

**Name of Policy** **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**Purposes**

To outline the process by which applicants may access learning. This policy includes the following programmes:

- Post 16 Study Programmes
- Post 16 part time programmes (which require interviews)
- HE programmes

**Author / Job Title** College Registrar

**Equality Assessment By Whom** College Registrar **Date** Feb 2015

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	SMT / Curriculum and Quality Committee	26 November 2014
	Corporation	

**Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable**

**Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy**

Curriculum and Quality Group  
Equality and Diversity Management Group

**To be published on College website** NO

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

Macclesfield College is committed to increasing and widening participation. Post 16 applications to study at Macclesfield College are actively encouraged from all interested parties based in our local community and beyond. This policy outlines the process by which applicants may access learning. This policy includes the following programmes:

- Post 16 Study Programmes
- Post 16 part time programmes (which require interviews)
- HE programmes

Macclesfield College offers impartial guidance throughout the admissions process to ensure that applicants are supported to choose the right course for them. Staff providing guidance are trained to be able to fully support applicants throughout the process.

Macclesfield College ensures confidentiality for applicants throughout the applications process and complies with the Data Protection Act 1998. The College's Data Protection nominee is the Head of Technology, Learning Resources and E-Learning.

Macclesfield College has an open and transparent post-16 admissions process to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination against any individual or groups. The process detailed here applies to those going through the full application procedure.

### **Enquiries**

The Customer Services Team will manage enquiries by:

- answering the query and sending out any appropriate course information sheets and applications forms in the choice of format requested by the customer
- contacting specific teaching staff to get necessary information to report back to the enquirer / customer if required
- offering referral information where possible if the enquiry relates to courses that are not on offer at Macclesfield College

For those applicants who are unsure about their choice, impartial advice and guidance will be available to assist with the post 16 applications process.

### **Interviews**

#### **Full time courses**

Applicants for (post 16) full time courses and HE programmes will be invited to attend an interview event, usually carried out in the evenings at regular intervals throughout each academic year (November – July). The invitation process includes a written invite with email and telephone contact to confirm attendance. Interviews are carried out by a trained member of staff from the Central Interviewing Team.

The Central Interviewing Team will be made up of experienced curriculum staff and additional teaching staff will be available to support events when demand for

interviews is high. Interviewers will undergo training and will be observed when carrying out interviews at least once a year.

The interviewer’s role is to assist applicants as they consider their options and select a course that reflects their interests, grades and prior attainment. The course they select should build on prior achievements and experience and should support the future needs of the applicant.

At the end of the interview applicants will receive an offer pack which will include:

FE programmes	HE programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision Form</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of their Interview Record which will record any conditions of enrolment stated by the interviewer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of their Interview Record which will record any conditions of enrolment stated by the interviewer</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FT2 form allowing opportunity for the applicant to provide more information about support requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FT2 form allowing opportunity for the applicant to provide more information about support requirements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolment dates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolment dates</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire to gather feedback about the interview process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire to gather feedback about the interview process</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HE loans information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome Day or appropriate “keeping warm” event information</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FE loans for students aged 24+</li> </ul>	

### Higher Education programme applications

Applicants for Higher Education (HE) courses will be invited to attend an admissions interview, carried out on a one to one basis with a member of the HE Central Interviewing Team. These interviews are held throughout each academic year (November – July). The invitation process includes written invite with email and telephone contact to confirm attendance. Interviews are carried out by a trained member of staff from the Central Interviewing Team.

The HE Central Interviewing Team will be made up of experienced HE curriculum staff. Interviewers will undergo training and will be observed when carrying out interviews at least once a year.

The interviewer’s role is to assist applicants as they consider their options and select a course that reflects their HE aims and objectives. The course they select should build on prior achievements and experience and should support the future needs of the applicant.

HE admissions at Macclesfield College support the Higher Education Cheshire Consortium’s policy for recruitment, selection and admissions of prospective learners on to higher-level (HEFCE-funded) programmes. HE admissions at Macclesfield College comply with the Quality Code.

### Entry Requirements and conditions of entry (full time programmes)

Entry requirements are in place for all courses to ensure that the applicants are fully informed of the demands of courses and have a good chance of succeeding on their preferred course of study. Macclesfield College offers fair and transparent conditions of entry system and the entry requirements for all levels of courses are published in each prospectus and on the website.

In addition to the cross college entry requirements there are some courses that require achievement of specific grades in some subjects to ensure that the learner achieves the most from that course and this will be discussed in detail at the admission's interview so that the applicant and the interviewer clearly agree on what entry requirements apply. All entry requirements will be clearly documented on the Interview Record.

In some cases, the awarding body has pre course entry requirements which the College must enforce and this will also be documented on the Interview Record.

### **Offers of places for all courses**

Offers will be made in line with the published entry criteria.

Interview Record Forms will be provided as a three part NCR form and will be completed by members of the Central Interviewing Team or any member of staff needing to document an admission's discussion. The top copy of the form will be given to the applicant for their own records, the second copy will be returned to Customer Services immediately after the interview has taken place. The third copy will be retained by the member of staff conducting the interview for their own reference.

Incomplete forms or forms that do not comply with this Admissions Policy will be returned to the interviewer for amendment

### **Offers of places for HE programmes**

Offers will be made in line with the published entry criteria

**Conditional Offers:** When an offer is made which is dependent on meeting entry criteria at a later date the applicant will be advised of this and informed of the date that they need to provide evidence of meeting such conditions and how to then enrol. On receipt of these conditions of entry the College will confirm the offer and enrol the applicant. In cases where the condition of entry is not met the applicant will be advised of this and offered further IAG. The Student Services Team will be asked to offer support with the use of the UCAS clearing system if applicable

**Unconditional offers:** when an offer is made and the entry criteria have already been met the learner will be advised of this and given a date to enrol.

### **Part time courses**

Some part-time courses will also require interviews or at least discussion with teaching staff prior to enrolment. Such courses will be determined by the Curriculum Manager who will inform the Customer Services Team, and will be clearly indicated in the part-time course guide and on the College website using the graphics and icons that indicate "types" of enrolment. In cases where it is not necessary for applicants to meet with teaching staff prior to enrolment, the Customer Services Team will be able to enrol students, subject to payment of course fees.

In cases where pre-enrolment assessment is required, decisions about entry to the programme will be made by the teaching staff concerned. If the applicant wishes to challenge this decision the Curriculum Manager for that programme area will investigate and make a decision which will be communicated to the applicant along with explanation for the refusal / referral. Formal appeal can then be made to the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality who will apply a final decision on behalf of the College.

### **Applicants with additional requirements or special circumstances**

#### **Applicants with additional support needs: Learning difficulties /disabilities**

Opportunity to explore learning support options will be offered to all applicants. Applicants will be asked to disclose requirements on their application forms. If support at the interview is required this will be arranged by the Senior Customer Services Assistant liaising with the Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator. Support requirements will be further discussed at the interview between the applicant, admissions interviewer and the Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator. If learning support is required by the applicant a form will be filled in either at the interview stage with the interviewer or at a later date as deemed appropriate.

#### **Applicants with criminal convictions**

If an applicant declares a criminal conviction more details will be required before the interview takes place and the applicant will be required to complete a Criminal Conviction Disclosure Form. The application will be put on hold until this information is received from the applicant. A Stage 1 Risk Assessment meeting will be held to discuss the disclosure.

The Stage 1 Risk Assessment will be carried out by the Head of Student Services and Support, the relevant Curriculum Manager and teaching staff. If the assessment is agreed as 'low risk' by two members of the assessment group named above then the application will continue through the usual admissions process. If the application is agreed to be 'medium' or 'high risk' by two members of the Stage 1 panel the application will be progressed to the Inclusion Panel which will include the following members of staff:

- Head of Student Services and Support
- College Registrar
- Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
- Curriculum Manager

Final recommendations for medium and high risk applicants will be agreed by the Principal

Disclosures made at interview or at enrolment will all be referred to the Head of Student Services and Support who will make appropriate arrangements for R=risk assessment taking the late disclosure date into consideration

#### **Non-European Union students (or EU students that have not been resident in the EU for three years or more)**

Macclesfield College does not accept international student applications from individual learners.

## **Excluded students**

Students that have been excluded from the College's post 16 provision may usually re-apply for admission in the academic year following the year of their exclusion. This does not guarantee them a place at the College. For students that have been excluded from school, please refer them to the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality. The Cheshire and Warrington Consortium of Colleges has a policy on providing for excluded school pupils and special cases, which the College will follow.

## **Pupils of compulsory school age**

The College does not normally accept individual students of compulsory school age. However in cases where an application is considered the Head of Student Services and Support is responsible for the assessment of students. The College's policy on admission of such students is the Cheshire and Warrington Consortium of Colleges Policy on Providing for Excluded School Pupils and Special Cases.

## **English Testing**

Macclesfield College does not accept International Learners however it does accept ESOL learners and offers a wide range of courses to UK/EU residents who do not speak English as a first language. Some courses require a standard of understanding and communication in the English Language in order to successfully participate in and achieve the qualification. These courses will usually be of relative short duration, intensively delivered and in some cases the awarding body may specify a certain language level or speed of communication. The College will not allow admission onto the course if the appropriate level of English cannot be demonstrated.

In such cases the College will offer Initial Assessment of English and in cases where the learner does not meet the minimum accepted standard an appropriate level of ESOL programme will be offered prior to the start of the course applied for.

## **Refusal of admission**

In cases where admission to the College would be considered inappropriate the College reserves the right to refuse admission to an individual. In such cases the individual will receive a written letter of refusal and will be advised of the reason for the refusal and any time frames that may apply to this. Refusal of admission will be administered by Head of Student Services and Support or the College Registrar and must be approved by the Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality. Appeals against refusal of admission should be made in writing to the Principal.

## **Procedure for processing applications for full time courses for post 16 students**

This procedure covers the following stages:

- Application for a course
- Acknowledgement of application
- Interview
- Offer of a place
- Decisions about places
- Enrolment

The College uses ProSolution to record and monitor all student applications for all programmes.

### **Preparation for the applications cycle**

Curriculum Managers arrange for their full time curriculum programmes to be set up by MIS in the course files on the ProSolution system and nominate a central interviewing team to be responsible for conducting interviews throughout the year. At this stage Curriculum Managers must ensure that a course information sheet in the agreed standard College format is provided. This will be a condition of the course being approved by the College's SMT, and validated by the Internal Validation Committee.

### **Role of Customer Services**

#### **Customer Services will:**

- acknowledge all application forms received within two working days (website/online, post, in person)
- input all application forms to ProSolution within two working days of receipt and generate unique student reference number
- allocate applicant to an interview date and interviewer
- telephone and provide guidance for those who do not know what they wish to do or arrange a further guidance discussion with relevant member of staff within two working days of receipt. Such IAG appointments will take place within 3 working weeks of receipt of the request
- in cases where individuals wish to make multiple applications they will be contacted to ensure that this is the case and offered any IAG that may ensure all options are considered. Applicants will be allowed to make multiple applications and CIT members will be made aware of this
- ensure that the applicant is invited to the next available interview session (events are held monthly)
- generate applicant file in the subject area files held in Customer Services. This will include the original application form and a copy of any correspondence sent to applicant.
- generate applicant pack for lecturer who will be carrying out the interview. Pack to include copy of application form, copy of any previous guidance discussions, Interview Record Form, offer of place documentation, transport information, LSF information. Customer Services will have a stock of these packs made up
- Customer Services will keep Curriculum Managers and other key staff advised of the numbers attending the interview events to allow for any additional staffing requirements to be planned for.
- Customer Services will ensure that the admissions pack is handed to the interviewer on the day of the interview event. Blank packs will always be available from Customer Services.

- If applicants do not attend an interview, Customer Services will contact them. Re-arranged interviews will be monitored and a maximum of 3 appointments will be offered to applicants, if they fail to attend after these 3 appointments reason for withdrawal will be sought and recorded.

### **Role of the interviewer**

- Interviews will be conducted in accordance with guidelines established by the Head of Student Services and Support and College Registrar. The outcome of the interview must be recorded on the Interview Record Form
- The interviewer must explain the contents of the offer pack to the applicant and inform them that there is a FREEPOST envelope for their use to return acceptance forms to Customer Services, should they require time to contemplate the offer.
- Once the interview is completed and the offer pack has been issued to the applicant the interviewer must return a copy of the admissions tracking form to Customer Services along with the interview folders that are issued for each event.
- The interviewer must clearly indicate on the student tracking form what the outcome of the interview is so that Customer Services are able to take appropriate action.
- Regular observations of interviews will take place during the cycle conducted by Head of Student Services and Support or the College Registrar

### **Role of Customer Services after the interview has taken place**

- Record details of offered programme on ProSolution using the Interview Record form
- Carry out any further action arising from the interview using the Interview Record form such as request for additional support, information or referral to another programme
- Where necessary Customer Services will seek parental signatures to complete the FT1 – decision form.
- File copy of Interview Record form in the applicant's individual file and retain this until the applicant returns their acceptance form
- On receipt of acceptance form Customer Services will secure all details for that applicant together and retain in the subject folders in the Customer Services office until later in the year when the files are used to form the course files for curriculum teams
- A system is in place to monitor and chase decision forms
- The College Registrar will centrally coordinate Applicant Relationship Management activities and events that are taking place in curriculum areas to

keep candidates interested in the College and up to date on College news and developments

- In July / August of each year College Registrar arranges enrolment times for full time students then coordinates the invitations sent to all those that have been offered a place on a full time course advising them of their personal appointment to enrol. These invites are then included in offer packs for any additional applicants that apply after the mail out.
- College Registrar and the Head of MIS will meet frequently throughout the year to plan for the enrolment of full time students on GCSE results day(s). They will lead the planning of enrolment and will work with relevant managers across the College to ensure that efficient and effective enrolment systems are in place.

## **Recruitment of students**

### **Aim of the interview:**

The interview is a critical part of the Student Recruitment Cycle and is an opportunity to create a good impression of the College and it should be friendly and relaxed as well as informative and well planned and of great use to the applicant

As a minimum each interview should include the following:

- the student's preferred course choice and options that are available to them based
- the applicant's prior attainment or predicted attainment
- the implications of their choice of programme
- progression opportunities and career options
- the entry requirements of their course as per agreed College policy
- information relating to progression routes, HE study, career options and employability as a result of FE and HE study
- an assessment of the suitability of the programme given applicant's interests, goals and attainment
- support available for students, learning support, financial support, service support etc
- transport to College (N/A for HE)
- discussion of continued study of Maths and English post 16
- College culture and mission
- HE loan information if applicable.

### **Before the Interview**

For applicants aged 16-18, parents will be encouraged to attend the interview and will receive a comprehensive invitation letter explaining the process. If applicable, applicants will be requested to bring along to the interview the following:

- for Creative Arts courses a portfolio of relevant work.

### **After the interview**

Central Interviewing team members to return the Interview File with the copy of the Interview Record Form for each interviewed applicant to Customer Services.

## **Initial Assessment**

All applicants included in the full-time application process will be required to complete Initial Assessment. This process will not apply to HE applicants.

An Initial Assessment is not a condition of entry to the College but will form a part of the admissions process along with examination results and any other conditions of entry will assist curriculum staff in making decisions about suitable enrolment / transfer to a more appropriate level of course.

Initial Assessments will take place at the end of June / early July each year. The Senior Customer Services Assistant will coordinate invitations to applicants. The Initial Assessment dates should also form part of the College's Applicant Relationship Management campaign.

Additional assessments will be scheduled by the curriculum teams for late applicants to ensure that 100% of applicants complete an assessment

Results of initial assessment will be recorded on ProSolution and will be included in pre-printed enrolment form data for the main enrolment period

## **Progression of existing students**

### **Continuing Learners (Year 1 to Year 2)**

Enrolment for continuing learners will be managed from the Direct Enrolment Centre (DEC). The DEC will coordinate appointments where cohorts of learners will visit the centre and sign their pre-printed continuation paperwork.

### **Progressing Learners (Level to Level in the same curriculum area)**

During Jan – March each year all potential progression learners will submit applications for their next intended level of study.

Each curriculum area will carry out a version of the existing admissions process tailored to meet the needs of progression learners, which will involve an interview with the appropriate member of the central interviewing team.

The Senior Customer Services Assistant will work with the Central Interviewing Team to ensure application and tracking forms are administered correctly. Progression learners will not be required to attend an Interview Evening if they are applying for the next level in the same curriculum area. If they are applying for a new curriculum area they will be invited to attend an interview evening so that both applicant and parent/carers get the chance to explore their options fully.

Continuing and progression applications will be included in the monthly applications report and will always be identifiable as different groups to "new applicants".

### **Exceptional Entry / Probationary Contract**

If at the time of enrolment the Curriculum Manager feels that a case for exceptional entry may be made this should be referred to and authorised by a member of SCMT. If exceptional entry is agreed this will be documented on an appropriate form which will be attached to the enrolment form. If a probationary period is agreed this will be documented on an appropriate form – 3 copies are to be kept as follows:

- Student Services Student files ( for Learning Mentors)
- Curriculum team files

- Given to the learner concerned