

# Higher Education Programmes Admissions Policy

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To set out the processes for admission of students to University Studies at West Suffolk College and the means by which we encourage and welcome applicants with different educational and social backgrounds.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. This policy applies to all applicants to, and students of University Studies at West Suffolk College unless they are covered by the policy of their awarding institution. This policy is consistent with the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education.

- 2.2. This policy aims to:

- 2.2.1. Be clear, comprehensive and well implemented as this is deemed to be fundamental to fair admissions to higher education.
- 2.2.2. Be coordinated for the benefit of the applicant experience which intends to influence recruitment, transition and retention.
- 2.2.3. Contextualise prior attainment.
- 2.2.4. Minimise barriers for applicants across all protected equality characteristics.
- 2.2.5. Ensuring recruitment and admission staff comply with all relevant legislation.
- 2.2.6. Planning admissions processes and procedures, with a clear review method.

- 2.3. This policy is reviewed regularly taking into account current and relevant legislation.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy describes the process of admission onto a University Studies at West Suffolk College and the policy applies to all:

- 3.1.1. Full time undergraduate applicants
- 3.1.2. Part time undergraduate applicants
- 3.1.3. All University Studies at West Suffolk College and West Suffolk College Group staff responsible for considering and admitting an applicant to a University Studies at West Suffolk College programme

## 4. Purpose

- 4.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the 'Principles for fair Admission' are adopted and that these principles are applied consistently. More so to ensure that all prospective students are considered for programmes, on a consistent basis and are able to access information advice and guidance as appropriate.

- 4.2. The principles state that a fair admission system should:

- 4.2.1. Be transparent.

- 4.2.2. Enable University Studies at West Suffolk College select students who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and their potential.
- 4.2.3. Seek to minimise barriers for prospective students

## **5. General Principles**

- 5.1. University Studies at West Suffolk College welcomes applications from all prospective students. We believe that a diverse community is an essential part of our core values, and that diversity amongst our student body enriches learning and teaching.
- 5.2. University Studies at West Suffolk College will treat all enquirers and applicants with respect and dignity and seeks to provide an admissions system free from discrimination ensuring equality of opportunity for all individuals seeking a place on a programme.
- 5.3. University Studies at West Suffolk College will offer a range of opportunities for students with varying levels of prior achievement, interests and background, helping them to realise their goals and aspirations.
- 5.4. University Studies at West Suffolk College operates a transparent admissions policy as detailed in this document. We are committed to providing clear, consistent, easily understandable and accessible information regarding entry requirements, selection procedures, and conditions of offer and fees which will support students in making an informed decision about their course.
- 5.5. In some circumstances, Safeguarding policies may take precedence.
- 5.6. An offer below the normal grade range may be made in exceptional cases where there is evidence that the applicant's grades may have been affected by individual extenuating circumstances.

## **6. Admissions Criteria**

- 6.1. Full time undergraduates: Those who are applying for admission to a Full-Time Undergraduate programme will normally do so through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Within University Studies at West Suffolk College the process for admitting students through the UCAS system is centralised to the Admissions team.
- 6.2. Part-Time Undergraduates: To apply to Part-Time Undergraduate programme an applicant does so through the internal application system. Following this, the application is processed in the same manner as the Full-Time programmes.
- 6.3. International admissions: All International applications will be referred to the internal Admissions team who will confirm eligibility.

## **7. Selection framework**

- 7.1. Admissions staff will be expected to use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual candidates. In exercising their judgement, admissions staff must operate in a way that is consistent with University Studies at West Suffolk College's Admissions Policy.
- 7.2. Entry requirements will be reviewed annually prior to the onset of the recruitment cycle by the University Studies at West Suffolk College Leadership Team in conjunction with academic teams.
- 7.3. University Studies at West Suffolk College accepts a broad range of qualifications and combination of qualifications for entry onto its programmes, including vocational and Access to Higher Education, alongside a range of qualifications offered to European Union. Qualifications may be subject to a NARIC (National Recognition Information Centre), the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills.
- 7.4. The Personal Statement and Reference is used as indication of ability, motivation and potential, alongside information about personal circumstances and contextual social and cultural information, including related work or voluntary experience showing commitment to a chosen career.
- 7.5. All applications received by the relevant UCAS deadline (normally 15 January prior to year of entry) are to be given equal consideration. Such consideration will also be given to applications received after 15 January up to and including 30 June (end of main applications scheme through UCAS).
- 7.6. University Studies at West Suffolk College welcomes applications from students with additional needs and will make every reasonable effort to meet their needs to enable them to study at the College. Applications from students with disabilities and/or additional needs are considered on their academic merits in line with applications from all students. If there is any doubt about a particular applicant's suitability for a programme, admissions staff will refer the application to the relevant academic teams. A decision will then be made in liaison between Admissions and the Curriculum Team.
- 7.7. For select programmes auditions, interviews or portfolios are required as part of the admissions process. This will be facilitated through the admissions team with the final decision made by the academic teams.
- 7.8. Consideration for admission based on APL will be given in accordance with the Accreditation of Prior Learning policy. We recognise that experience counts and offer the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Certificated Prior Learning (APCL) as processes that allow applicants to gain recognition for skills or qualifications gained at work or elsewhere. APEL and APCL can help the applicant gain credit towards a wide range of qualifications and may reduce the period of study time necessary to obtain their chosen award.
- 7.9. For applicants whose first language is not English, each programme will publish a minimum score for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and this forms part of the selection criteria. A Grade C/4 GCSE or an equivalent qualification is normally required.
- 7.10. Unless your results are transmitted to USWSC via UCAS or confirmed by your school/college when you apply, you will be required to produce satisfactory evidence

of your qualifications. You must provide us with an original transcript or certificate; or by agreement with the Admissions Office a clear and legible copy that has been authenticated by the issuing organisation or other authorised person.

- 7.11. Applicants to certain vocational or professional courses may be required to pass an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and/or to demonstrate medical fitness to practice prior to being admitted. This is in order to comply with the requirements of relevant professional bodies. Applicants will be advised if these or any other conditions apply when they are made an offer of a place.

## **8. Criminal Conviction**

- 8.1. University Studies at West Suffolk College aims to provide a supportive, positive, and safe environment for learning and teaching. For this reason, all applicants will be required to declare any relevant criminal convictions. The relevance of criminal convictions depends upon the nature of the course. It is important to note that having a criminal conviction does not necessarily prevent an applicant from being accepted on a course. This will depend on the nature of the programme of study, the outcome of any Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and the circumstances and background of the offences.
- 8.2. All courses that bring students into contact with children or vulnerable adults require applicants to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. More information may therefore be required about any criminal convictions.
- 8.3. Please see the Criminal Convictions policy for more information.

## **9. Offers**

- 9.1. Making an offer for study, which is subsequently accepted, is the creation of a contract between the University Studies at West Suffolk College and the applicant. Only trained Admissions Selectors are therefore able to make a formal offer of study to applicants.
- 9.2. University Studies at West Suffolk College reserves the right to amend or withdraw an offer of a place based upon (but not limited to) the following.
- 9.3. If the student is subsequently found to have made false statements or provided inaccurate information or omitted significant information, including criminal convictions, during the application process.
- 9.4. Based on information provided to the College after an offer has been made (i.e. via a reference or DBS certificate).
- 9.5. University Studies at West Suffolk College may report any application it suspects to be fraudulent to the UCAS Verification Unit.
- 9.6. University Studies at West Suffolk College may convene an Admissions panel to consider the suitability of any applicant to join the course at any stage of the

admissions process. In this case, the applicant will be invited to submit a statement for consideration.

- 9.7. If you accept our offer of a place, you have the right to cancel your contract. You must notify us if your decision in writing (email or letter). It is your responsibility to take account of UCAS application and acceptance deadlines, together with UCAS terms and conditions for students taking up places of study.

## **10. Additional Support Needs**

- 10.1. University Studies at West Suffolk College is committed to providing on-going support and accessible services for students, and to supporting all students to complete their courses as independently as possible.
- 10.2. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss with the College any additional support requirements, especially where support may be required during the application and induction process. Applicants are encouraged to discuss these needs with the College as early as possible to ensure that consideration can be given to any new arrangements that may need to be put in place.
- 10.3. The College is committed to providing on-site and individual tours on request for students with reduced mobility and/or visual impairment. The College will work with applicants and their support networks to support equal access to recruitment and induction events.
- 10.4. Students who do not require additional support during the application process but believe they may require additional learning support, mental health support, or reasonable adjustments during their studies are also strongly encouraged to discuss their anticipated needs with the College on application. This is in order to ensure consistent, well-planned support can be delivered throughout every student's studies.

## **11. Course Changes or suspension**

- 11.1. University Studies at West Suffolk College reserves the right to make course changes, including changes to course content, structure, teaching and assessment or suspend a course, at any time between your acceptance to 28 days prior to the date when your course starts, for one or more of the following reasons:
- 11.1.1. To comply with external, professional, accrediting or other regulatory body requirements.
  - 11.1.2. To improve course quality.
  - 11.1.3. To ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the intended learning outcomes and/or standards set by relevant professional bodies.
  - 11.1.4. To implement external examiner and academic adviser feedback.
  - 11.1.5. To implement student feedback, for the benefit of students.

11.2. The College will notify you of any such changes as soon as reasonably practicable. If, as a result of a change made under this clause, you wish to withdraw your acceptance or terminate your enrolment.

11.2.1. You must notify the College in writing or through UCAS, within 14 days of receiving written notification of the change;

11.2.2. If you would like to be considered for another course, the College will use its reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative course within the institution (for which tuition fees may be payable) or suggest a suitable alternative course with an alternative provider;

11.2.3. The College will provide you with a full refund of any deposit or tuition fee paid

11.3. USWSC may withdraw or suspend a course. Applicants affected will be contacted as early as possible and will be given the right to withdraw their acceptance of the offer.

## **12. Feedback to Applicants**

12.1. If an applicant requires feedback on an unsuccessful application, this should be in writing to the University Studies office. This request will then be passed to the appropriate Admissions Selector. The College will not discuss the outcome of individual applications with anyone other than the applicant.

## **13. Entry to Second or Third Year of Programme**

13.1. Applications will be considered for direct entry to the second or third year of an undergraduate programme. Applicants will be expected to have the standard entry requirements for the course as well as the appropriate number of higher education credits.

## **14. Deferred Entry**

14.1. Applicants who would like to defer entry for a year should indicate this in their application. It is also recommended that they outline briefly on the personal statement their reason for choosing deferred entry. Applicants will usually be considered on the same basis as applicants for the current year of entry and receive correspondence from UCAS and University Studies at West Suffolk College during the application timetable for that year.

## **15. Complaints**

15.1. Concerns that the University Studies at West Suffolk College's admissions principles and procedures have been incorrectly implemented may be raised through the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

15.2. Applicants are encouraged to view the Tuition Fee Policy and the General Regulations (Students), which sets out the requirements of students relating to Attendance and Co