



Admissions Policy (FE and HE)

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Originator:	Head of Advice and Guidance / Minor amendment Ac Registrar
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Audience:	Students, Applicants, Staff & Governors

Admissions Policy

Nescot's Mission is to inspire our students to be the best that they can be.

We recognise that the first vitally important step is ensuring that students can make an informed decision and enrol on the course which best meets their needs, ambitions and abilities. This policy sets out our commitment to this.

General Principles

The College aims to recruit with integrity and provide a high quality educational experience for students. This policy is consistent with the College's Equality & Diversity Policy.

The College will apply the principles embedded in this policy statement to all learners, including full and part time, Further Education and Higher Education, those on apprenticeship programmes or other work based learning schemes, distance learners and those on partnership schemes. Students under the age of 16 will usually be admitted to College in partnership with other agencies and procedures for them may vary.

Prospective students will receive:

- Accurate, up to date and detailed information about course provision and additional services and facilities
- Appropriate information, advice and guidance where necessary or requested, which will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options
- Initial assessment, where appropriate, to assist in ensuring that students are enrolled on the correct level of course
- Access to clear entry criteria
- Induction to their chosen course, College services and facilities upon enrolment.
- Communications which are courteous, prompt and clear.

All decisions relating to admissions will be based on:

- Best interests of the client
- Impartiality
- Equality of opportunity
- Confidentiality & disclosure protocols
- Transparency
- Accessibility

All applicants will be invited to disclose additional support needs at application. All such disclosures will be treated as confidential and permission will be sought to pass relevant information to other appropriate members of staff.

The College will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to both services and curriculum delivery in order to meet the needs of students. Information disclosed will be used to enable access to our courses, not to discriminate. Our ability to make reasonable adjustments may be limited if permission is not granted to share information about any personal need.

Information, Advice & Guidance

Prospective students will receive accurate, current and detailed information about courses which will be given impartially and without prejudice.

Course information will include:

- Course contents
- Entry requirements
- Mode of attendance
- Assessment procedures
- Qualification outcome
- Costs (of both course and any additional items, eg. Specialist clothing, equipment or materials)
- Opportunities for work placement
- Progression routes
- Other information e.g. Residential visits

College information will include:

- College facilities, including Learning Resource Centre and childcare facilities
- Financial and welfare support
- Grants, benefits or allowances to which learners may be entitled
- Additional learning support
- Accommodation
- Methods of payment

Information will be provided to the public through:

- The Advice & Guidance Centre
- College Publications
- College Website
- Open days/evenings, Taster Days
- School Liaison activities

- Marketing and community activities.

The Advice & Guidance Centre offers:

- A drop-in facility for potential and existing students, which is open at client friendly times throughout the year
- Appointments for more detailed advice & guidance.

Please note: Where required, specific information can be made available in community languages, Braille, large print or on audio tape.

Priority for places:

Places on courses will be offered in accordance with the following priorities:

1. Existing Nescot learners and learners following a Link programme at the college.
2. Learners from Surrey
3. Other applicants.

Application and Interview

- Applications to full time Higher Education courses are administered within the procedures laid down by UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Services). Applicants to some Higher Education courses will be interviewed by academic staff.
- International applications are forwarded to academic staff for decision. If the applicant is suitable for the course their details will be forwarded the Student Finance Manager to determine if a Tier 4 visa is required. If a visa is required the Student Finance Manager will liaise with the student to ensure that the correct documentation is held on file and a Certificate of Acceptance of Study will be issued when an agreed (non refundable) deposit has been received. If the course does not meet Tier 4 requirements the Student Finance Manager will inform the student before a deposit is paid.
- All prospective students for full-time Further Education, for certain substantial part-time courses (150 Guided Learning Hours per year) e.g. Childcare, AAT, apprentices will be interviewed by academic staff and where necessary, their levels of literacy and numeracy assessed.
- All applicants who have applied by 31st January will be offered an interview for a place to study at Nescot. Applicants who apply after this date will be offered an interview if places on suitable courses are still available.
- In order to avoid discrimination there is a clear structure for each interview and admissions tutors receive training in order to meet standards and ensure consistency.

- Any applicant who discloses an individual need at application will have Additional Learning Support staff available at their interview to ensure that appropriate adjustments and support needs can be discussed and arranged wherever possible. Learning support staff will be available for advice by arrangement.
- Interviewers are expected to be prepared for their interviews and to be able to accommodate individual needs. Where necessary, and by arrangement, the College will provide, language interpretation, a communicator or other form of support which may be required.
- The interviewer will take into account any available record of achievement, prior accreditation, credit transfer or reference.
- Applicants who require further advice or guidance following the interview or who are unlikely to meet the entry requirements, will be offered further advice with a view to finding an alternative course, either at Nescot or elsewhere.
- When courses are full and/or waiting lists are held or when courses have to be closed; or are significantly changed, applicants will be informed immediately and given appropriate advice.
- Clear details of arrangements for enrolment and induction of new students will be communicated to successful applicants in a timely manner. This will include information on action to be taken if applicants do not achieve the results specified in the offer of a place.
- All information collated during the admissions procedures is regarded as confidential and will not be disclosed to other parties without the prior agreement of the client, in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.
- All records will be stored securely in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

Initial Assessment

- The purpose and nature of the assessment is communicated to applicants before the test.
- Assessments will be available at times that minimise inconvenience to the applicant.
- Assessments will be conducted and evaluated in a standardised manner.
- For certain courses, testing for Basic Skills (Numeracy, Literacy) may be carried out as part of the admissions process prior to enrolment. An offer of a place on the course may then be conditional on the outcome of those tests.

- Screening for learning support needs will not affect a student's chance of enrolment on a course.

Waiting List Criteria

- A waiting list is established for a course when sufficient acceptances have been received that if last year's conversion figure is applied, this year's target enrolment figure would be met.
- A conversion to waiting list letter is sent to those who have not yet accepted their offer of a place.
- Where a waiting list already exists, applicants invited to interview are informed that this is the case, either by phone or email.
- When an offer on a waiting list has been made, a specific 'Waiting List' decision email and acceptance form is sent to the applicant.
- Applicants are allocated a number on the waiting list dependent on the date of receipt of their acceptance.
- The waiting list is capped at 15 (20 for high demand courses).
- IAG for alternative courses is offered to those unable to gain a place.

Decision

All decisions relating to admissions will be based on:

- Best interests of the client
- Impartiality
- Equality of opportunity
- Confidentiality & disclosure protocols
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Decisions on applications are made on the basis of potential to succeed, based on the abilities, aptitudes, skills, qualifications and experiences of applicants. There should be no discrimination against any applicant.
- Clear, unambiguous decisions will be communicated to the applicant as soon as possible.

- Clear, detailed notes of the interview will be recorded on the online ARM (Applicant Relationship Management) system.

Appeal

- If the College is unable to offer a place to a prospective student, then the applicant may appeal to the Deputy Principal.
- Appeals must be received in writing within 5 working days from the decision being communicated. Applicants must explain the reasons why the College should reconsider its decision and include further evidence and any new mitigating circumstances which could influence the original decision.
- Appeals will be considered by the Deputy Principal or his/hers nominated Senior Manager, whose decision is final.
- The person considering the appeal will notify the parties of his or her decision as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 20 working days from receipt (working days means term time only) of the written notice of appeal.
- Applicants to higher education courses validated by the Open University have the right to submit an appeal to the Open University. Please contact the Academic Registrar at NESCOL to obtain details of how to submit your appeal.

Securing an Offer

Once an offer has been made applicants must accept their offer online within 3 weeks of the date of the email to secure their place.

Applicants who do not accept their offer may still be able to enrol at Nescot but we cannot guarantee a place on their original choice of programme.

Enrolment

- Clear details and instructions will be available and communicated effectively to prospective students.
- Explicit information on fees/costs and methods of payment will be given to prospective students before enrolment.
- The enrolment process is planned and implemented in an effective and efficient manner to minimise inconvenience to the client.
- Sufficient and appropriate members of staff will be present during the main enrolment period to ensure prospective students receive full and accurate information and advice.
- There is a planned programme of induction for late enrollers.

Monitoring and Review

In order to monitor and improve the advice and guidance process, the College will:

- Conduct regular surveys to gain feedback from enquirers, applicants and students.
- Monitor and action plan any complaints received.
- Carry out self assessment as part of the Quality process.
- Consider the effect of the Admissions Policy and entry criteria, when reviewing student success rates.
- Monitor changing patterns in the application market, availability of and demand for different modes of study and qualifications offered by applicants.
- As part of Equality & Diversity monitoring, compare the recruitment levels and success rates of applicants/students from minority and disadvantaged groups with those of the majority.
- Summarise and review data regarding applications, offers made and enrolments on a course-by-course basis in order to inform future recruitment strategy and curriculum development.

Roles & Responsibilities

- The Advice & Guidance Team will be responsible for processing enquiries, full-time and part-time Further Education and Higher Education applications and enrolments. Responsibility for processing enrolments for Distance Learning and other courses lies with staff of those units together with College Information Service staff.
- Academic staff will assist the central Advice & Guidance Team where necessary/appropriate.
- Academic staff will provide accurate, updated information about their courses, the numbers of offers to be made and the entry qualifications.
- All staff involved in the admissions process offer places to applicants who they are confident will benefit from the course and achieve the standards required for success.
- The College will ensure, through training and staff development, that those staff involved in advice and recruitment are competent to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

- The College accepts that it is not possible to plan for every situation which might arise in the admission process but strives to ensure that it provides a fair and equitable service to all prospective students.
- The College has policies and procedures in place for responding to client complaints about the admissions process and will ensure that all members of staff involved in advice and guidance are familiar with these procedures.
- The Head of Advice & Guidance is responsible for ensuring that the admission policies and procedures are effectively implemented and monitored.
- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Vice Principal Planning & Information Services and the Head of Advice & Guidance, to ensure that it continues to support the mission of the College and remains current and valid.

Service Response Times

- **Response to enquiry** – All enquiries will be responded to within 2 working days and should the enquiry warrant longer time to gather information, then confirmation that the enquiry is being dealt with will occur within 2 working days.
- **Acknowledgement of application** – this will be immediate if applications are made online and within 2 working days of receipt of paper applications.
- **Confirmation of interview date** – interview dates for applicants will be issued by email within 4 working days of receipt of the application.
- **Confirmation of offer** – verbally by the interviewer at the end of the interview, subject to all required information/evidence being available, followed by a confirmation email within 3 working days.