

# Higher Education Admissions Procedure



Date approved: 09/01/2024  
Approved by: AMT  
Responsible Manager: Admissions and CC Manager  
Executive Lead: Vice Principal – Apprenticeships,  
Business and People

Applicable to colleagues: Yes  
Applicable to students: Yes  
Accessible to students: Yes  
Accessible to general public:  
(including clients) Yes

## Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:	Date:
• AMT	09.01.2024
• Students	23.01.2024

Procedure review frequency: 2 years

## **Contents**

- 1.** Scope and purpose of the procedure
- 2.** Accountability and Responsibilities
- 3.** Admissions Team
- 4.** Admissions Procedure
  - 4.1** Entry Requirements
  - 4.2** Assessing Applications
  - 4.3** Special Cases
  - 4.4** Decisions
  - 4.5** Non-Academic Considerations
    - 4.5.1** Criminal Convictions
    - 4.5.2** Disclosure and Barring Service
  - 4.6** Offer holder next steps
  - 4.7** Confirmation
- 5.** Extra, Adjustment and Clearing
- 6.** Applicants wishing to reapply
- 7.** Widening Access
- 8.** Reporting
- 9.** Appeals and Complaints
- 10.** Equality Impact Assessment

## **1. Scope and purpose of the procedure**

This procedure applies to all applications made by prospective students to any of Blackpool and The Fylde College (B&FC) full or part time higher education programmes regardless of background or characteristic with the exception of higher and degree apprenticeships and maritime employer sponsored degree-level programmes as outlined below.

Higher and degree apprenticeships and employer sponsored maritime degree-level students are considered firstly by the applicants employer in consultation with the College and therefore are not covered by the procedure.

This procedure takes into account sector best practice, statutory and legislative obligations. There may be occasions where this procedure will be superseded by the relevant policies and procedures relating to these obligations and requirements.

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## **2. Accountability and Responsibilities**

**2.1** The Admissions and Contact Centre Manager is responsible for ensuring B&FC has appropriate admissions procedures in place in line with best practice, statutory and legal requirements and that these are effectively implemented and monitored. The Admissions and Contact Centre Manager is also responsible for ensuring this procedure is accessible to colleagues, applicants and students and that appropriate training is in place for colleagues involved in making admissions decisions.

All colleagues involved in any aspect of the admissions process are responsible for following this procedure.

### **2.2 Admissions Team**

B&FC's Admissions Team are responsible for receiving and processing applications to our higher education programmes. Applications come from a variety of channels including UCAS, B&FC website, instruction (verbal or electronic) from current students wishing to progress from Level 3 to B&FC HE provision and paper forms.

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Team to enter accurate data onto B&FC's Student Management System and where applicable, UCAS. Admissions Officers assess all applications against published entry criteria as part of the decision making process and liaise with designated academic colleagues if a decision cannot be made on the basis of formal qualifications (referred to as non-standard applications).

The main responsibilities of the Admissions Team include:

- To assess applications using published admissions criteria, as set out in the programme specification, and, wherever possible, to make initial decisions on all standard applications within five working days
- To liaise with designated academic colleagues on non-standard entry
- requirements including relevant work/life experience and/or knowledge
- To correspond directly with applicants on admissions matters, where appropriate

in consultation with designated academic colleagues within agreed timeframes

- To liaise with Head of Registry on any international applications regarding UKVI requirements and funding eligibility following the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration UKVI Tier 4 Policy
- To be responsible, in liaison with UCAS and other agencies, for checking applications for evidence of fraud/plagiarism and for investigating and resolving such cases
- Periodic audit and review of application end to end process for each curriculum area
- To provide timely and relevant information at various stages of the process, to ensure applicants remain involved, updated and motivated prior to the start of the academic year
- To correspond with applicants in a timely manner when any changes to their programme of application occurs (such as those made during revalidation) in line with Consumer Market Authority legislation.
- To keep accurate and thorough records with a full audit trail
- To proactively liaise with curriculum involved throughout the admissions process to ensure admissions policies and procedures are strictly adhered to
- To be involved in the organising of any auditions, interviews, and open days as appropriate
- To be proactively involved in keeping up to date with developments in education which may have a bearing on HE selection and recruitment, and to participate in relevant training and development
- To monitor application data and update the UCAS system and other relevant sites to ensure that published course information is both accurate and consistent

### **3. Admissions Principles**

The leadership and management within Admissions drive six guiding principles which are inherent within this Procedure:

1. B&FC policies and procedures for applications, selection and admission to higher education programmes are transparent and accessible.
2. As a higher education provider B&FC uses fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enables us to select students with the potential to complete their programme successfully.
3. B&FC reduces or removes unnecessary barriers for prospective students.
4. Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.
5. All colleagues and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.
6. B&FC continually enhances widening access strategies and policies in line with local and national guidance.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Entry Requirements

Criteria for admissions are approved as part of B&FC's validation process and are set out in the programme specification and published B&FC's. Entry criteria are aligned to the B&FC's vision and values and those outlined in the Admissions Policy.

### 4.2 Assessing Applications

Applications are assessed and places offered on the basis of the academic and professional judgement of appropriately trained colleagues. Admissions selectors typically use the following criteria to assess an application:

- Academic qualifications (including prior and predicted grades)
- Relevant work/life experience and/or knowledge (where appropriate)
- Programme-specific criteria (e.g. audition, satisfactory DBS)
- International applicants requiring a Tier 4 visa – against requirements outlined in the Home Office UK Visas and Immigration UKVI Tier 4 Policy.

### Programme specific criteria

In addition to the basic criteria described above there will be specific entry criteria for some programmes. These are listed on B&FC's website and in programme specification documentation.

B&FC's Admissions assessment framework supports a fair and transparent process and includes the following three stages culminating with enrolment as stage 4:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Achieved and predicted qualifications and/or relevant work life experience and/or knowledge	Additional requirements such as successful interview/audition	Confirmation (achieving entry requirements in final exam results and non-academic entry requirements such as satisfactory DBS)	Enrolment

### 4.3 Special Cases

#### 4.3.1 Transfer to B&FC for part of an undergraduate programme

B&FC will consider applications from students wishing to transfer to B&FC for part of an undergraduate programme. In this instance the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Procedure should be followed. Applicants should read thoroughly the relevant sections of [Higher Education Academic Regulations](#) prior to talking to the Admissions Team who will, along with academic colleagues, work to support any applicant wishing to make an RPL application.

### **4.3.2 Applications to B&FC Top-Up Degrees**

Applications to B&FC Top-Up degrees from students who have completed a foundation degree elsewhere will not be accepted.

Foundation degree graduates who have not immediately progressed to a Top-Up Degree will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **4.3.3 International applicants**

B&FC welcomes international applications. Where an application is received, a check is performed to ensure the programme has the appropriate number of hours required by UKVI. If this is the case, the applicant is contacted to request further information such as a copy of their passport and any UK visa(s), copies of relevant certificates and qualifications, copies of their IELTS or TOEFL certificate and a copy of the follow-up international application. When returned, it is assessed by the Senior Admissions Officer in liaison with the relevant programme leader.

### **4.3.4 Applicants requiring additional support**

B&FC are committed to providing an accessible admissions process for all. Where an applicant has declared a disability or need for additional support, Admissions liaise with the relevant colleagues to provide information to applicants and support at events held throughout the admissions process such as open events, interviews and auditions.

#### **4.3.4.1 Applicants with a Disability**

B&FC welcome applications from disabled students and from those with specific learning difficulties; their applications will be considered on the same academic grounds as those of other students. B&FC will contact applicants who indicate a disability on their application and subsequently accept an offer. B&FC will invite such applicants to discuss their support needs with a member of the Student Support and Wellbeing team so that any necessary support can be arranged. The discussion will take place within 7 days of the applicant indicating they have a support need.

Further information may be found at: <https://blackpool.ac.uk/higher-education-learning-support>

#### **4.3.4.2 Applicants who have been in Local Authority Care (Looked After Children/In Care)**

B&FC welcome applications from students who have had experience of being in local authority care. Applicants who indicate they have been in care on their application will be contacted by the Student Support and Wellbeing Team to discuss any support or needs they may have. Further information may be found at: <https://www.blackpool.ac.uk/looked-after-children-and-care-leavers>

Applicants who have had experience of being in local authority care will also have access to a bursary for each year of study, a dedicated Higher Education Learning Mentor to offer ongoing support, regular one-to-one study skills and/or wellbeing sessions and other College services on a priority basis.

## 4.4 Decisions

Applicants will normally receive a decision within 5 working days (for standard applications) to 10 working days (for non-standard applications). Regular monitoring of admissions decisions take place to ensure continued compliance and fairness and alignment to relevant policies and procedures.

The following decisions may be made:

**Standard offers** – Admissions Officers will assess applications to higher education against published entry criteria. Where an applicant meets the criteria an offer will be made pending final confirmation of examination results and non-academic requirements.

**Non-Standard offers** – Where an applicant does not meet published entry requirements or where relevant work/life experience needs to be assessed, admissions will liaise with the appropriate programme leader with a decision being made within 10 working days (where the applicant has provided all information required to make a decision). If an offer can be made it will be one of the following:

1. **Conditional** – where an applicant has been initially assessed as suitable for the programme but still needs to meet the requirements, ; for example, not yet achieving a specified result with their current qualification
2. **Unconditional** – where an applicant has met all entry criteria an unconditional offer may be made. B&FC does not issue unconditional offers to applicants who have not yet met their entry requirements.

All applicants receiving an offer will receive a letter outlining in details the conditions of the offer. This will include the details of any specific criteria that needs to be fulfilled before an applicant can enrol onto their programme. It will include a link to B&FC's Terms and Conditions, the HE Admission Appeals Procedure and the Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Policy.

**Reject** – A standard rejection decision may be made – but is not limited to – the following reasons:

- Failure to complete the application form correctly
- Knowingly providing false or fraudulent information at any point of the application process
- Failure to attend an audition, workshop or interview or provide a portfolio (electronically or in person)
- Failure to fulfil academic or non-academic entry requirements, for example, a school leaver not having the required entry requirements, not providing satisfactory DBS or medical clearance before starting a programme or not providing evidence of securing relevant employment or placement
- Failure to provide evidence of qualifications they have achieved within a reasonable timeframe as requested by B&FC.

All non-standard rejections are reviewed by the Admissions Manager in liaison with the Head of Curriculum. All applicants who receive a reject decision will be provided with feedback as to why their application was unsuccessful. At this stage applicants will be

referred to an alternative course that will support them in their career or study journey.

Admissions will also record any decisions with UCAS (where applicable). UCAS will then notify the applicant advising them that a decision has been made and to log into UCAS Track.

## **4.5 Non- academic considerations**

### **4.5.1 Criminal Convictions**

Applicants declaring a criminal conviction will be assessed according to the [Appropriateness of Study Policy](#).

### **4.5.2 Disclosure and Barring Service**

Some programmes mandate a satisfactory DBS before starting the programme. This is set out in the programme specification as part of the validation process. In such cases, this will be made clear in any published entry requirements and in any resulting offers.

## **4.6 Offer holder next steps**

Non-UCAS applicants may accept or withdraw their offer at any time. This will be recorded in Dynamics B&FC's Student Management System by Admissions.

UCAS applicants wishing to select B&FC as their firm (first) choice, insurance (second) choice or decline an offer must do so through UCAS Track by the relevant deadline. UCAS will advise them of their deadline.

Applicants wishing to confirm their place with B&FC can do so in a number of ways and at any point after receiving an offer by:

- Logging-into their B&FC Admissions Portal Account
- Calling the Admissions Team
- Emailing the Admissions Team

## **4.7 Confirmation**

Before an applicant can enrol they must produce evidence that they have fully met the conditions outlined in their offer. This could include, for example, copies of examination certificates or a satisfactory DBS check.

Non-UCAS applicants must provide copies of examination results and any other required documentation set out in their offer directly to Admissions or the relevant programme tutor. This will be made clear in the offer letter. Admissions will then update both B&FC's Student Management System confirming or rejecting their application.

In some cases, examination results will be sent to B&FC by UCAS where an applicant has applied through UCAS and the relevant awarding bodies have shared this information with UCAS for us to access. Where this is the case, Admissions will update both B&FC's Student Management System and UCAS either confirming or rejecting the application.



Current B&FC students who have applied to progress to a degree-level programme with have their results checked by Admissions in liaison with the Achievements Team.

## **5. UCAS Extra, Adjustment and Clearing**

Applications received via UCAS Extra, Adjustment and Clearing will be considered in the same manner as any other application made throughout the cycle. However, there may be instances where there is insufficient time to complete all requirements (e.g. satisfactory DBS check) for applications received late in the cycle. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If it is too late to fulfil all requirements, applicants will be advised on the next start date for the programme and when to reapply.

## **6. Applicants wishing to reapply**

Applicants who are unsuccessful or who do not take up their place with B&FC are welcome to reapply. Previous admissions decisions will not be taken into account, however, there will be circumstances where the Appropriateness to Study Policy will take precedence.

## **7. Widening access**

Widening participation and supporting social mobility are integral to B&FC's ethos and mission, and applications are welcomed from everyone who could benefit from and be successful in, higher education. Our Access and Participation Plan outlines how B&FC will improve access to higher education and will continue to ensure different student groups are provided with the opportunity to perform the same as their peers.

Whilst applicants can disclose information at any point in the admissions process we encourage them to provide this information at the point of application to ensure we can contact them to discuss what adjustments can be made, what support they will require once they arrive and information about support such as scholarships that might be of interest.

## **8. Reporting**

Information we process about applicants will be used to manage their application and provide information about funding and/or finance they may be entitled to and may be shared with organisations that have either statutory or regulatory responsibilities for the educational sector and for analytical purposes.

This includes but is not limited to organisations such as UCAS, HESA and Student Finance England.

## **9. Appeals and Complaints**

An admission appeal is defined as a challenge to admissions decision. This may be a decision to reject an application or on the conditions of an offer.

An admission appeal is not:

- general feedback
- an expression of dissatisfaction with a service you have received from B&FC

The Compliments, Complaints and Feedback procedure should be followed in the above

instances. Further information may be found in the [Compliments, Complaints and Feedback Procedure \(Public\)](#).

Applicants wishing to appeal an admissions decision should follow the B14 HE Admission Appeals Procedure which may be found in the [Higher Education Academic Regulations: Part B](#).

Academic appeals for current students are covered under separate procedures which may be found in the [Higher Education Academic Regulations](#)

**4. Impact Assessment for the 4 strands of Equality, Safeguarding, Health and safety and Sustainability**

**Initial Form to be completed with Risk Assessments or as part of a proposal or change to a policy, plan or new way of working**

Title of Activity: Higher Education Admissions Procedure  
 Name and title of proposer: Liz Wilson, Admissions and Contact Centre Manager

New or  Revision  
*(tick as appropriate)*

**Equality and Diversity.**  
 Are there students, apprentices, other customers, community/stakeholders, and/or colleague concerns that the proposed policy, project or change may be discriminatory or have an adverse impact on people with protected characteristics?

A	Students/Apps/Customer	No	If so, how many individuals / which groups of are likely to be affected?
B	Community/stakeholders	No	
C	Colleague	No	

Equality group	Positive impact High Low None	Negative impact High Low None	Reason / comments for positive impact why it could benefit any /all of the equality groups	Reason /comments for negative impact /what could disadvantage any/all of the equality groups
Sex	High	None	This procedure is inclusive irrespective of sex	
Gender reassignment (Male/female/Non-binary/Transgender)	High	None	This procedure is inclusive irrespective of gender assignment.	
Age	High	None	This procedure is eligible to applicants 18+	
Race or ethnicity	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of race or ethnicity	
(Disability) Learning difference	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of difference	
(Disability) Physical and/or sensory	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of disability	
(Disability) Mental health need	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of disability	
Sexual Orientation	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of sexual orientation	
Religion and Belief	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of religion or belief	
Marriage and civil partnership	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of status	
Pregnancy and maternity	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of status	
Carers/care experienced	High	None	Inclusive irrespective of status	
Socio Economic deprivation indicators	High	None	Supports Access and Widening Participation Plan	

What changes or actions do you recommend to improve the service, project, policy, or change to eradicate or minimise the negative impacts identified?  
 Who will be responsible for monitoring these actions?

Have students, apprentices/other customers, communities and/or colleagues been consulted in the review / proposed change?

A	Students/Apps/Customers	Yes / No
B	Community	Yes / No
C	Colleague	Yes / No
	If yes, who and how many have you involved and how have they been involved?	

**Safeguarding:** Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a Student/member of staff/visitor to feel unsafe? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?

Yes  
 No

<b>Health and Safety:</b> Have any risks been identified? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks What are the benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Sustainability:</b> Are there expected benefits or impacts on sustainability issues? If yes, how have these been considered?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Evidence:</b> What evidence do you have for your conclusions and expectations for these conclusions? How will this impact be monitored for all these considerations?	
Is this policy of a high/medium or low risk?:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low

