

Askham Bryan College

QA4a Higher Education Admissions Policy

Review due August 2018

Contents

1. Scope and Purpose	2
2. Responsibilities	2
3. Entry requirements	3
4. Applications	4
5. Post-Application.....	6
6. Students with additional learning support needs or disabilities.....	7
7. Applicants with criminal convictions	8
8. Decisions and Complaints	9

1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1. Askham Bryan College is committed to providing an outstanding education for its students. The Corporation of Askham Bryan College recognises that it has a responsibility to uphold the law and to safeguard the welfare of all stakeholders in respect of equality of access to learning irrespective of disability, level of prior learning or ethnic background.
- 1.2. This policy recognises both this commitment to an outstanding education and the need to ensure equality of access. It is informed by the requirements of the QAA Quality Code (specifically Part B: Chapter B2: Admissions) and guidance provided by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA). The Policy ensures that the College works within the guidance for Higher Education providers published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to ensure that applicants are provided with all the information they need to make an informed decision about their course of study, under extant consumer rights regulations. This includes the guidance issued by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in March 2017 *Good practice guide on publishing information for prospective undergraduate students*). The College also refers to the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) guidelines in relation to undergraduate admissions, and guidance issued by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in March 2017 *Good practice guide on publishing information for prospective undergraduate students*).
- 1.3. This policy is applicable up to the point at which a student commences their course of study. Students are thereafter required to refer to the College's website for the policies and arrangements which apply during the course of their studies.
- 1.4. The Corporation accepts that the provision of accurate and appropriate pre-entry information and support is fundamental to ensuring applicants are admitted to the College at the appropriate level with suitably tailored support. The College will make every effort to identify and provide suitable support for students with disabilities, subject to their fitness to study and where relevant, fitness to practise.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1. The Academic Board receives an annual report on the admission of students on to the College's higher education programmes, at the end of each admissions cycle. Regular interim reports throughout the cycle are also provided.
- 2.2. The **Director of Higher Education** has strategic responsibility for admissions to the University's taught courses. Operational responsibility for the implementation of this policy is delegated to the Head of Higher Education Operations and the Student Records Manager, who manage the teams responsible for undergraduate admissions, and also liaise closely with course managers for each programme.

- 2.3. Course Managers judge the potential of each applicant to succeed on programmes, taking into account qualifications, relevant experience and, for some courses, an interview through which applicant's interests, understanding and motivation for study are assessed. Interviews are compulsory for some programmes.
- 2.4. Applicants are responsible for financing their programme of study. Students are expected to have sufficient funds to pay course fees and living expenses during their period of study, and are asked to provide details of funding arrangements on the application form and during the enrolment process. All Applicants are strongly advised to contact Student Finance England to discuss their eligibility for a fee loans and grants prior to applications.

3. Entry requirements

- 3.1. The College's typical academic entry requirements and the details of its academic programmes are published annually in its prospectus and on the College website at <http://www.askham-bryan.ac.uk/>. The College also provides information on the UCAS website (www.ucas.ac.uk).
- 3.2. The College regularly reviews its typical academic entry requirements and aims to consider a wide range of qualifications for entry to higher education programmes. Applicants are advised to check individual course requirements, for whilst a wide range of subjects may be suitable for entry onto our courses, in some cases there are specific subjects or combinations of subjects which we believe will provide the best preparation for study on a particular course. The College welcomes applications from those who are returning to education, who do not have specified formal qualifications and those who are not applying directly from or within a year of leaving school or college. Non-standard qualifications are also considered and applicants may request work or life experience to be taken into account as part of their submission.
- 3.3. The College recognises that some applicants may have faced individual circumstances that have impacted on their ability to complete qualifications to the standard usually required for admission to a higher education programme. These mitigating circumstances may have had a serious and demonstrable impact on an applicant's ability to complete particular qualifications or achieve the grades of which they are academically capable. The College will assess all applications on an individual basis and where evidence of the impact of these circumstances can be provided in the academic reference or in a separate letter from another relevant professional, this may be taken into account as part of the decision making process. The College's decision in these cases remains final. Some applicants may be able to transfer credit for previous learning or claim credit for some elements of the course (Accreditation of Prior Learning).
- 3.4. Applicants that have already achieved a higher education qualification and want to study another course at an equivalent or lower level, are classed by

the Government as having 'Equivalent or Lower Qualifications' (ELQ) status. At Askham Bryan College this effectively means that applicants that have already achieved a Bachelors degree and wish to study another course at Bachelors level may not be eligible for a student loan or associated grants or loans.

- 3.5. The College reserves the right to verify the result of any examination that is not supplied by UCAS through the Awarding Bodies Linkage (ABL). Where we do not receive results directly from UCAS, applicants should expect to provide evidence of their qualifications directly to the College.

4. Applications

- 4.1. All applications should be via UCAS and the College observes the rules and procedures laid down by UCAS. More information about applying through UCAS and application deadlines can be found at www.ucas.ac.uk.
- 4.2. The College abides by UCAS rules and procedures concerning fraudulent applications. Any application suspected by the College to contain fraudulent information will be referred to UCAS. By signing an application form or by submitting one through UCAS, applicants are declaring that the information they are providing is complete, true and accurate. This declaration is also included within the enrolment agreement which all students are required to sign when they commence
- 4.3. The College reserves the right to cancel or withdraw any offer made on the basis of an application that has been found to contain fraudulent information. Any student found to have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information may be suspended pending an investigation, which could result in the student being permanently excluded from the College and have their studies terminated.
- 4.4. As part of the UCAS application process all personal statements are checked for potential plagiarism. UCAS will notify both the College and the applicant if they feel that there are reasonable grounds to suspect potential plagiarism. The College reviews all cases of potential plagiarism individually and may contact an applicant for more information about the situation before making a decision. The College reserves the right to reject an application on the basis of plagiarism in a personal statement
- 4.5. Applicants for programmes other than Veterinary Nursing will not normally be required to attend an interview unless there is a perceived need for personalised discussion with any individual applicant. All potentially suitable undergraduate applicants for Veterinary Nursing are normally invited for interview in person, on campus. All applicants for Veterinary Nursing courses are required to attend the College, in person, for an interview.

- 4.6. Some programmes, such as Veterinary Nursing, require applicants to have a minimum amount of work experience before they are admitted onto the programme. This is clearly articulated within the programme entry requirements. Any expected work experience must be completed by the deadlines set at interview, as we cannot guarantee confirmation of any place without this.
- 4.7. For applications onto Veterinary Nursing programmes, the College is also required to comply with guidance produced by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) in relation to admission of students onto Veterinary Nursing programmes. This is to ensure their fitness to practise and complete study on an accredited programme. As a qualifications body, the RCVS sets out its own competences and standards, to ensure a professional standard is applied equally to all applicants to ensure they are competent to perform in the role of a veterinary nurse. The College may seek advice from the RCVS and/or the validating partner university if there is any doubt over the suitability of an applicant for the accredited programme. The College must also consider any long-term or serious illnesses which may prevent applicants from practising as a veterinary nurse. Whilst the College is committed to making reasonable adjustment to allow students to succeed, the College must also ensure that these adjustments do not exceed what would be acceptable within a veterinary working environment.
- 4.8. All applications are reviewed on an individual basis. While the majority of offers made are within the range of the published entry requirements, the College retains the right to use its discretion to offer places exceptionally to applicants who sit outside of the normal entry qualification range.
- 4.9. As a routine part of the admissions process, applicants may be required to provide further information regarding their work experience, or proof of their qualifications, before their applications can be fully considered. All applicants are therefore advised to regularly check their emails following the submission of their application, as this is the primary communication route that the College uses with students. Applicants should also ensure that the University is informed of any changes to contact details.
- 4.10. Specific programmes may require applicants to provide evidence of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure, to ensure students are suitable to have specified contact with children or vulnerable adults. In particular, this will apply to applicants to programmes involving placements settings with specified contact with children or vulnerable adults. Applicants to specific programmes will be required to apply for a DBS disclosure.
- 4.11. Applications for deferred entry considered at the same time as all other applicants in that application year. Deferred applicants must have their offer conditions satisfied within the same application year and cannot carry conditions over into the following one. If an applicant wishes to defer, or has applied for deferred entry and subsequently wishes to join in the application year, they need to contact the Student Records team to inform them of this decision. Students are subject to the fee liabilities of their year of entry cohort, rather than the admissions cycle in which they gained a place.

4.12. Where an applicant is made an offer(s), they will receive details of how this, should they accept it, forms a contract between themselves and the University. Applicants are advised to read this information in full and ensure that they understand it before they make any decisions. The contract information also includes details on how to cancel the contract after a 'cooling off' period. For undergraduate students, there is also a period of time where changes to decisions are permitted under the rules of the UCAS scheme.

4.13. The College reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who have not met the minimum entry requirements or who cannot meet the conditions articulated in their offer. The College will endeavour to offer an alternative course to applicants where appropriate, subject to places being available, but this may not be possible in all cases.

4.14. International applicants are also welcomed. International qualifications are evaluated by referring to independently published guides such as UK NARIC database. In addition applicants will need to demonstrate that they have sufficient command of the English language to enable them to undertake study in the UK and meet the College's minimum requirements and those of the Home Office for students requiring a Tier 4 visa. For International students requiring a Tier 4 visa, the College will conduct full checks on applicants history to ensure that the College is able to make an offer to an applicant within UKVI visa sponsorship rules.

5. Post-Application

5.1. Applicants receiving an offer - either conditional or unconditional - will be able to view the College's decision online using UCAS Track. All successful applicants will be sent a letter from the College confirming that they have been offered a place. If an applicant who has received a conditional offer fulfils the conditions of the offer as specified, or if the College accepts an applicant on the basis of satisfactory academic performance, then an unconditional offer will then be transmitted to UCAS. Applicants will again be able to view the College's decision using UCAS Track.

5.2. Applicants may be made an offer for an alternative programme if the College decides that it is unable to offer a place on the original programme to which an applicant has applied, but is able to make an offer for an alternative degree programme. In this situation the College will contact to the applicant to confirm that they wish to be made the offer for the alternative programme.

5.3. Applicants who do not meet the requirements of their original offer may also be made an offer of an alternative programme. In this situation the College will process the alternative offer and applicants will have the opportunity to accept or decline this through UCAS Track.

- 5.4. Feedback may be requested by applicants if they have not been made an offer. Applicants should do so promptly and contact Student Records in writing, by email or letter. Applicants are able to request feedback at any time during the admissions year in which they are applying. The College aims to respond to requests for feedback within twenty working days of receipt. Feedback requests will not be considered if the feedback request is submitted anonymously or through a third party or if the query concerns a decision from a previous admissions cycle.
- 5.5. 'Confirmation' refers to the period in August when the College receives examination results. Applicants who achieve the required entry grades have their conditional offer confirmed and accepted. Applicants who have not met the conditions of offer are reviewed by the subject tutor who may contact the applicant directly to discuss possible alternate course/s, although there is no guarantee that an offer will be confirmed.

6. Students with additional learning support needs or disabilities

- 6.1. Applications from students disclosing a disability or long term health condition are assessed using the published entry criteria for the applicant's chosen course (which may include professional body requirements) and decisions are based solely on these criteria. All applicants will have access to the College's Student Support Service should they require it during or following the application procedure. Individually tailored support will be arranged for open days and interview days where prior notice is received. All students are eligible to receive some form of support after disclosure, although there may be instances when a charge is made for support.
- 6.2. There may be exceptional circumstances where an individual may be unable to undertake a course due to a physical, mental or learning disability. However these will be assessed on an individual basis by the Admissions Panel and where possible, all reasonable adjustments will be made by the College (see also the College's Fitness to Practise and Fitness to Study policies).
- 6.3. The College encourages applications from individuals with disabilities or long term health conditions and advises the disclosure of information about their condition as early as possible in the application process, to ensure that necessary transition and support arrangements can be put into place during the admissions cycle and before they arrive at the College. The College is unable to accept responsibility for any delays in providing student support and reasonable adjustment if an applicant does not disclose this information at the point of application and in some cases this may result in postponement of studies until a subsequent year. In rare cases, students may be advised that they are unable to participate on a programme if they have not disclosed and the nature of their condition is such that the College determines that required adjustments are not practicable or fitness to practise is

compromised (see also the College's Fitness to Practise policy).

- 6.4. Funding may be available to provide appropriate support for higher education students with a declared disability or learning need. The application for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) is an independent process, which applicants/students are responsible for completing on an individual basis, although support and guidance will be offered by the College. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas> or by contacting the College's learning support team. As the DSA process can be lengthy at busy times of year, applicants/students are advised to apply as soon as they have decided to accept their place to ensure that support is in place when they commence study. The College is unable to accept responsibility if a student chooses not to apply for/accept the support available through DSA.
- 6.5. Applicants/students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for DSA, but who feel that they may benefit from additional support for learning, should contact the College's Learning Support Manager to make an appointment to discuss if there is an appropriate mechanism for support.

7. Applicants with criminal convictions

- 7.1. The College requires all applicants with any unspent criminal conviction or charges pending to declare these at the point of application. The College does not automatically reject such applications and each case will be considered individually.
- 7.2. The admission of students with a declared criminal conviction may be subject to assessment by the Admissions Panel in relation to the duty of care to the wider College community. All information disclosed to the Admissions Panel is confidential and will be held as such by the Panel in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1988.
- 7.3. In making its decision, the Admissions Panel must consider the College's duty of care to safeguard the health, safety and personal wellbeing of all of its students and staff.
- 7.4. Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974), cautions and bind overs are not considered to be relevant. They will not be considered within the initial risk assessment process.
- 7.5. If a conviction is brought to the College's attention once the student has commenced studies or occurs during the course of the students' registration at the College, the College will take urgent steps to determine if it is still appropriate for the student to remain registered on their programme. This may involve applying the College disciplinary policies and if relevant, the Safeguarding Policy and Fitness to Practise policies. Students are required to disclose any new convictions as soon as they occur to the Student Records Manager.

7.6. The College will undertake a risk assessment, separate from the academic decision within the admissions process, of what the implications may be of admitting a student to a programme of study and the College community.

8. Decisions and Complaints

8.1. Although the College attempts to deal with applications and admissions in a fair, effective and efficient way, there may be an instance where applicants feel dissatisfied with the service provided.

8.2. Applicants who believe that their application has not been handled appropriately through the admissions procedures outlined in Section 1-6 above, should write to the Director of Higher Education. Applicants should explain the nature of their concerns and provide any additional information that they have which may result in a different outcome to their application.

8.3. Any such request, should be received in writing within 10 working days of the admissions decision being notified to the applicant. The Director of Higher Education will investigate the concern and will respond back to the applicant, in writing, normally within 15 working days of receiving the request.

8.4. It is expected that such requests are made by the individual applicant, however if there are mitigating reasons why another person should request a review on the applicants behalf, they may do so in writing as per point 7.3, outlining the circumstances.

Dr. Deirdre Rooney

Director of Higher Education

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