

Policy/procedure title	Admissions & Recruitment Policy		
Review Cycle *Please specify	1 year	Responsible Department	Admissions, Business & Student Support
Procedure Owner *overall responsibility	Head of Admissions & Business Support		
Responsible Person (if different to above) *responsibility for communicating changes and staff training where appropriate	Head of Admissions & Business Support		
Types of provision this procedure applies to:	16-19 Study Programmes, Adult Learning, Apprenticeships Higher Education		
Revision Record			
Rev. No.	Date of Issue	Details and purpose of Revision:	
1	December 2024	New Policy	
2	December 2025	Revisions and introduction of applicant journey flow chart	

Equality Impact Assessment

Whenever a policy is reviewed or changed, it's impact assessment also must be updated. The Equality Act 2010 seeks to simplify discrimination law and introduced statutory duties to promote equality whereby The College of West Anglia must, in the exercise of its functions, pay due regard to the need to promote equality in relation to the protected characteristics.

Could any staff or students be adversely impacted by this policy/process? If yes give details and how this will be mitigated:

Date	Action and Monitoring:
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Dec 2024	No actions required
Dec 2025	No actions required

E, D & I Statement

This procedure has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment., Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual Orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this procedure to ensure that it allows equal access and does not discriminate against any individual or group of people.

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1. Aims and scope

The College of West Anglia is committed to a fair, impartial and supportive admissions service. Through high quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) the college is committed to ensuring all potential students are best placed to start and succeed at college.

This policy underpins our aims to:

- provide a fair, timely and transparent admissions service
- assess all applicants individually to ensure students are matched appropriately to the right study programme and that any additional learning needs and / or personal circumstances are considered
- ensure applicants receive high quality and impartial information, advice and guidance
- increase and widen participation in education and training

The policy and related procedures apply to all applicants and students on all programmes (including part-time courses, apprenticeships, further and higher education). **The college does not offer provision for elective home educated learners under the age of 16 at the start of the academic year.**

This policy refers to the whole applicant journey, from enquiry (e.g. at school, recruitment events and IAG), to a formal application, information session, offer, applicant welcome days or taster and enrolment sessions.

The college is committed to ensuring an open and transparent admissions process and that it meets its requirements under the Equality Act (2010). All applicants will be treated fairly and given equal opportunities to apply for courses.

Certain aspects of the admissions process may overlap with other CWA policies and procedures, including the [CEIAG Policy and Fees Policy](#). The policy is also informed by relevant statutory and Department for Education (DfE) guidance, such as 16-19 funding guidance, adult skills funding rules and advanced learner loans funding rules, all which are reviewed annually and can be found on the [government's website](#).

2. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

The college will ensure that all applicants are given access to appropriate levels of IAG from admissions, apprenticeship advisors and vocational teaching teams to help them decide on a course that best meets their current circumstances and future aspirations.

Marketing, admissions, apprenticeship advisors and vocational teaching teams will participate in school events throughout our catchment area to promote the college and advise potential applicants and parents (where relevant) on their options.

The college is accredited to the DfE's [matrix standard](#) for ensuring the delivery of high quality information, advice and guidance for the following departments: student services (including admissions staff), careers and work placement, apprenticeships, employer liaison and partnerships, commercial training and learning resources.

The college holds the [Quality in Careers Standard](#) for careers education & IAG.

3. Making an application

Applicants can apply online through a variety of channels, depending on their age, chosen course, and the local authority for their school:

Age	Channel
15 - 16	College website HelpYouChoose (certain Norfolk schools) MyChoice16 (Cambridge Area Partnership schools)
17 - 18	College website Student portal (applications from current students) UCAS (full-time higher education courses)
19+	College website Online college store (tailored learning courses) UCAS (full-time higher education courses)

Timescales for applications

For most further education courses, applications will open in the first week of September prior to the course starting (generally in the following September).

Many schools will set their own deadlines when they would expect their students to apply for further education.

For most full-time courses, we accept applications for up to a month beyond the start date or, if sooner, until the course reaches capacity. For part-time courses, we generally accept applications up until the course begins or, if sooner, the course reaches capacity.

We do not accept applications for courses which are at capacity but we do hold waiting lists for substantial courses, which, if a place was to become available, would be prioritised by date of interest. Potential applicants can declare their interest for full courses by contacting admissions@cwa.ac.uk.

Most of our courses will not reach capacity until they've already started. In the instance that a course becomes full prior to the start of term, priority will be given to existing students wishing to progress to the next level in their programme area (for example, from Motor Vehicle – Level 1 to Motor Vehicle – Level 2), provided they apply before the end of December and meet the progression specific entry requirements for their intended course. Applications from new students for the remaining spaces will be prioritised by application date (where the applicant has been offered a place and meets

the entry requirements). If an applicant does not engage with their application / enrolment in a timely manner (for example, does not book their information session / enrolment or action a request for further information, such as a photo of their grade transcript), their place may be lost to another applicant.

Application review

On receipt of application, the admissions team will review the applicant circumstances to determine suitability and considerations, including (where relevant):

- Age
- Intended career and progression opportunities
- Prior qualifications (or predicted grades, if still at school)
- Residency eligibility
- Learning difficulties, disabilities or medical conditions
- Disclosed and unspent criminal convictions (see below)
- Performance, behaviour and attendance on current course / at school
- Current location and available transport
- Any other disclosed personal circumstances which may affect transition to college (e.g. children in care, previously electively home educated, free meals eligibility etc.)
- Current employment (for apprenticeship courses)
- Eligibility to receive a course fully or co-funded (adult applicants) or for an advanced learner loan / student loan

Within five working days, the admissions team will contact the applicant with an update on their application. Following this review, the applicant will either be asked to provide us with more details (on a medical condition, for example) or be invited to attend an information session for their chosen course.

Applicants will manage their application through the student portal, where they can book information sessions, share more information, change their personal details and accept their offer of a place.

Applicants with learning differences, disabilities or medical conditions

The college welcomes applications from learners with a wide range of disabilities and learning difference and we are committed to removing and reducing barriers to learning and enabling as many people as possible to access the course of their choice. The additional support team will review each applicant's profile to assess any support and adjustment required to meet their learning needs and provide a supportive and inclusive learning experience.

When a prospective student has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), the Additional Learning Support team conducts an assessment to determine the support needed to address the student's specific learning requirements and whether CWA can effectively meet those needs. The assessment is informed by the EHCP and related documents and may also involve input from a variety of other sources, such as school transition reviews and meetings with the student, parents, and other professionals.

The findings of this assessment are used to create a tailored individual support plan, outlining the specific assistance the student would receive if they enrol at CWA. These support plans are stored on the student portal and are accessible by relevant curriculum staff (for example, course director, programme manager, skills tutor) and student support staff.

For students with an EHCP, local authorities have a statutory obligation to formally consult with CWA before naming it as a provider on the EHCP. CWA collaborates closely with several local authorities and is committed to adhering to this statutory process. In cases where CWA's assessment indicates that we are unable to meet the student's needs, the response to the local authority will detail the reasons for this decision. Should this decision be contested, consideration of further evidence or additional assessment may take place. The outcome of this may be to uphold the original decision or to confirm that CWA can meet the student's needs. The outcome of this assessment will be communicated clearly to the local authority.

[Applicants with criminal convictions](#)

Applicants are asked to disclose any relevant unspent criminal convictions under the [Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#) at application. Information related to convictions are handled as special category data and kept securely with access restricted to the Head of Student Welfare, Head of Admissions & Business Support and Assistant Principal Student Services. Details of convictions are not shared with any other college staff outside of this group unless there is a significant reason to do so, including vocational staff or admissions advisors making decisions in relation to admissions.

The applicant's convictions are risk assessed by the Head of Student Welfare in conjunction, where appropriate, with local youth offending teams (if the applicant is under the age of 18) or probation services. The college may request further information from the applicant through an online form.

This risk assessment will generally be completed within 6 weeks but may be delayed due to factors outside of our control (for example, a delay with liaising with external services).

Applicants or students who become subject to a conviction or commit an offence during their application or their students should inform the college immediately.

The college reserves the right to refuse an application for a specific course area if the conviction prevents progression in their chosen career path or refuse entry to the college if, following the risk assessment, it is determined that the applicant may endanger others.

[International applicants](#)

The college does not currently hold a tier 4 license to sponsor international students to study in the UK, we therefore cannot accept applications from international students requiring a tier 4 visa. All applicants who have not lived in the UK for the last three years are therefore assessed to determine their eligibility to be funded to study in the UK or to access an advanced learner loan / student loan based on statutory guidance. This may involve checking the applicant's (or their family's) status using a "share code" or asking for their passport or biometric residency permit.

All suitable further education (excluding apprenticeships) applicants who can live in the UK but are not eligible for funding to study will be given the opportunity to pay a higher rate to study their chosen course.

4. Information sessions / interviews and offers

All applicants for further education courses at the college will be invited to attend an information session / non-competitive interview with the curriculum team for their chosen course(s).

The aim of the information session is to:

- Help and support the potential student confirm that this is the right course
- Give curriculum teams the opportunity to sell their course and the college

On some creative subjects, the level of practical skill will be assessed by a review of a pre-prepared portfolio or audition.

For apprenticeship applicants, an information, advice and guidance session will be held for those without an employer to provide employment support and career guidance. Apprenticeship applicants with a relevant employer will be interviewed to determine suitability for the standard, their prior existing knowledge, skills and behaviours and complete an English and Maths assessment.

In most instances, the applicant will receive a conditional offer at their information session of a place based on them meeting or demonstrating that they've already met the entry requirements for their chosen course.

Applicants must accept their offer through the student portal to confirm they understand that they need to meet the offer conditions and that they intend to join the college in September. The number of acceptances are used to inform curriculum planning. Applicants who have accepted their offer should expect to hear from the college each month. Timetables, start information and details on how to complete their enrolment is generally confirmed and shared with applicants in May or June.

All applicants who have accepted their offer will be invited to attend an Applicant Welcome Day in the summer.

If an applicant is not offered a place on the course they've applied for following their information session, the application is referred to the admissions team and / or the Head of Admissions & Business Support to confirm the decision is fair and founded. Refer to the "Refusing admission" section for further details.

Further information about higher education courses

As with most higher education institutions, most higher education applicants are not formerly interviewed before being made an offer. The college may invite a higher education applicant in for interview if:

- the programme is newly validated
- the applicant is planning to relocate to the area
- we have further questions about the applicant's suitability to study based on their application (for example, personal statement, education history)

- the applicant has applied for a veterinary science or nursing degree at our Cambridge campus
- the applicant requests an interview

Higher education applicants will be contacted within two weeks of receipt of their application with an offer, interview invitation, a request for further information or a message explaining why their application has been unsuccessful with details on how to appeal that decision.

Offers are generally conditional to meeting the entry requirements for the programme but applicants who already exceed the entry requirements will be made an unconditional offer, subject to the applicant providing physical copies of their qualifications to show they've met the entry requirements.

All full-time higher education applicants must apply through UCAS and will accept or decline their offer of a place on UCAS. Part-time higher education applicants will accept or decline their offer through the student portal.

5. Entry requirements

All courses have entry requirements. These entry requirements are generally based on previous qualifications and differ between courses, programme areas and levels.

All level 1 courses do not have any qualification-based entry requirements, but applicants will be expected to demonstrate a good attitude towards learning, a willingness to progress and a keen interest in the subject area during their information session and subsequent applicant welcome day.

Accepting an offer does not guarantee a place on the course applied for; applicants must meet the entry requirements and upload a photo of their grade transcript during enrolment. If an applicant does not meet the entry requirements, an alternative course or course level will be offered. For example, if the applicant does not meet the entry requirements for a level 3 engineering course but does exceed the requirements for the level 2 programme, they will be offered a place on the level 2 (subject to availability).

Entry requirements differ for existing students, as many would not be able to achieve the external entry requirements. Existing students are expected to complete their current course (including achieving the relevant progression grade, e.g. a merit) and demonstrate a clear wish to progress and a commitment to gaining valuable work experience. For most level 3 courses, existing students will be expected to already have a grade 4 in English and Maths. Behaviour, attendance and performance will be considered. The programme manager will review all applications from existing students and conditional offers are not made until closer to the end of the course.

Entry requirements for higher education courses are generally based on UCAS Tariff points but exceptions may be made (please see below *Recognition of Prior Learning* section). An applicant's UCAS account will be updated in the summer once exam results are released to confirm whether they have met the conditions of their offer.

Recognition of Prior Learning (higher education courses)

The college recognises that knowledge, skills and behaviours come from different learning experiences and that some applicant may acquire through employment or volunteering. Whilst this process is primarily for prior learning to be counted towards the completion of a module, non-certificated learning (for example, skills learned in work or volunteering) could support an applicant who does not meet the general academic entry requirements for the programme. Affected applicants will be interviewed to determine suitability. For further details, please see our [Recognition of Prior Learning and / or Attainment](#) policy.

6. Refusing admission

The college has the right to refuse an application to study their preferred course. In most instances and if applicable, the college will work with applicants to find an alternative course at the college. For example:

- The applicant is unable to demonstrate the minimum entry requirements for the course
- The course is undersubscribed (and therefore not viable) or oversubscribed
- The applicant has a criminal conviction which prevents progression in their chosen career path

The college may refuse an application to study at the college altogether. The following reasons are examples and non-exhaustive:

- The college is unable to receive funding for the applicant based on their circumstances
- Following a risk assessment, the college believe that the applicant could be a threat or danger to employees or students of the college (please refer to *Applicants with criminal convictions* above)
- The applicant is not currently fit to study (please see [Fitness to Learn](#) policy)
- The applicant has a specific need that the college is unable to meet (please refer to *Applicants with learning difficulties and disabilities section* above)

If the college considers an applicant unsuitable to study, these reasons will be shared with the applicant in full with the opportunity to appeal. Appeals are submitted to the Admissions Team by email and will be responded to within 14 days. In all instances, the college will offer information advice and guidance to support unsuccessful applicants to make alternative arrangements.

Applicant Journey - Study Programmes

Pre-Application	<p>Year 10 taster days</p> <p>Students at our main catchment schools have the opportunity to try a subject at CWA towards the end of year 10.</p>	<p>School liaison activities</p> <p>Our school liaison team lead assemblies and attend careers or progression fairs at our main catchment schools to promote CWA as an option to year 11 students.</p>	<p>Open days</p> <p>CWA hosts open days in the autumn and spring terms. These give prospective applicants and their parents / carers the opportunity to explore the college, meet the course team and ask any questions.</p>	<p>Applying for CWA</p> <p>Prospective students can apply for as many course as they like. We accept applications directly through the CWA website or through HelpYouChoose (Norfolk schools) or mychoice16 (Cambridge schools)</p>
Application Assessment	<p>Review of application</p> <p>The admissions team will look at the applicants intended career, age, predicted or actual grade profile, amount of courses applied for etc. to help confirm that they've applied for the best course for them.</p>	<p>Request for additional information</p> <p>In some instances, the admissions team may request further information from the applicant, generally to be able to support their transition better. For example, this could be for details about a learning difference or disability, details to risk assess a criminal conviction, residency details to assess eligibility or attained qualifications / predicted grades. In most instances, applications will be considered "pending" until this information has been received.</p>		<p>Writing a support plan</p> <p>Applicants with a learning difference, disability, medical condition or mental health need will have a bespoke "support plan" written by the ALS team prior to attending an information session.</p>
Info Session & Offer	<p>Invitation to attend an info session</p> <p>Following the review, the applicant will be invited to attend an information session. Applicants can choose a date and time which suits them through the student portal.</p>	<p>Information session</p> <p>At the info session, the applicant will meet the course director on a one-to-one basis to allow both to ask questions and confirm that this is the best course for them before being offered a place.</p>	<p>Being offered a place</p> <p>The offer is normally conditional and will be accepted if CWA (and the course) is the applicant's first choice for September. Applicants can be offered places on numerous courses but can only accept one course.</p>	<p>Following the offer</p> <p>Following the offer, applicants will continue to be sent details about important topics (e.g. transport, equipment lists), what our current students are up to and will be invited to our applicant welcome days</p>
Enrolment	<p>Applicant welcome days</p> <p>Our applicant welcome days give new applicants the opportunity to attend a day in the life of as a CWA student; meeting potential classmates and seeing exactly what college is like. These welcome days are generally in June or July and are set in advance so applicants can save the date. These days are generally accompanied with a virtual Q&A event for parents and carers.</p>		<p>Enrolment</p> <p>Applicants will be able to upload a photo for their ID card, confirm personal details and that they're joining CWA. Applicants can upload a photo of their GCSE results which is assessed against entry requirements. Those who have not met entry will generally have the option of being enrolled on a lower level or discussing an alternative at our late open day. Applicants will come into college to collect their ID card and sign their enrolment paperwork after GCSE results day.</p>	