:

- Applicants already meet the entry requirements and selection criteria

Conditional offers are made if:

- There is a reasonable expectation that applicants will achieve their estimated grades
- Other aspects of the selection criteria are met

Curriculum Leaders make the offers via UCAS. This is followed up by a letter from Learner Recruitment confirming the details of the offer with reference to our terms and conditions.

If a student is rejected the Head of HE and Access must be alerted so that an alternative offer for a level 3 course (eg Access to HE) can be made if appropriate.

13 Feedback to unsuccessful applicants

Feedback is not routinely given to unsuccessful applicants. Applicants can request an explanation for the decision to reject an application by contacting the University Centre.

Curriculum Leaders are responsible for recording and justifying reasons for rejecting applicants in order to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Applicants may appeal against the decision to reject if they believe that the admissions criteria have been incorrectly applied, by invoking the college complaints procedure, as explained in section 14.

14 Appeals and Complaints

Appeals and complaints concerning recruitment, selection and admission are addressed using the college complaints policy. Information about the college complaints process, together with details of how to make a complaint, are available on the college website.

Complaints are documented during the Annual Review process and used to inform the Action Plan in order to take any necessary steps to continuously improve our service to students.

15 The closure of courses

Full time courses

If at the UCAS closing date for applications the college considers there are insufficient applicants to offer a good student experience the course may be closed. The decision will be made by the Learner Recruitment Steering Group in consultation with the Head of HE and Access. Applicants will receive a letter from the University Centre to notify them of the closure and inform them of any alternative offer the college is able to make them. Should no appropriate offer be available, the University Centre will offer to help the applicant find a place on an appropriate course at another institution.

On occasion it may be in the student interest to close a course at a later date. The circumstances when this may apply are detailed in the college's terms and conditions. The college will avoid where ever possible course closures within 28 days of the start of the course and will provide advice and guidance where closure is unavoidable.

Part time courses

If by enrolment the college considers there are insufficient applicants to offer a good student experience the course may be closed. The decision will be made by the Learner Recruitment Steering Group in consultation with the Head of HE and Access. Applicants will receive a letter from the University Centre to notify them of the closure and inform them of any alternative offer the college is able to make them. Should no appropriate offer be available, the University Centre will offer to help the applicant find a place on an appropriate course at another institution.

16 The Admissions Process

The college will confirm all conditional offers once the conditions are met. Full time applicants will receive confirmation of their place via UCAS shortly after results are published, followed by a letter from learner recruitment explaining the next step. Part time applicants need to provide evidence of their results to the University Centre before their place is confirmed.

Applicants who have not met the conditions of their offer should contact the University Centre if they still wish to be considered for a place. If there are any places remaining on the course, their application may be reviewed.

Successful applicants will receive details through the post of attendance requirements for enrolment, and other course specific information, together with instructions as to what to do prior to enrolment.

At enrolment all students are required to provide evidence of the source of funding for fees. Self-funding students pay the first installment of fees at enrolment. Details of instalment terms are published on the college website.

17 Monitoring and review of policies and procedures.

Policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed through the college Annual Review (AR) process. Policies are revised when college structures, processes or HE external requirements change.

Analysis of recruitment, selection and admission data, considered alongside data such as progression and retention rates of students, withdrawal and transfer, and reasons for non-completion, takes place at the autumn meeting of the Higher Education Academic Board, which includes student representation.

In addition, Higher Education student representatives are asked for feedback on the process which informs policy review.

Appendix 1

Procedures for Handling International Applications

Currently the college does not accept applications from international candidates choosing to study in the UK. Should this situation change, then the following procedures will apply:

The Curriculum Leader is responsible for making the academic decision on whether or not to make a **conditional** offer to an international student. Guidance at Sheffield City College can access the NARIC database to advise you of equivalence if you are unsure of the status of the qualifications on the application form.

On no account should an unconditional offer be made, even if the applicant holds relevant qualifications at the time of application.

Making a conditional offer on UCAS

Within the UCAS system, input the academic offer, then click 'standard offer/International Student' and add it. The wording it will add to the academic offer reads 'Your offer is subject to meeting the requirements of the tier 4 Visa.'

Informing the International Office

Having made the offer, print off the application form and send it to the International Office. They will complete the legal requirements for us to comply with the UK Border Agency. **This takes a minimum of 6-8 weeks.**

The International Office will inform the Curriculum Leader and the University Centre when and if the requirements of the tier 4 visa have been met.

Confirmation of conditions

The University Centre will confirm to UCAS that the student has met all the conditions of the offer.

Enrolment

The International Office will inform the Curriculum Leader prior to the arrival of the student. Enrolment will then follow the same procedures as for home students.

Definition of international student

This is a complex area, and if in any doubt advice **must** be sought from the international office as to an applicant's status. As a guide, the following categories are 'home' students. Anyone outside these categories counts as 'international'.

The following are classified as 'home' students:

- 1. Those who are 'settled' in the UK and meet the main residence requirements**
 - (a) must be settled in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course;and

- (b) must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (c) must also have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the full three year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course - eg, if the course begins in October 2013, must have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands from 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2013; and
- (d) the main purpose for your residence in the UK and Islands must not have been to receive full-time education during any part of that three-year period.

If the student is self-financing, they will be assessed to see if they are a 'home' or an 'overseas' fee payer. If they are not ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course (because, for example, they have not yet moved there from the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man) they cannot meet the requirement of (a) above, even though they may be a British citizen.

In addition, if they moved to the UK for the course of study (or a course of study finished immediately before it), they will be treated as being ordinarily resident in the Islands and you will therefore be unable to meet (a) above.

2: Those who are 'settled' in the UK and have exercised a 'right of residence' in the EEA/Switzerland

Applicants satisfy the qualifying conditions for this category if they meet all of the following criteria:

- (a) are settled in the UK; and
- (b) have left the UK and exercised a right of residence having already been settled in the UK and
- (c) are ordinarily resident in the UK on the day on which the first term of the first academic year actually begins; and
- (d) have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or the overseas territories for the three years preceding the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (e) in a case where the ordinary residence referred to in (d) above was wholly or mainly for the purposes of receiving full-time education, they have been ordinarily resident in EEA/Switzerland immediately before that three-year period.

3: EU nationals, and family

To be eligible under this category:

- a) on the first day of an academic year of your course, applicants must be:
 - a national of an EU country; or
 - the relevant family member of a non-UK EU national, and that non-UK EU national is in the UK as a self sufficient person or as a student; or
 - the relevant family member of a UK national; and
 - (b) must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or the overseas territories for the three years before the first day of the first academic year of the course (if you have not, see the Special Provision below); and
 - (c) the main purpose of your residence in the EEA/Switzerland (or the overseas territories if applicable) must not have been to receive full-time education during any part of the three-year period (if you have not, see the Special Provision below)
- For the purposes of the residence conditions, any country that joins the EU is considered always to have been part of the EEA. the relevant family member of a non-UK EU national, and that non-UK EU national is in the UK as a self sufficient person or as a student; or

4: 'EU Nationals in the UK'

Applicants satisfy the qualifying conditions if:

- (a) they are a non-UK EU national on the first day of the first academic year of the course
- (b) they were ordinarily resident in the UK on first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (c) they were ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (d) if during any part of the three year period, the main purpose for residence was to receive full-time education, applicants must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or the overseas territories immediately prior to the three-year period of ordinary residence in the UK and Islands.

5: Those with the 'right of permanent residence' in the UK

Applicants are entitled to pay 'home' fees under this category if:

- (a) they have the right of permanent residence in the UK (under European Community (EC) law) on the first day of an academic year of the course; and
- (b) they were ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (c) they were ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for the three-year period before the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (d) if any of the ordinary residence in (c) was for the main purpose of receiving full-time education, they must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or the overseas territories immediately prior to that three-year period.

6: EEA/Swiss workers, and family

In order to qualify for 'home' fees under this category, you must meet the following criteria:

- (a) on the first day of an academic year of the course you must be a non-UK EEA national, or a Swiss national, and resident in the UK as a worker, or the relevant family member of such a worker; and
- (b) they must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course unless you are an EEA or Swiss frontier worker or relevant family member of a frontier worker; and
- (c) they must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or the overseas territories for the three years before the first day of the first academic year of the course.

7: Child of a Swiss National

In order to qualify for 'home' fees under this category, you must meet the following criteria:

- (a) on the first day of an academic year of the course, they must be the child of a Swiss national; and
- (b) they must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (c) they must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or the overseas territories for the three years before the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (d) if the main purpose for residence in (c) above, was wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education, applicants must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland immediately before that three-year period.

8: Child of a Turkish worker

To be eligible under this category:

- (a) they must be the child of a Turkish national; and
- (b) the Turkish national parent must be ordinarily resident in the UK and must be, or have been, lawfully employed in the UK; and
- (c) they must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (d) they must have been ordinarily resident in the EEA and/or Switzerland and/or Turkey and/or the overseas territories for the three years before the first day of the first academic year of the course.

9: Refugees, and family

- (a) they must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (b) on the first day of an academic year of the course, they must be:
 - a refugee recognised by the UK Government; or
 - the spouse / civil partner of such a refugee and you must have been the spouse or civil partner of that person on the date on which their asylum application was made; or
 - the child of such a refugee or of a refugee's spouse or civil partner and at the time the refugee made the asylum application they must have been the under-18-year-old child of the refugee or of the refugee's spouse or civil partner; and
- (c) they have not ceased to be ordinarily resident:
 - since they were recognised as a refugee; or
 - if they are a spouse / civil partner, or child, of a refugee, since they were given leave to remain in the UK.

10: Those who applied for asylum, were refused refugee status but were granted Humanitarian Protection, and family

If they apply for asylum and the Home Office decides that they do not qualify for refugee status, they may still be allowed to stay in the UK. In such circumstances the Home Office normally grants Humanitarian Protection (HP), Discretionary Leave (DL) or, in some cases, Indefinite Leave to Remain. Only those granted Humanitarian Protection at this point are eligible in this category.

To be eligible under this category:

- (a) they must be ordinarily resident in the UK on the first day of the first academic year of the course; and
- (b) on the first day of an academic year of the course, they must be a person:
 - whom the Home Office has told does not qualify for recognition as a refugee but nevertheless should be allowed to stay in the UK and who has been granted Humanitarian Protection; and
 - whose period of leave is still current, or has been renewed and the new leave is still current, or who is waiting for the outcome of an in time application for renewal, or is waiting for an appeal concerning their leave; and
 - who has been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands since having been granted leave. Or they must be the spouse or civil partner of such a person with humanitarian protection, and must have been the spouse or civil partner of that person on the date on which the asylum application was made; or they must be the child of a such a person with humanitarian protection, or a child of that person's spouse or civil partner and, at the time the 'person granted humanitarian protection' made the asylum application, you must have been the under-18-year-old child of that person or of that person's spouse or civil partner.

Source: UK Council for International Student
Affairs <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Fees--finance/Home-or-Overseas-fees/England-Higher-Education/#>