

Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy

Document Summary

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1: Introduction

The aims of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy are to ensure that:

- a wide range of flexible education and training opportunities are available, designed to meet the needs of the community, both local and elsewhere
- opportunities to access and progress to higher-level study are developed in line with market demand and higher education guidelines
- adult learners have equitable and equal access to higher education
- a suitable learning environment is provided for all students
- students are recruited with integrity onto the correct programme and level.
- Students recruited have a reasonable expectation of success on the programme.

In line with the five 'Schwartz principles', the following are observed to produce a fair admissions system. The 'Schwartz principles' state that a fair admissions system should:

1. be transparent
2. enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course, as judged by their achievements and their potential
3. strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid
4. seek to minimise barriers for applicants
5. be professional in every aspect and underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and processes.

2: Widening participation

The College is committed to widening participation and encourages applications from groups of people who are disadvantaged by traditional selection mechanisms. It is proactive in engaging with community groups to encourage participation and raise aspirations for underrepresented groups, mature learners, care-experienced students, estranged students, disabled students, refugees and asylum seekers and students from low participation backgrounds. It is keen to identify alternative methods for demonstrating an ability to meet selection criteria, monitor admissions outcomes and student success by protected characteristics and take actions to address disparities.

The College's Student Recruitment Policy is compliant with all appropriate legislation. It also considers National guidelines governing the recruitment and admission of students (for example the Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code), the Fair Admissions Code of Practice, and requirements laid down by awarding bodies (such as proof of English language).

requirements effective from 1 September 2026 for students enrolling on BTEC study programmes).

3: Aims of Selection:

The aim is to attract and retain students from a wide and diverse community who have the potential to complete their programme of study successfully and benefit from the experience.

The College is committed to transparency in its admissions procedures. All applicable selection criteria are published on the website of The City College.

Selection is based strictly on academic criteria, vocational aptitude, and potential. No applicant will be excluded or disadvantaged on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The City College aims to conduct recruitment ethically and ensure accurate advertising, responsible use of social media, ethical outreach activity, expectations of ethical conduct by agents and protection from misleading information.

4: Selection Criteria:

The admissions criteria will consider institutional policy, national guidelines and relevant legislation. Selection criteria are reviewed regularly in order to ensure their ongoing relevance to developing curricula and teaching and learning practice. Evidence is gathered through a variety of means, including formal admissions interviews, prior certified qualifications, verified English language proficiency, and an evaluation of relevant work or life experience.

All applicants attend an admissions interview and must demonstrate English language capability at a standard that supports successful academic progression.

In accordance with Pearson Higher National quality requirements and Office for Students Condition B4, all applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency benchmarked to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) Level B2 to ensure a reasonable expectation of success.

Applicants are exempt from external testing if they fall into one of two recognised categories:

- Group A, UK applicants who completed at least two years of secondary education in the UK, evidenced by GCSE or GCE A Level English at Grade 4 or C and above, or official school records and a British passport confirming two years of UK secondary attendance.
- Group B, non-UK applicants whose final two years of secondary education were taught and examined in English, evidenced by graduation certificates such as WAEC or WASSCE alongside transcripts confirming English as the medium of instruction.

Applicants who do not meet these exemption criteria must provide an approved qualification certified at CEFR Level B2. The College does not conduct internal English tests, but admissions staff assist applicants who need to book an approved external examination. Any third-party registration or certification fees are payable by the applicant. Verified certificates are retained on the central enrolment file.

This policy should be read alongside the Access and Participation Statement, Admissions Appeals and Complaints Procedure, Equality and Diversity Policy, Conflicts of Interest Policy, Privacy Policy, and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

5: Communication during the application process

All applicants are asked to inform the College about disabilities, specific learning differences (SpLDs), long-term medical conditions or mental health issues when they apply for their course in order to discuss the support which may be required. There are other opportunities to disclose conditions – during interview, induction and when completing student forms.

Applicants who disclose a need for further support are assured that the information provided will be treated with sensitivity and in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy.

Early disclosure is encouraged so support can be put in place both during the application stage and before a student begins their course. The College will consider any requests for reasonable adjustments at the interview stage.

6: Administration of the admission process

All College staff involved in the admissions process are briefed carefully on the information to cover with prospective students during the interview process, as well as the areas of experience, qualifications, and aspirations to be explored as part of the interview.

All College staff are careful to note the potential need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants. In order to facilitate applications, admissions staff may seek further information from the candidate and/or colleagues as appropriate.

In addition, the following information is collected in the applicant's enrolment record:

- Personal details
- Next of kin contact details
- Residency status
- Photographic ID
- Equal opportunities monitoring information, including declared disabilities, learning differences, or support requirements
- Funding and finance information

- Criminal convictions declaration
- Qualifications and education history
- Work and relevant experience history
- English language ability
- Programme registration details
- Expected date of completion
- Mode of study (e.g. full-time, part-time)

7: Support for Disabled Applicants and Students

The College welcomes applications from disabled individuals and neurodivergent learners. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the College operates an anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments throughout recruitment, admissions, and course delivery.

Applicants are encouraged to disclose any physical condition, mental health condition, sensory impairment, or specific learning difference at the earliest stage. Early disclosure allows the Student Welfare Officer to discuss support arrangements, coordinate access requirements, and advise eligible students on applying for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA).

Where recruitment procedures take place, reasonable adjustments are implemented to remove disadvantage. Following enrolment, the College works with the student to establish an Individual Support Plan, ensuring confidential communication with academic staff where the student consents.

All disability disclosures are processed confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

8: Admissions to Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes

Applicants aged 21 years or over at the start of the programme who have had a break from formal education are considered as mature applicants. While mature applicants may not hold standard Level 3 entry credentials, they must demonstrate the academic potential and vocational capability to succeed at Higher National level (Level 4 and Level 5). Selection is determined through an assessment of prior certified learning, relevant work or professional experience, an admissions interview, and verified English language proficiency in accordance with the requirements set out in Section 4.

For those under 21 who have recently been in education, the entry profile has to include a Level 2 and 3 qualification or the equivalent:

- A relevant BTEC Level 3 qualification
- A GCSE Advanced Level profile that demonstrates strong performance in a relevant subject or adequate performance in more than one GCE subject. This profile is likely

to be supported by GCSE grades A* to C and/or 9 to 4 (or equivalent) in subjects such as Maths and English



- Other related Level 3 qualifications
- An Access to Higher Education Diploma awarded by an approved further education institution
- An international equivalent of the above.

Applications are made either directly to the College or through an educational consultant. All applications are treated the same regardless of their origin. All applicants meeting academic or vocational entry profiles attend a formal admissions interview. Applicants must also satisfy the English language proficiency requirements outlined in Section 4. Where an applicant requires an approved external English examination, admissions staff provide guidance on booking, and the application remains conditional upon receipt of verified test results.

All applicants, and/or their educational consultant (where applicable), will be informed of the outcome normally within two working days.

9: Admissions for Acupuncture and Tui Na programmes

The entry profile of an applicant gaining admission to the Acupuncture or Tui Na programmes normally includes:

- Five GCSE qualifications including English Language at grade C (minimum)
- A/ AS level qualifications totalling 120 UCAS points
- Undergraduate degree

Applicants to the Tui Na programme would have typically completed an Acupuncture programme previously.

In addition, applicants are required to submit a 400-500-word personal statement detailing why the applicant would like to study at The City College of Acupuncture.

Applicants meeting these requirements will be invited for an interview that assesses a variety of key features, including, for example, commitment, life experience, empathy, compassion and people skills. Career changers will have the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate life experience or interests that they have built on in place of academic qualifications.

The interview focuses on application details and highlights the requirements of the programme. There are four principal aspects:

- **Commitment:** The applicant must be clear that studying any form of Chinese Medicine takes commitment. In order to be accepted onto the programme, the applicant must fully understand and agree with the demands of the programme.

- Requirements: To be accepted onto a British Acupuncture Accreditation Board (BAAB) accredited programme, we may only take people onto the programme who we believe have a reasonable chance of becoming a practitioner
- Practical Skills: Acupuncture and Tui na are practical skills, and applicants wishing to acquire these skills must be willing to participate by also being a model and working with other students
- Reflectivity and aptitude: Students training to become therapists will need to be willing and able to engage in self-reflection.

All applicants who complete a successful admissions interview must provide verified proof of English language proficiency at GCSE Grade 4 or C minimum, or an approved external qualification benchmarked to CEFR Level B2, in accordance with British Acupuncture Accreditation Board standards.

10: Interviews and offers

Applicants who are asked to attend an interview are seen by a member of staff who has been briefed and trained in interviewing prospective students. All interviewers use an Interview checklist to ensure consistency across different interviewers. Interviewers will make notes during the interview (and immediately afterwards), and all applications will be discussed between at least two members of staff to reach one of the following decisions:

- To make an offer of a place on the applicant's chosen course
- To reject the application but offer a place on an alternative course. The reasons for rejection and offering another course will be detailed in a letter to the applicant
- To reject the application outright, communicating this decision to the applicant as appropriate.

During the Admissions procedure, the College aims to provide sufficient information about the College and course so that applicants may make an informed decision about the appropriateness of their chosen course as well as basic information on applying for a student loan where applicable. All admissions decisions are notified to the applicant or educational consultant (where applicable) normally within two working days.

11: Fraudulent Statements.

Admission to the College is subject to applicants disclosing all facts and information relevant to their application.

If during the course of consideration of an application, an applicant is discovered to have omitted any information requested in the instructions or the application form or made any misrepresentation(s) therein or given false information, the College reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place and/or dismiss the application.

12: Appealing an Admissions Decision

An applicant has the right to appeal where they feel that the decision made was wrong. In such instances, the applicant must present relevant documentation or evidence to substantiate the grounds for reconsideration. Where a decision is overturned, an offer of a place will only be made subject to space on the course. (Otherwise, an alternative intake will be offered). Course places will not be held pending the resolution of an appeal.

If an applicant wishes to complain about the Admissions Procedure / Outcome on the basis of being treated unfairly, they must make the complaint in accordance with the Admissions Appeals and Complaints procedure which is available separately.

13: Applicants seeking deferred entry

The College considers applicant requests for deferred entry for up to 12 months. Where course timetabling, cohort viability, or exceptional circumstances require an intake adjustment, the College may offer a deferred start date, subject to mutual agreement with the applicant.

14: Procedure for applicants disclosing a criminal record.

Applicants are asked to declare any criminal record so they can be advised on the advisability of their chosen course. In addition, the College has the duty to ensure the safety of its student and staff community. If the College considers that any applicant could cause harm to self or others, the College has the right not to accept the applicant or exclude a current student who poses this sort of threat.

15: Data Protection.

All staff process, store, and retain admissions data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and institutional privacy notices.

16: Student finance

Applicants should please note:

- The fee details are included on the website, which is the most up-to-date information
- If students are self-financing, they are expected to pay 100% of fees before the start of each year of their course or to enter into an instalment agreement with the College at the College's discretion (this service attracts an additional fee)
- If students are financed through Student Finance England, they must be able to demonstrate that they have made an application before the start of their study programme. Proof might include any correspondence for Student Finance England showing the amount and schedule of their payment.
- If students are unsure about how to go about the application process, then a member of staff will advise them.

17: Availability of Information

All the information given to prospective students at the interview stage is also available on The City College and The City College of Acupuncture websites, as is an overview of the selection process.

18: Admissions monitoring

The Academic Board of The City College has oversight of, and responsibility for, all matters regarding admissions and student recruitment.

19. Further Information and Resources

For additional details and best practice guidelines on Student Recruitment, please refer to the following sources:

Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code

[UK Quality Code](#)

The Fair Admissions Code of Practice – Universities UK

[Fair admissions code of practice](#)