Higher Education Admissions Guidelines

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedures and processes in place to ensure the efficient management of the admissions of students to Higher Education courses at Vision West Nottinghamshire College. The guidelines have been informed by QAA’s Quality Code of Practice, Chapter B2: Admissions to Higher Education, and Supporting Professionalism in Admission’s (SPA’s) Good Practice guides.

1 Scope

The Admissions Guidelines apply to all applicants for higher education courses at Vision West Nottinghamshire College. The college is committed to providing a professional admission service and to the pursuit of clear, fair and consistently applied procedures that provide a good quality experience for applicants. The college aims to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students; the college will take into account the needs of students with learning difficulties and students with disabilities in the admissions process. To support this we have adopted five key principles that govern our Admissions Guidelines. These are to:

- Be easily understood;
- Be transparent and fair;
- Be consistent;
- Safeguard individuals and personal data;
- Treat all students and prospective students as individuals.

2 Responsibilities under the policy

Overall responsibility for Vision West Nottinghamshire College’s HE admissions and recruitment activity lies with the Director: Communication, Marketing and Learner Engagement. The Head of HE and International will oversee the enquiry, recruitment and admissions policy for HE. Day to day responsibility and management of admissions lies with the HE Manager and the Admissions Officer for HE applications. HE Co-ordinators (HECs) and Programme Area Leaders (PALs) have designated responsibilities at course level. The Admissions Guidelines will be reviewed annually.

In order to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency the Admissions Officer for HE applications will manage the admissions process with support from the HE Manager, the HECs and PALs. For each course, the HECs and PALs will be responsible for agreeing the specific criteria by which applications are assessed and admissions decisions will be made with the Head of School. In the case of applications from non-traditional routes or borderline applications, the Admissions Officer will refer the application to the appropriate Curriculum Manager (CM) for consideration.

All staff involved in the admissions process will have been adequately briefed/trained to undertake their roles.
3 Admission guidelines and offers of places for entry

Vision West Nottinghamshire College offers a range of full time and part time higher education courses and intends to provide clear, accurate and comprehensive information about its programmes and the services and facilities available. All applications for all programmes of study should be made using the college online application form. We welcome applications from all students with wider experiences, non-traditional backgrounds and any group under-represented in higher education.

3.1 Applications

The college aims to process applications efficiently and fairly, acknowledging receipt within three working days using the My Vision system. The Admissions Officer will initially assess whether the applicant has met the minimum entry criteria for the programme. If these have been met, the Admissions Officer will check the effectiveness of the personal statement in the application form. If the application forms are not completed in full e.g. the personal statement is too brief or provides too little information, the Admissions Officer will request further information from applicants via email, again within three working days. The Admissions Officer will discuss applications with PALs/HECs/CMs in all cases where the application is considered to be borderline.

3.2 Applicants

All students will be invited to attend an Applicant Event, at which there is a short presentation by the central HE team, followed by a group interview with the HEC and applicant interviews. These are designed to ensure that the applicant understands the nature and demands of their chosen programme, and provide an opportunity to visit the college, view facilities and meet members of the academic and support staff, as well as informing entry decisions. Interview outcomes are recorded on a standard template.

For some programmes an audition or portfolio presentation form part of the selection process, to provide each candidate with the same opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and aptitude for the programme of study.

3.3 Offers

After interview and subject to course availability, one of the following may happen:

- The college will offer applicants an unconditional place on a specific course;
- The college will offer a place on a specific course, conditional on exam results and/or approval by the partner university (UoD);
- The college will offer an alternative course;
- The application will be declined or rejected.

Whatever the outcome, letters will be sent within ten working days from the date of interview. All applications for programmes validated by the University of Derby are subject to final approval by the programme teams at the university.
Note: for Teacher Training programmes, approval from the university will be sought when the application packs are complete i.e. full details of the teaching hours and mentor information. As some applicants are not in receipt of a teaching timetable until early September, they should be made aware at interview that final confirmation of their place on the course will be after receipt of full details.

If an applicant is unsuccessful, the college will provide a reason why their application has been declined. There is no right of appeal in relation to the decision. However if applicants feel that the process has not been followed, or wish to challenge a decision to reject their application, they may complain using the college Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available on the West Nottinghamshire College website.

4 Eligibility

Entrance criteria for the courses conducted at Vision West Nottinghamshire College are broad and varied. Applicants will need to meet specific entrance criteria stated in the college prospectus and/or outlined at interview. Where appropriate, applicants may be asked to sit pre-entry screening assessment, and must fulfil the entry requirements for the subject/course for which they are applying. To be offered a place, an applicant must:

- Demonstrate his/her suitability for the course at interview;
- Be predicted to achieve the specific grade requirements for their chosen subject/course, as specified in the college prospectus;
- Where appropriate provide a satisfactory DBS check (Teacher Education).

The college reserves the right to offer an alternative course (subject to availability) that they believe better suits the applicant’s needs. The course offered will be based on the overall strength of the applicant’s profile, based on predicted grades. In some circumstances, students with appropriate experience will also be considered.

5 The College may decide not to offer a place to an individual if:

- The college has permanently excluded the applicant;
- The college cannot reasonably provide for the applicant within its duty of care;
- Previous behaviour, attendance, achievement, course completion or any other significant factor has caused concern;
- An applicant submits false or misleading information, or is later involved in misconduct on or off the college site;
- There are other circumstances that suggest that their admission may not be in the best interests of the applicant or the college.

All such cases will be referred to the Head of HE & International for consideration.
6 Equality and diversity

Vision West Nottinghamshire College encourages participation in its learning programmes by all sections of the community it serves, and regardless of their protected characteristics.

6.1 Disability

Vision West Nottinghamshire College makes every effort to ensure that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to follow a programme of study most suitable to his or her needs, with appropriate support. This support will be monitored, reviewed and changed as necessary. All students are provided with information about the Disabled Students’ Allowance at the Applicant Event and are encouraged to apply for the funding if they believe that they may be eligible. Support in completion of the application forms is available from the central HE team, (HE and International Advisor) and the college Additional Learning Support team.

6.2 Language

Vision West Nottinghamshire College will make every effort to provide support for students whose first language is not English, where appropriate to their needs.

7 Withdrawal or Suspension of Courses

The college reserves the right to withdraw a course or suspend applications for courses. In these cases, applicants will be informed and, where appropriate, suitable alternatives discussed with all applicants.