

DEGREE STUDIES AT WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Purpose To set out the processes for admission of students to Degree Studies at West Suffolk College and the means by which we encourage and welcome applicants with different educational and social backgrounds.

Scope This policy applies to all applicants and students of Degree Studies at West Suffolk College unless they are covered by the policy of their awarding institution. This policy is consistent with the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education.

Principles:

1. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College believes that a diverse community is an essential part of its core values, and that diversity amongst our student body enriches learning and teaching. We accept students with a wide range of educational experiences and qualifications.
2. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College operates a transparent admissions policy as detailed in this document. We are committed to providing clear, consistent, easily understandable and accessible information regarding entry requirements, selection procedures, and conditions of offer and fees which will support students in making an informed decision about their course.
3. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College publishes clear course information and entry requirements (reviewed annually) on the West Suffolk College website.
4. All staff involved in the administration of admissions and/or selection and interview of applicants undergo relevant training on admissions procedures and equality and diversity. Offers will normally be made within the publicised grade range.
5. When assessing the merit and potential of applicants, selectors may also take into account the context of academic achievements by reference to data on school performance.
6. An offer below the normal grade range may be made in exceptional cases where there is evidence that the applicant's grades may have been affected by individual extenuating circumstances.

Admissions Criteria

7. Admissions staff will be expected to use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual candidates. In exercising their judgement, admissions staff must operate in a way that is consistent with Degree Studies at West Suffolk College's Admissions Policy. Admissions selectors treat each application to the College individually and will normally consider the following information when making offers for undergraduate study, including:

- Academic ability and potential as shown in the qualifications section on the application form.
- Predicted grades for qualifications yet to be taken.
- The Personal Statement and Reference as indications of ability, motivation and

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potential, alongside information about personal circumstances and contextual social and cultural information.

- Related work or voluntary experience showing commitment to a chosen career.
- Extenuating circumstances, whereby factors beyond the student's control have caused the student to perform less well in his or her coursework or examinations than they might otherwise have been expected to do.
- Portfolio/interview/performance where applicable.

8. Applicants to certain vocational or professional courses may be required to pass an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and/or to demonstrate medical fitness to practice prior to being admitted. This is in order to comply with the requirements of relevant professional bodies. Applicants will be advised if these or any other conditions apply when they are made an offer of a place.

9. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College may request a DBS or medical fitness check for other courses, as part of the admissions process and as a result of information provided as part of the application.

Entry Requirements

10. Applicants to DipHE, Foundation Degree or Honours Degree courses, who are under the age of 21, will need to fulfil the general minimum entry requirements detailed below and any specific course requirements as detailed in our prospectus or on the College website.

11. It is normally expected that applicants will have had two years' experience of post-16 study.

12. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College welcomes applications from people over the age of 21, which takes into account life and work experience for all courses. Undergraduate applicants will usually need to provide evidence of successful recent study at Level 3 in relevant subjects, or relevant professional qualifications or experience. Applicants with no recent experience of studying may be advised to take an Access to Higher Education course first.

Honours Degree courses – minimum entry requirements

13. In order to ensure sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding we normally require applicants to have achieved a minimum of two A-Levels (GCE) or equivalent.

14. Certain courses will require a particular level of performance in a subject at GCSE, A-level or other examinations. These subject-specific requirements will be specified on the course pages of the website.

Foundation Degree - minimum entry requirements

15. Generally, applicants will be required to have achieved a minimum of one A-Level (GCE or VCE) or equivalent, and three GCSEs at grade C or above.

International Baccalaureate, Scottish, Irish and other Qualifications

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16. We welcome applications from candidates with a wide range of qualifications, including Scottish Highers, the Irish Leaving Certificate, and the International Baccalaureate. For further information about entry requirements, please contact the Degree Studies Office or UCAS.

International Students

17. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College welcomes applications from international students. International students must have entry qualifications equivalent to the general requirements for admission in accordance with National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) equivalences. The Degree Studies office can advise on the equivalence of qualifications where requested.

18 For students requiring a visa, Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will assess each Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) request on its individual merit. We are required to meet strict UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) conditions as detailed on the [UKCISA website](#). There are a number of circumstances where the College may be unable to sponsor a student by issuing a CAS. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Failure to provide the College with the necessary personal information to produce a CAS;
- Failure to pay a CAS deposit for a course of study;
- The proposed course of study does not satisfy Tier 4 requirements;
- The student does not have valid leave to be in the UK at the time the CAS is requested;
- Degree Studies at West Suffolk College believes sponsorship will put the sponsor licence at risk, or has concerns about the student's intention to study;
- Degree Studies at West Suffolk College believes that a visa application will not be successful. Grounds for this may include (but are not limited to) inadequate information, a history of visa refusals, insufficient funds, overstaying or language ability.

18. International students should be aware that Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will report to the UKVI any student who is issued with a CAS, but does not enrol, misses classes, stops attending, or defers their place.

19. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College reserves the right to refuse admission to international students who do not hold a valid visa for the duration of their studies.

English Language

20. To get the most out of their studies all students are expected to have strong English language skills. Students whose first language is not English will be expected to undertake a recognised English Language test in advance of commencing a Degree Studies at West Suffolk College course, Grade C GCSE or an equivalent qualification is normally required

21. There are a range of tests available for students from outside the UK to demonstrate their English Language proficiency. Applicants who require a visa should check the UKVI requirements to ensure that they choose an appropriate test. The minimum International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) (Academic) accepted by the College is 6.0 overall (minimum 5.5 in each component) for undergraduate courses. Other recognised tests include: the Cambridge Proficiency Certificate © and the Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English (B).

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Accreditation of Prior Learning

22. We recognise that experience counts and offer the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Certificated Prior Learning (APCL) as processes that allow applicants to gain recognition for skills or qualifications gained at work or elsewhere. APEL and APCL can help the applicant gain credit towards a wide range of qualifications and may reduce the period of study time necessary to obtain their chosen award. Consideration for admission based on APL will be given in accordance with the Accreditation of Prior Learning policy.

Entry to Second or Third Year of Programme

23. Applications will be considered for direct entry to the second or third year of an undergraduate programme. Applicants will be expected to have the standard entry requirements for the course as well as the appropriate number of higher education credits.

Deferred Entry

24. Applicants who would like to defer entry for a year should indicate this in their application. It is also recommended that they outline briefly on the personal statement their reason for choosing deferred entry. Applicants will usually be considered on the same basis as applicants for the current year of entry and receive correspondence from UCAS and Degree Studies at West Suffolk College during the application timetable for that year.

Criminal Convictions

25. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College aims to provide a supportive, positive and safe environment for learning and teaching. For this reason all applicants will be required to declare any relevant criminal convictions. The relevance of criminal convictions depends upon the nature of the course. It is important to note that having a criminal conviction does not automatically prevent an applicant from being accepted on a course, and for the majority of courses, only offences against the person of a violent or sexual nature, or offences concerned with commercial drug dealing or trafficking, have to be declared.

26. All courses that bring students into contact with children or vulnerable adults require applicants to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. More information may therefore be required about any criminal convictions.

27. Please see the Criminal Convictions policy for more information.

28. The following advice is given to applicants:

- Remember that only relevant criminal convictions have to be declared.
- Be honest about your criminal convictions on application and enrolment forms.
- Applicants who declare a conviction in accordance with the Criminal Convictions Policy will not automatically be excluded from the application process.

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- Information is treated in the strictest confidence and is shared only with appropriate staff on a need to know basis.
- If a criminal conviction is not declared and subsequently becomes known, this will be treated in accordance with the Student Discipline Procedure and could result in removal from the course.
- Any student who acquires a relevant criminal conviction during their course of study is required to make this known to the Associate Dean Student Experience. This may result in students being removed from the course.

Interviews

29. For the majority of courses, the College does not require candidates to be interviewed as part of its recruitment process. However, in some cases the College will interview applicants if it is felt that this is the best method of identifying potential for study, and/or where there is a relevant legal/regulatory requirement or guideline.

30. Some courses will carry out informal interviews as part of the application process to ensure applicants completely understand the course. Some courses will offer interviews in order for applicants to be made a reduced or unconditional offer. Interviews may also be requested on an individual basis by the Degree Studies office.

31. Where courses have a selection procedure such as interviews, applicants will receive details of the selection procedure in advance to ensure sufficient time for any preparation. Applicants with additional needs are invited to stipulate any additional requirements on their interview response.

Offers

32. Offers are usually expressed on the basis of UCAS tariff points and will include both completed and pending qualifications. Some courses may use methods such as assessment of predicted grades, reviewing of personal statements and/or references, written tasks or interviews in order to consider applicants for a reduced conditional or unconditional offer for study. Criteria for reduced conditional or unconditional offers will be agreed at the beginning of each academic year by the HE Management team.

33. Making an offer for study, which is subsequently accepted, is the creation of a contract between the Degree Studies at West Suffolk College and the applicant. Only trained Admissions Selectors are therefore able to make a formal offer of study to applicants.

34. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College reserves the right to amend or withdraw an offer of a place based upon (but not limited to) the following:

- If the student is subsequently found to have made false statements or provided inaccurate information or omitted significant information, including criminal convictions, during the application process;
- On the basis of information provided to the College after an offer has been made (i.e.

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via a reference or DBS certificate).

35. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College may report any application it suspects to be fraudulent to the UCAS Verification Unit.

36. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College may convene an Admissions panel to consider the suitability of any applicant to join the course at any stage of the admissions process. In this case, the applicant will be invited to submit a statement for consideration.

Additional Support Needs

37. The Degree Studies at West Suffolk College welcomes applications from students with additional needs and will make every reasonable effort to meet their needs to enable them to study at the College. Applications from students with disabilities and/or additional needs are considered on their academic merits in line with applications from all students. We would encourage all applicants to view the Degree Studies at West Suffolk College Disability Statement for more information.

38. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their likely additional support requirements with the College as early as possible to ensure that consideration can be given to any arrangements that may need to be put in place. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College is committed to providing on-going support with the focus on providing accessible services and supporting students to complete their courses as independently as possible.

Course Changes or suspension

39. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College reserves the right to make course changes, including changes to course content, structure, teaching and assessment or suspend a course, at any time between the applicants acceptance to 28 days prior to the date when your course starts, for one or more of the following reasons:

- To comply with external, professional, accrediting or other regulatory body requirements.
- To improve course quality.
- To ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the intended learning outcomes and/or standards set by relevant professional bodies.
- To implement external examiner and academic adviser feedback.
- To implement student feedback, for the benefit of students.

40. The College will notify you of any such changes as soon as reasonably practicable. If, as a result of a change made under this clause, you wish to withdraw your acceptance or terminate your enrolment:

- You must notify the College in writing or through UCAS, within 14 days of receiving written notification of the change;
- If you would like to be considered for another course, the College will use its reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative course within the institution (for which tuition fees may be payable) or suggest a suitable alternative course with an alternative provider;
- The College will provide you with a full refund of any deposit or tuition fee paid.

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Feedback to Applicants

41. If an applicant requires feedback on an unsuccessful application, this should be in writing to the Degree Studies office. This request will then be passed to the appropriate Admissions Selector. The College will not discuss the outcome of individual applications with anyone other than the applicant.

Complaints

42. Concerns that the Degree Studies at West Suffolk College's admissions principles and procedures have been incorrectly implemented may be raised through the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

43. Applicants are encouraged to view the Tuition Fee Policy and the General Regulations (Students), which sets out the requirements of students relating to Attendance and Conduct.

Monitoring

44. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College regularly monitors and reviews its admissions policies and procedures so that they are fit for purpose. The HE Management team reviews and agrees entry requirements on an annual basis in consultation with the curriculum teams.

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