



Admissions Policy

For entry 2024/25

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1. Policy Statement

1.1 The College is committed to ensuring an Admissions Policy that addresses the needs of potential students. The admissions process matches prospective students to the most appropriate course for them. Potential students are judged on their own merits for selection onto a course by the use of open, transparent and consistent entry requirements that relate to the course itself.

1.2 Whilst making every effort to match students to an appropriate course occasionally there are circumstances where this cannot be achieved, and students are offered guidance and support to identify suitable alternatives. Potential students will receive accurate information about courses; presented in a manner appropriate for them facilitating informed choice.

2. Scope of the Policy

2.1 This policy applies to those students on full-time courses up to Level 3, Apprenticeships and those on part-time courses that require a course discussion; it excludes Higher Education programmes which are addressed separately in the Higher Education Admissions Policy.

3. Key Aims

3.1 In supporting the Policy, the College will:

- Ensure applications are processed efficiently and effectively
- Match prospective students to the most appropriate course for them
- Identify the learning support needs of the prospective students
- Identify any other areas of support a prospective student may have, including those from vulnerable groups
- Ensure consistency of practice across the College

4. Policy Implementation

4.1 The College will process applications efficiently and effectively by ensuring:

- Students apply for courses by completing an application form, either online or in some limited circumstances in paper form.
- Course discussion arrangements are centrally administered through Admissions.
- Course discussions for full-time courses will be offered in line with a College calendar of dates.
- Applicants from key partner high schools may alternatively be invited for course discussions during in-school interview sessions agreed with their school.
- Where appropriate students will be given a conditional offer certificate on the evening of the course discussion.
- Marketing, Guidance & Admissions staff, Curriculum Leaders, Curriculum Managers and A Level subject staff are briefed on the application process annually.

4.2 The College will match prospective students to the most appropriate course for them by ensuring:

- All course information is accurate and clear.
- All course information includes sufficient detail on the course content for the prospective student to have a clear understanding of what the course will cover.
- All course information leaflets contain clear entry requirements.
- All students have the opportunity for an impartial guidance interview.
- All applicants for full-time and substantial part-time courses will have a one to one course discussion with an admissions tutor (for overseas students please see Section 11), either through a face to face meeting or online platform.
- All interviewers (Curriculum Leader, Curriculum Managers, course tutor, lecturer or admissions team member) use a standardised approach to course discussions, including standardised documentation and completion of an interview record summary.
- Students whose choice is unclear at application or at course discussion will be contacted and offered further guidance.
- Where a student is refused an offer onto a course or cannot progress to the second year of a course they will be given a clear explanation based upon entry requirements and eligibility.
- Refusal onto a course will not be on the grounds of one reference only. Where a reference is not satisfactory but students have demonstrated a commitment to their chosen course

through course discussion and have, or are likely to gain, the appropriate entry qualifications, a second reference and/or other information will be sought.

- Where proof of achieved grades or details of predicted grades are not available at course discussion this will be recorded as one of the conditions of the offer.
- Any applicant who is refused entry onto a course will have the right to appeal.
- Any applicant who is dissatisfied with the admissions process will have the right to make a complaint.
- Following interview all applicants will be offered a conditional place, an unconditional place or a guidance interview.
- Each student will have the opportunity to discuss whether they are on the right course during the first half-term and offered further guidance if appropriate.

4.3 The College will identify support needs of prospective students by ensuring:

- Students' support needs are identified as soon as possible in the applications process. This can include support for a learning difficulty, disability or medical need. In addition, support needs may arise due to issues of a welfare or Safeguarding nature, including those students in identified vulnerable groups such as Young Carers or Looked After Children.
- All students have the opportunity to discuss how their support needs might be met with a member of the Learning Support team, Health and Wellbeing Coordinator or Safeguarding Officer.
- All students' support needs are clearly documented.
- Applicants are told whether or not their support needs can be met and provided with clear explanations.
- Where students disclose other needs that may affect their application they will be contacted by a relevant member of staff.
- Under exceptional circumstances a telephone interview can be arranged. This must be with the agreement of the Head of Student Services.
- All applicants are asked to declare if they have a Relevant Criminal Conviction. If they do make a declaration they will meet with a Safeguarding Officer and follow guidance as set down in the Criminal Convictions Policy.
- For some students a Risk Assessment may be necessary, where appropriate the College may then use the Fitness to Study and Practice Policy.
- For some students who are moving between departments/subject areas a reference from a course tutor may be required alongside attendance, MSR records and any other relevant information that will assist the process.

4.4 The College will ensure consistency of practice across the College by ensuring:

- The Admissions process and supporting documentation are reviewed annually
- Awareness raising sessions are delivered to Curriculum Leaders, Curriculum Managers, Guidance, Marketing and Admissions staff.
- Reports are presented to Governors.
- Entry criteria are fair, consistent and well communicated.
- All information collected relating to IAG is confidential and securely stored.

5. Entry Criteria

5.1 Entry and Progression Criteria: 16-19 age group

5.1.1 Entry criteria are set as follows:

Pre-Advanced Level Programme – Entry to Level 2

Supported Internships	Successful course discussion, fulfilling the criteria for Access to Work support.
Entry Level 1 and 2 (Connect)	Successful course discussion, assessment and taster session.
Entry Level 3 (Aspire)	Successful course discussion and assessment.
Level 1 (Ambition)	Successful course discussion.
Level 1 (Vocational)	Successful course discussion.
Level 2	Level 1 qualification in a related subject or 4 GCSEs at grade 3 including English Language and/or maths.

Advanced Level Programme – Level 3

Level 3	Level 2 qualification in a related subject or 5 GCSEs at grade 4 including English Language and/or maths.
A Level Study Programme	A Level Study Programmes usually consist of 3 A Level subjects; the entry criteria is 5 GCSE grades 9-5 including English Language.
	Mixed Study Programme
	A Mixed Study programme usually consists of 2 A Levels and 1 BTEC A level equivalent. The entry criteria is 2 GCSEs at grade 5 or above and 3 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above including English Language

5.1.2 These entry criteria will be reviewed when further information regarding equivalencies and government guidelines are released.

5.1.3 The above lists the core entry criteria. Individual course leaflets and the School Leaver Prospectus identify any subject-specific entry requirements according to qualification. These subject-specific requirements are agreed by Curriculum Leader with the Curriculum Managers and include:

- Requirement for Childcare students to have both maths and English at GCSE 9-4;
- Requirement for Extended Diploma in Engineering students to have GCSE Maths 9-4;

- Presentation of a portfolio;
- 5.1.4 Previous qualifications must be in a relevant subject area.
- 5.1.5 Reference to English GCSE in the entry requirements means English Language GCSE.
- 5.1.6 If students are accepted on to a Level 3 programme with entry requirements of Grade 9-4 in English and/or maths and have achieved 9-4 in English or maths they must have a minimum of 9-3 in the other subject.
- 5.1.7 Curriculum Leaders/Curriculum Managers or Tutors must gain permission from their Director or Assistant Principal Student Experience, prior to accepting students on to a course without the requisite entry criteria and this should only be in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.1.8 In exceptional circumstances students applying for a sideways move (e.g. moving from one Level 2 course to another Level 2 course) may be accepted with approval from the relevant Curriculum Manager and the Assistant Principal for Apprenticeships and MIS. The student must receive a reference from their previous Curriculum Leader.
- 5.1.9 For many courses work placement is a compulsory part of the course. Course information leaflets will clearly explain what experience is required and the student's responsibility in the process of gaining experience.
- 5.1.10 Some courses will require a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. Certain convictions will prevent potential students gaining the appropriate work experience and therefore they will not be able to complete essential parts of their course. Where students have concerns about their criminal record they should declare them at the application stage in order that appropriate guidance can be given.
- 5.1.11 As part of the College's commitment to Safeguarding, all potential students will be asked if they have any relevant criminal convictions for sexual or violent crimes. Risk will be assessed on an individual basis. For more information please see the Criminal Convictions Policy.
- 5.1.12 Some discretion is allowed when considering mature students by the Curriculum Leader/Curriculum Manager. Where appropriate, advice should be sought from a member of SLT.
- 5.1.13 If an applicant wishes to gain entry to a course using qualifications obtained overseas then the College may need to apply for a Statement of Comparability on those qualifications before the applicant can be offered a place. If a Statement of Comparability is required the applicant will need to provide documentation including their original qualification certificate and transcript as well as an official translation of the documentation if the original is not written in English. Applicants who require a statement of comparability will be advised of this upon receipt of their application.

5.1 Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 of a course

- 5.1.1 For a student to progress and enrol onto the 2nd year of a course, for example from a BTEC Foundation Diploma to an Extended Diploma, they must have successfully completed all required 1st year components of their course to the agreed standard. For students on A level Study Programmes or Mixed Study Programmes this will include adhering to the Year 1 Exam process and completing mock exams in all subjects.
- 5.1.2 In place of a reference, students must have a report from their Progress Tutor, which comments on their attendance, ability to meet deadlines, disciplinary record and any other factors which may affect their ability to complete the course. If a student is not to progress to the next level, the Progress Tutor's report must clearly state the reason why they feel the student will not be able to achieve. Progress Tutors must be able to provide documented evidence e.g. MSR information, Case Conference notes, reviews etc. to support this.
- 5.1.3 Student handbooks must clearly state details of progression including the importance of attendance, meeting deadlines and completion of work.
- 5.1.4 If a student is unable to progress on to the next level of their course they will be offered a guidance interview to assist them in identifying their other options.

5.2 Progression Criteria (Next level of course)

- 5.2.1 For a student to progress to the next level of a course they must show that they have successfully passed all relevant components of their course at the appropriate level (e.g. pass, merit). Students must have the correct entry criteria.
- 5.2.2 Students will be invited to a progression 1:1 with their Progress Tutor and discuss the course they would like to progress onto. If a student is progressing the same curriculum area, then Progress Tutor will make them a conditional offer. If a student is wishing to progress into a different curriculum area then the student will be booked a course discussion with the relevant Curriculum Leader.
- 5.2.3 Student handbooks must clearly state details of progression including pass levels, the importance of attendance, meeting deadlines and completion of work.
- 5.2.4 If a student is unable to progress on to the next level of their course they will be offered a guidance interview to assist them in identifying their other options.

5.3 Under 16s

- 5.3.1 Applications from students under the age of 16 may be considered providing they have completed a full range of GCSEs (minimum of 5) along with meeting the relevant entry criteria. Where necessary guidance can be sought from the relevant Local Authority and/or funding agency.
- 5.3.2 The Assistant Principal Student Experience and Welfare must be informed about any applications from prospective students who would be under the age of 16.

5.4 Apprenticeships

5.4.1 Students applying for Apprenticeships must complete a satisfactory initial assessment for their programme and must have a successful interview with the curriculum team. Students must also be employed in a suitable job role. Apprenticeship employers may have additional requirements for the post, details of which will be provided on each Apprenticeship job description.

5.5 Access to Higher Education Courses

5.5.1 Candidates wishing to start an Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma are recommended to have GCSE in English and maths at grade 4(C) or above as universities generally require these qualifications. It is recommended that any relevant university entry criteria are checked.

5.5.2 Candidates wishing to start an Access to Diploma (Health & Caring Professions), an Access to HE Diploma (Business) or an Access to HE Diploma (Social Science) must hold GCSE maths and or English at grade 4(C) or above or if not held the applicant must have Level 2 equivalences in both maths & English.

5.5.3 Candidates wishing to start an Access to HE Diploma (Science and Allied Medical Professions) or Access to HE Diploma (Education) must hold GCSE maths, English and Science at grade C(4) or above.

5.5.4 Applicants who possess Adult literacy and numeracy at Level 2 will also meet the minimum entry requirements, however must be advised that not all universities will accept these.

5.5.5 Acceptance is also subject to satisfactory course discussion to ensure that each applicant:

- Has aims that match the programme
- Has the ability to benefit from the programme
- Has the potential to achieve

5.5.6 Students may also be required to undertake a short written assessment prior to an offer of acceptance being made.

5.5.7 Students whose first language is not English should have IELTS 5.5 or equivalent. Any learners who do not have a sufficient level of written English would be advised to complete relevant ESOL qualifications prior to enrolling on an Access to HE course.

6. Overseas Students

6.1 All non-British students are required to show their passports at the point of application. This is to ensure students have the relevant visas and are charged the correct fees.

6.2 The College is not currently registered as a sponsor, therefore we are unable to take applications overseas students who do not have residency and have not already gained the appropriate visa.

- 6.3 All overseas students who will be charged full fees will need to send a cheque for 25% of the course fee at the point of application. This fee is refundable if a student is not offered a place on the course, minus a £50 administration charge. This applies to full and part time courses. The remaining fees for full and part time students are payable on enrolment.
- 6.4 Students who are not resident in the UK are given an opportunity for a telephone course discussion.
- 6.5 As a result of any such course discussion students are offered either an unconditional place, a conditional place, or are sent a letter to explain that they have been unsuccessful. Unsuccessful applicants are refused entry onto the course based on entry requirements.
- 6.6 Conditional offers may be made to include a range of requirements including,
- Assessment of English Skills
 - Satisfactory references
 - Gaining or proof of relevant qualifications
 - Skills assessment or similar (if stated as part of the entry requirements for a course)
- 6.7 Where a student's first language is not English an offer may be made subject to assessment of their English skills, both written and spoken. The interviewing tutor will complete a referral form, which will be forwarded to the ESOL Curriculum Leader, who will then arrange for an assessment. Students must attend College in order for the assessment to be completed. The application process cannot be completed until the student has been assessed. If a student's level of English is not seen to be appropriate for their course the offer of a place can be withdrawn. Where appropriate students may be offered a place on a course on the condition of attendance at an ESOL class.
- 6.8 Where students have been assessed and need Learning Support Assistant e.g. support worker in class, this will be charged at the same rate of recovery as a student funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 6.9 All full fee paying students on a full time course, whose first language is not English, will be eligible for a place on an ESOL course (subject to availability).
- 6.10 Overseas students who hold a visa have their visa expiry date monitored. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the visa will cover the length of their course. If a student's visa is found to be invalid or has expired and they do not produce a new visa they will be removed from the course and their details passed to the Home Office. Any fees already paid will not be refunded.
- 6.11 Where an applicant wishes to gain entry to a course using qualifications obtained overseas then the College may need to apply for a Statement of Comparability on those qualifications before the applicant can be offered a place.

7. Appeals and Complaints

7.1 Where a student is refused entry onto a course or progression onto the next year of their programme of study they are given a clear explanation based upon the entry progression criteria and, where appropriate, a guidance interview will be arranged to discuss alternative options.

7.2 Should a student wish to appeal against this decision or complain about an aspect of the admissions process this should be put in writing to the Assistant Student Experience within 10 working days of receipt of the decision. Any applicant is entitled to appeal a decision of refusal of entry or progression.

- A complaint is a concern related to an administrative error, irregularity or maladministration in the admissions process and will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Complaints Procedure.
- An appeal is a request for a formal review of an admissions decision or condition of offer and will be presented to an Admissions Appeal Panel as set out in the following procedure.

7.3 Admissions Appeals Procedure

7.3.1 The Assistant Principal Student Experience will record and acknowledge receipt of the complaint or appeal within 5 working days. A College appeal panel will review the appeal within 10 working days of receipt. The appeal panel will consist of Vice Principal, Assistant Principal Student Experience and Director. Staff substitutions must be at the same level or higher as those stated. The student/applicant is not required to attend the appeal review.

7.3.2 Once the appeal is complete the following actions are taken:

- The applicant is advised of the outcome by letter within 7 working days of receipt of their appeal (although some variation may be necessary over the summer period)
- In the case of an unsuccessful appeal the appellant will be offered a guidance interview and any other support mechanisms available such as referral to Career Connect, National Careers Services or other suitable external agencies

7.3.3 In exceptional circumstances an applicant may be refused entry onto a course for alternative reasons, for example as a result of a risk assessment. Where this is the case this must be with the advanced agreement of the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Welfare. The appeals procedure will be applied as above but with substitutions to staff and/or paper work as appropriate. In some limited circumstances the Vice Principal, Assistant Principal Student Experience and Welfare, Student Engagement Officers or Head of Student Services may instigate the Fitness to Study Policy. If a student is excluded under this policy, the appeals policy for Fitness to Study will be followed.

7.3.4 Appeals will not be considered:

- about matters of academic judgement regarding an applicant's ability to study a programme;
- about an applicant's failure to satisfy non-academic requirements specified by external agencies for a particular programme (e.g. criminal records checks).

8. Monitoring and Review, Policy into Practice

8.1 The Assistant Principal Student Experience and Welfare will review this Policy annually, and governors will be asked to review and approve the policy on an annual basis. Monthly admissions reports will be reported to the Admissions Group.

9. Data and Confidentiality

9.1 All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

10. Relevant Documents

10.1 The following documents and procedures are available from Student Guidance or via the Intranet and Southport College Website. For clarification on any of the above points please contact the Head of Student Services, Vice Principal or the Assistant Principal.

- Criminal Convictions Policy
 - Disability Statement
 - Equality and Diversity Policy
 - Fitness to Study and Practise Policy
 - Higher Education Admissions Policy
 - Maintaining Student Responsibility – Academic Procedures
 - Maintaining Student Responsibility – Conduct Procedure
 - Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
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- In addition all College students are subject to all College policies and procedures which may be used in conjunction with or in addition to the Admissions Policy where appropriate.