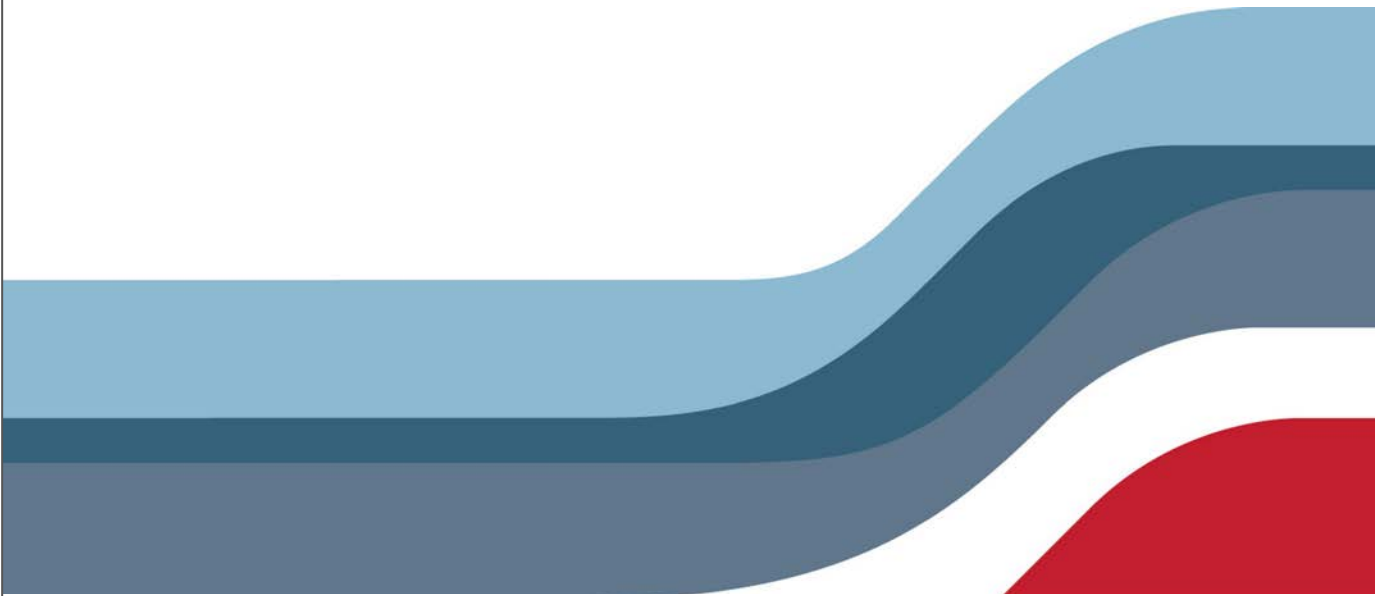


# Admissions policy



# Admissions Policy

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy supports the College's mission, vision and values as laid out in the College's strategic plan. For this to be a reality for learners it is important that they are enabled to make informed choices about the courses and/or training they follow. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all learners are considered for courses and/or training on a consistent basis and can access information, advice and guidance as appropriate.
- 1.2 The Policy reflects current legislation and funding guidelines in offering impartial advice and guidance. The Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies and procedures.

## 2 Commitment

- 2.1 South Thames College encourages and welcomes applications from all prospective students. It celebrates and values the diversity of its learners and believes that the College will benefit from attracting and retaining learners irrespective of their race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religious or philosophical belief, age, marital or parental status or socio-economic class.
- 2.2 The College will treat all enquirers and applicants with respect and dignity and seek to provide an admissions system free from discrimination ensuring equality of opportunity for all individuals seeking a place on a programme or course. The College will offer a wide range of opportunities for learners with varying levels of prior achievement, interests and background.
- 2.3 The College will recruit with integrity to all programmes providing impartial information and advice to enable enquirers and applicants:
- to make appropriate choices in line with their previous experience and qualifications and career aspirations
  - to understand the opportunities for progression.

### **3 Definitions and Scope**

- 3.1 The Admissions Policy applies to all applications made to all programmes and courses in the College.
- 3.2 The Policy will be reviewed annually to take into account guidance from the funding bodies, national priorities and the College's own priorities.
- 3.3 The College will offer a place to all learners aged 16-18 (subject to references) and provide initial assessment and advice to ensure that they are placed on an appropriate Study Programme
- 3.4 The College will allocate places to adult learners (learners aged 18 or above) within the available funding and advise these learners as soon as possible if it is unable to provide a subsidised course.

### **4 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 4.1 Responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy lies with the Enquiries and Admissions Manager in conjunction with the VP Employer and Community Engagement.
- 4.2 All staff with responsibility for any aspect of the admissions process, including but not limited to Enquiries and Admissions staff, Student Services staff, Heads of School and curriculum staff, are accountable for ensuring that applicants are dealt with in accordance with the principles set out in the policy.

### **5 Key Principles**

#### **5.1 Information, Advice and Guidance**

All potential learners have the right to expect free, independent and accurate information from the College about the available programmes and courses. The College will provide information on:

- teaching and learning facilities including learning resource centres, workshops, information technology and other resources
- courses offered and the qualifications they lead to
- entry grades or other entry criteria
- how the course is organised
- times and days on which the course takes place and where it is held
- teaching and assessment requirements
- support available for learners with disabilities, learning difficulties and/or medical conditions

- arrangements for work experience, if appropriate
- approximate costs of studying and the financial help available
- access to 24+ Advanced Learning Loans and Higher Education Loans available through the Student Loan Company, if appropriate
- the services for learners who come from overseas
- the support available for childcare costs.

## 5.2 **Applications and Interviews**

All applicants for full time and substantial part-time programmes and courses will be required to complete an application form and will be interviewed to ensure that the course for which they have applied will meet their learning needs and goals. Where an applicant is unsure about which programme to apply for they will be invited for an advice interview.

- 5.3 Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the interview including details of any conditions for entry to the course either at the end of the interview or within ten working days.

Admission to our Aurora Centre is determined on a case by case basis using multiple sources of information including an assessment by staff from the Centre, school records, reviews, reports from outside agencies and interviews with the applicant and parents/carer. (full admissions policy appendix 1)

- 5.4 For short part-time courses, an application form and interview will not normally be required. If an applicant needs to be interviewed prior to acceptance on the course this will be made clear in College promotional literature and on the website. College prospectuses and the website will have up to date information on:

- how and when applicants can enrol
- how much they will need to pay
- whether they are entitled to a reduced fee
- how to apply for a student loan if eligible
- how to pay in instalments or get a refund.

- 5.5 For Higher Education, learners can only be funded for study if the qualification sought is at a higher level than that already held by the applicant. However, full cost provision may be available to those learners who wish to study an Equivalent Level Qualification (ELQ).

## 5.6 **Learner Support**

The College offers the opportunity of study support to all learners within the resources available and will on request, arrange appointments, to discuss and assess individual support needs. If applicants are progressing from a Special School and/or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the College will, wherever possible, ensure

that appropriate transition arrangements are in place. Applicants will be encouraged to disclose a disability, learning difficulty and/or medical condition to ensure that appropriate support can be planned and put in place. Support will be offered at interview if requested on application. Decisions about course offers will be made independently of the process for identifying and meeting support needs and will be based on applicants' capability, learning needs and learning and employment goals.

For Adult and Community Learning learners there is a limited level of funding for learner support. These learners will be encouraged to make the College aware of their support needs prior to enrolment when they will be advised if funding is available to support them. This support funding will be available on a 'first come, first served basis'.

### 5.7 **Pre-Course Assessment or Initial Assessment**

If an applicant is required to complete an assessment prior to interview s/he will be notified by letter. Where learners have requested support, they will be contacted before their interview. Initial Assessment will take place prior to interview when, for example:

- applying for a full time course and not holding a GCSE English or maths qualification at A\*- G or equivalent
- applying for a course and not taking or holding a qualification that would meet the entry criteria
- applying for an Access or pre-Access course
- 19+ and applying for a course where applications are anticipated to be greatly in excess of places available
- where it is felt to be necessary in order to provide advice regarding appropriate course choice.

5.8 All applicants who undertake initial assessment will be informed of the outcome of the assessment. Where appropriate, for example in the case of learners with a hearing impairment, a specialist assessment will replace initial assessment.

### 5.9 **Entry Requirements**

In general, the level of an individual programme will determine the entry requirements. Most courses and programmes have specific entry requirements. Applicants will be informed of any specific requirements for a programme at an early stage in the application process.

5.10 Applicants who do not fully meet the normal entry requirements for a particular course or programme *may* be given a place subject to specified conditions. These conditions will be made explicit to the applicant. A decision to admit an applicant under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Head of School.

5.11 Overseas qualifications are welcome, provided that they are considered equivalent to the requirements of the particular programme being applied for.

### 5.12 **Offers of Places**

The offer of a place on a programme of study will be subject to the following. Applicants must:

- satisfy all pre-course entry requirements, including accurate completion of all associated paperwork by any deadline given, by attending all appointments associated with their application to the College and by submitting any evidence to support their application as required
- meet the specific entry requirements of any programme or course and meet any other admissions criteria
- provide evidence of prior qualifications (where applicable) and/or to the satisfactory completion of their present education programme
- where applicable, be supported by satisfactory references
- pay all fees and costs, unless they are eligible for fee remission or financial assistance
- provide confirmation from the Student Loan Company of a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan or a Higher Education Loan, if applicable
- have a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) decision, where required
- confirm acceptance or rejection of any place offered by the date specified.

5.13 The offer of a place does not guarantee that the course or programme will run. Should a course or programme (or part thereof) be cancelled, the applicant will be offered an alternative course or programme if appropriate, or a refund of any fees paid if no alternative is available.

5.14 The provision of a year one of any course does not automatically guarantee the progression to subsequent years of study in the same subject.

### 5.15 **Right to Refuse an Application or Enrolment**

Under certain circumstances the College may reserve the right to refuse an application or enrolment. Applications from prospective learners who fall into this category will be given full consideration before any such refusal.

5.16 The College reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant who:

- is unable to meet any required entry requirements
- has needs which cannot be met by reasonable adjustment
- has a history of high risk behaviour which poses a threat to the health and safety of themselves or other learners or staff

- has previously been excluded from this or another education institution. Before any such decision is made, reasonable effort will be made to obtain references from previous education institution/s; where provided, references will support any decision to offer a place
- has previously attended this or another education establishment and not completed courses, including all external assessments, without good reason
- has previously been subject to the College's disciplinary procedure and has not followed the recommendations following the outcome of any such disciplinary
- has outstanding debts with the College
- provides false or misleading information on an application or enrolment form
- has a relevant criminal conviction which is either not spent or can never become spent (this will be assessed on an individual basis).

The above list is indicative, and is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. The College reserves the right to make the final decision on whether or not to accept an application or enrolment to the College.

5.17 In the event the College offers a place and subsequently discovers that the candidate has committed an action that would constitute gross misconduct under the College's Disciplinary Procedure, the College reserves the right to withdraw the offer, whether or not the course or programme has commenced.

#### 5.18 **Applicants Disclosing a Criminal Conviction**

All applicants will be asked to declare whether they have any convictions that are considered 'unspent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as a condition of their application to the College.

Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered relevant and are therefore not necessary to disclose, unless the applicant is applying to a course involving working with children or vulnerable adults, in which case ALL previous convictions must be disclosed.

A conviction does not necessarily mean that someone cannot come to college. However we will ask for more information about this and we may also require a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. Failure to disclose offences relevant to the course applied for could result in exclusion or disciplinary action.

5.19 Any applicant who is not accepted onto a course will be notified in writing and given reasons. Applicants who are not satisfied with the decision will be advised to use the College Complaints procedure.

5.20 The College may request a DBS check for applicants to certain programmes. Where a DBS check is requested, the outcome of this will be taken into consideration when making a decision about offering a place to an individual.

5.21 A panel convened by the Vice Principal Curriculum & Learner Services Ensures that any recommendations for rejection are checked for compliance with the College's Policies and Procedures.

5.22 In the event the College offers a place and subsequently discovers that the candidate has committed an action that would constitute gross misconduct under the College's Disciplinary Procedure, the College reserves the right to withdraw the offer, whether or not the course or programme has commenced.

## **6 Monitoring**

6.1 The monitoring process will be used to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and equally.

6.2 To inform the setting of targets and the measurement of our progress in achieving them, the College will collect the following information:

- race, gender, age and disability group profiles of learners
- success and failure rates for admissions to programmes
- complaints by learners or their sponsors in relation to the admissions process
- learner satisfaction surveys.

## **7 Review**

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and updated as necessary.

## **8 Breach of the Policy**

The College will take seriously any instances of non-adherence to the College's policy by its staff or management. Any instance of breach of policy will be investigated and, where appropriate, action will be considered under the College's Disciplinary Code for Staff.

## **9 Access to the Policy**

This policy will be published on the South Thames College Blackboard and on the College website.

## **10 Reference to other policies, procedures and guidelines:**

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Mental Health Policy and Procedures
- Health, Well Being and Fitness to Study Procedures



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