

# The Chesterfield College Group

## Student Admissions and Recruitment Policy



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<b>Manager Responsible:</b>	Assistant Principal Student Experience and Wellbeing
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<b>Impact Assessment status</b>	In preparing the Policy, any potential disproportionate impact it might have upon individuals with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, have been carefully considered. It is the conclusion of the College Group that the Policy does not adversely impact on individuals with any of the protected characteristics.
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## Aim

The Student Admissions and Recruitment Policy is informed by the mission and values of Chesterfield College Group, the needs of its students, and those of employers. The policy aims to ensure that:

- Every new applicant and progressing student is provided with outstanding customer service to help them develop a career plan that is underpinned by a programme of study, wider learning, and support services that meet their individual needs.
- From initial enquiry through to enrolment, applicants are provided with appropriate information, advice, and guidance at each stage, and that the applicant's starting point, career aspirations, and interests are used to inform their choice of a suitable learning programme.
- Chesterfield College demonstrates its commitment to transparency, consistency, and fairness through its admissions policy and procedures.
- No applicant is treated less favourably on the basis of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or because of any unrelated criminal convictions.

## Scope

This policy and associated operating procedures apply to Chesterfield College, which includes our subsidiary companies: Training Services 2000 Ltd (Learning Unlimited Derby), Learning Unlimited ATA Ltd, Recruit Unlimited Ltd and Chesterfield College Enterprises Ltd.

This policy provides a framework for the admissions cycle for entry to the college during the academic years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. It covers the application and admissions process for Further Education classroom-based learning, work-based learning (apprenticeships), and Higher Education.

## Policy Statements

### General

The purpose of the student admissions and apprenticeship recruitment function is to:

- Consider applications from potential students consistently and without prejudice.
- Ensure that applicants receive information, advice, and guidance appropriate to their needs and aspirations.
- Ensure that applicants make an informed and appropriate choice of course.
- Ensure that applications are dealt with in a timely manner and to an agreed timeframe.
- Ensure that applicants are communicated with effectively at all stages of their application, providing clear updates on the progress of their application, the next steps they should take, and the ways in which they can prepare for their studies.

The objectives of the student admissions and apprenticeship recruitment function are to:

- Provide a clear and easy to follow process for external customers, progressing students, and other stakeholders to enable fairness, consistency, and transparency in all admissions and recruitment decisions.

- Ensure that all applicants to the college are welcomed, engaged, and supported throughout the application process, providing all the information required to support them with their career planning and course choices.
- Provide a clear process for staff to follow to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency in all admissions and recruitment decisions.
- Maximise student numbers by delivering clear and effective processes to secure appropriate conversion from enquiry, to application, to enrolment.
- Maximise student numbers by delivering clear and effective internal progression routes for students already studying with the college.

The college will ensure that all staff involved in the admissions and recruitment process are suitably qualified and trained to give impartial advice and guidance, support applicants throughout the application process, and make admissions decisions in the best interests of the applicant. Staff involved in the admissions and recruitment process are offered continuous professional development to ensure they access the latest information on the types of qualifications currently being undertaken by potential applicants and, where applicable, to ensure that staff only make offers that applicants can fulfil by successful completion of any current course of study.

The college is accredited with the Matrix Standard for Advice and Guidance and aims to provide a careers service that meets the requirements of the Gatsby Careers Guidance Benchmarks (2013).

The college will provide clear, accurate, and accessible information about career pathways, study programmes, and part-time courses in a variety of formats to meet different needs.

Potential applicants will be made aware of how to apply to the college through various media, including the website, prospectus, telephone enquiries, open evenings, and marketing events.

Entry requirements for each programme will be set out on the college website and in marketing materials and will be discussed in interviews following an application. Where entrance to a programme is dependent upon demonstrating a competency standard, the relevant curriculum team will ensure that this is appropriate, proportional, and necessary as a means of assessment, and applied equally to disabled and non-disabled applicants.

Offers may be reconsidered after exam results are available. The college will strive to place all applicants on a suitable level of programme and will seek to make an alternative offer to any applicant who does not achieve the entry criteria for their first-choice programme.

When a course is still in the pre-validation stage any advertising materials and offers made to applicants will make this clear.

Where a programme does not run, or the college makes significant changes to the advertised course between an offer being made and the start date of the programme, applicants will be notified at the earliest opportunity and be provided with clear, supportive advice and guidance to ensure that the college continues to provide the appropriate support for their career plan. Where the college is unable to offer an appropriate alternative, or the applicant chooses to withdraw their application, the college will offer independent support and careers advice to ensure that the applicant is able to access an appropriate learning programme with an alternative provider.

Applicants should inform the college of any support needs they have. This can be conveyed to the college via the application process or, if appropriate, by external organisations, parents, or carers. Where required, reasonable adjustments will be made to assessment methods used in the interview process and whilst on programme to ensure the college meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Applicants who declare a criminal conviction will be dealt with in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The college will adhere to the procedures outlined within the college's Safeguarding Policy (GOV05) for dealing with positive disclosures/self-declaration of criminal convictions. Declaration of a criminal conviction will not necessarily result in an application being refused. Any information provided will be managed confidentially.

Where a physical or mental health disclosure is made that may impact upon the applicant's engagement and achievement in learning, the college's Fitness to Study Guidance (GOV13) will be followed to ensure that all reasonable adjustments can be considered and balanced with any health and safety or mental health and wellbeing risk.

Where an applicant has previously been excluded or been the subject of disciplinary action the college will carefully consider the suitability of admission onto further study. Any offer may be subject to conditions around attendance and/or behaviour. If the individual is deemed to present a risk to the college environment, they will be subject to the college's usual risk assessment process, as outlined within the Safeguarding Policy, to help inform any decision.

Applicants are responsible for providing the college with accurate information on which it will make admissions decisions. Any individual found to have provided false information or to have plagiarised their personal statement is at risk of being withdrawn from the application process (or from their programme if they have already enrolled). Any individual that is required to leave their programme will be subject to the conditions for fee payment and refund as outlined in the college's Fees and Refunds Policy (FIN09).

All applicants who accept an offer for a classroom-based programme of study (Further Education or Higher Education) will receive joining instructions that include an invitation to enrolment. All students undergo a formal induction process at the start of their programme covering student welfare, personal tutorial support, learning support services, library services, and study skills.

Where an applicant is unhappy with the service they have received or the decision the college has made they can raise their concern as per the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy (CSE06).

### **Further Education Classroom-Based Learning**

All applications will be managed through the agreed procedures for Further Education admissions, with clear service levels at all stages of the process and clear communication to applicants.

Where an applicant wishes to apply for more than one course their application will be dealt with in order of course choice.

Applicants for all GCSE and functional skills provision will complete an initial assessment in English and maths as part of the admissions or induction process.

Applicants for the Sector-Based Work Academy Programme will complete an initial assessment in English only.

The college will provide accurate and up-to-date information about course fees and other costs, which will be confirmed to the applicant at enrolment. The college will also produce information detailing any fees support and financial assistance available.

The applicant must be able to pay all fees and costs if liable. Different fees may apply to applicants for the same course depending on how the course and the student is funded. Applicants who have outstanding debts may be refused entry to the college.

All students who enrol at the college will be expected to sign the student statement to agree the Terms and Conditions of enrolment prior to starting their course and will be expected to abide by the college's Student Code of Conduct.

In addition to the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy, complaints about providers of Further Education can be raised via the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) complaints procedure: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship>.

### **Work-Based Learning**

For work-based learning provision (apprenticeships), the application process will differ depending on whether the applicant is looking to secure an apprenticeship with support from the college, or they are an existing employee within an organisation.

In addition to the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy, complaints about providers of apprenticeship training can be raised via the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) complaints procedure: <https://www.gov.uk/complain-further-education-apprenticeship>.

### **Higher Education**

Applicants to Higher Education provision are chosen on merit and based on the recommendations outlined in 'Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice' by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (2004). The policy is also guided by the principles outlined by the SPA Good Practice Statement: Admissions Policies (2014), the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admissions (2015) and the college's Higher Education Access and Participation Plan, which is approved and published by the Office for Students.

The college is committed to recruit students from groups under-represented in Higher Education generally by:

- Providing adequate support for students who might otherwise not be able to access Higher Education.
- Providing substantial advice and guidance to our own Level 3 students to encourage them to progress to Higher Education.

Detailed course information for Higher Education provision is available from the college and, for full-time programmes, on the UCAS Course Collect website. The college website contains programme information, together with information on fees and funding, and guidance and support available. Alternative formats of this information can be provided on request.

Entry requirements for each programme are set out in validation documentation and college advertising literature. Entry requirements detail the expected number of UCAS points an applicant is required to have to secure a place. Entry requirements may be relaxed for individual applicants who can demonstrate alternative qualifications or experience that lead tutors to believe that they will be successful on the programme. Where professional statutory regulatory bodies may have specific requirements for admission to a course (e.g., an enhanced DBS check) these will be clearly stated.

A student may be awarded credit for prior learning (certified or uncertified) towards the requirements of a named award, in line with Awarding Organisation and partner University policies. Students entering a validated qualification Level 6 'top-up' programme, comprising 120 credits and designed to build on a lower credit bearing award, may not enter the programme with credit. Credit for prior learning (certified or uncertified) is not allowed at the final stage of a Bachelor's Degree, or for the thesis/dissertation module.

Where an applicant has made multiple applications, each will be processed as a standalone application and run concurrent to the others.

Applicants are advised to monitor their application via UCAS, which the Admissions Team will update with confirmed offers. If the applicant does not meet the terms of the offer they may still be accepted onto the programme or offered another programme. If applicants are not accepted, they will be able to apply to other institutions via clearing.

Applicants may ask for their place to be deferred for one year. They may do this when they apply or in the year leading up to their start date. If they wish to defer again, they will need to reapply via UCAS.

Applications to the college can be made via clearing once this function is live. The college will accept late applications onto Higher Education programmes where appropriate.

In addition to the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) is the Government's designated operator for handling unresolved student complaints in Higher Education. It provides an independent, transparent complaints handling scheme to review student complaints and academic appeals. More information about the OIA can be found on its website: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

## Implementation

For all types of provision, the applicant will:

- Provide relevant and accurate information in support of their application.
- Return any reference that is required in a timely manner.
- Attend any scheduled interviews or group presentations and, if unavailable, contact the Admissions Team (for Further Education classroom-based learning and Higher Education) or Apprenticeship Recruitment Team to rearrange.
- Respond to any correspondence in relation to their application.
- Attend events throughout the process, including any student experience events, taster sessions, summer schools, and enrolment.

### **Further Education Classroom-Based Learning**

On receipt of an application the Admissions Team will:



- Check the applicant's record in the student records system within two working days and create a new record if required.
- Aim to send out an acknowledgement communication/invitation to interview within two working days, although during peak times this may take longer. Scheduled interviews will take place within 6 weeks of the application being received.
- Coordinate curriculum interviews as per the working arrangements between the Admissions Team and curriculum teams.
- Maintain correspondence throughout the application process, including chasing non-attendance and re-offering interview/group presentation times where appropriate. Where an applicant does not attend their scheduled interview, the Admissions Team will re-arrange another interview as soon as possible. Once the applicant has not attended three separate interviews, their application will be withdrawn.

Curriculum Teams will:

- Provide the Admissions Team with regular interview times to meet the demand of the course.
- Conduct interviews that enable the applicant to make an informed choice about their career plan and which programme of study would be most appropriate.
- Investigate any additional needs and record these in the interview record. This should be captured during or shortly after the interview takes place.
- Explore the suitability of the applicant for the programme through sensitive discussion and questioning.
- Ensure the applicant is clear on what programme they are being offered and record this decision on the interview record at the end of the interview.
- Work closely with the Marketing Team and Admissions Team to provide a programme of clear and supportive communication, events, and activities to ensure that applicants are well informed and well prepared for their chosen programme before starting their studies.
- If the applicant is not suitable for the programme, ensure that they are clear as to why and that they are referred to the college's Careers Service or alternative provision to explore further options. The Admissions Team will coordinate any intervention required within five working days of receiving the referral from the curriculum area.

Admissions and Curriculum Managers will:

- Coordinate the admissions process for all applicants.
- Work with Information Services to ensure that suitable management reports are available showing application data, including like-for-like comparisons, and use these to monitor the effectiveness of procedures, information, and advice given to applicants.
- Ensure the Student Admissions and Recruitment Policy is adhered to.

### **Work-Based Learning**

If no employer has been identified on receipt of an application the Apprenticeship Recruitment Team will:

- Create a registration form in the eSignUp system.
- Contact the applicant within five working days to arrange a pre-assessment interview.



- Withdraw applicants following three attempts to contact to arrange a pre-assessment interview.
- Coordinate the initial pre-assessment interview and follow-up communication with any applicant who does not attend within 48 hours.
- Invite the applicant into a Chesterfield College Group centre to take part in a pre-assessment interview for their chosen apprenticeship. In certain circumstances, this may be conducted via Microsoft Teams or telephone.
- Conduct pre-assessment interviews that enable the applicant to make an informed choice about their career plan and which apprenticeship pathway to study.
- If the applicant is not suitable for an apprenticeship, ensure that they are clear as to why and signpost to other types of provision as appropriate. This could include the college's Careers Service. This must be completed within 48 hours of the pre-assessment interview taking place and be made clear on the interview record.
- Following successful pre-assessment interview the applicant will be added to the talent pool and their profile will be sent to appropriate external employers who will decide if they would like to shortlist the applicant for interview.
- Where the applicant is successful in being shortlisted for interview by an employer, work with the applicant to ensure that they are prepared as much as possible.
- Where the applicant is unsuccessful in being shortlisted for interview by an employer they will be provided with feedback and will remain in the talent pool so that they can still be considered for similar opportunities with other employers.
- Where the applicant is successful in securing a position with the employer following interview a suitable employment start date will be agreed.
- Where the applicant is not successful following interview with the employer they will be provided with feedback and will remain in the talent pool so that they can still be considered for similar opportunities with other employers.

The Apprenticeship Recruitment Team will:

- Coordinate the admissions process for all applicants.
- Work with Information Services to ensure that suitable management reports are available showing application data, including like-for-like comparisons, and use these to monitor the effectiveness of procedures, information, and advice given to applicants.
- Ensure the Student Admissions and Recruitment Policy is adhered to.

### **Higher Education**

The Admissions Team are responsible for processing applications via UCAS (for full-time programmes) and the college's application management system (for part-time programmes).

The Admissions Team will:

- Check applications daily via UCAS Weblink and acknowledge the application within 48 hours.
- Pass applications to academic staff for decisions.
- When requested, arrange interviews or auditions for applicants in consultation with academic staff.
- Convey academic staff decisions to the applicant either directly or through UCAS. Applicants may be made an unconditional offer, a conditional offer, or rejected. If a conditional offer is made the conditions will be clearly stated. If academic staff reject

an applicant, they must make clear to the Admissions Team the grounds on which they have made the decision so that the applicant can be given information on how the decision was reached.

- Where appropriate, refer applicants to the college's Careers Service for advice on alternative programmes, or to one of the college's delivery partners who may be better placed to meet the individual needs of the applicant.
- Keep a copy of all rejections, together with the reasons for rejection, for a period of 12 months from the date of the decision so that this can be referred to in the event of a challenge from an unsuccessful applicant.
- Once Embargo on exam results has lifted and results have been updated on UCAS Weblink, review final confirmed offers with the HE Course Lead to ensure any conditions given have been met. If conditions have been met, the applicant is fully accepted onto the course, and this is updated on UCAS Weblink. If conditions have not been met, the applicant is rejected and referred as appropriate for advice and guidance.

Applicants will:

- Monitor their application via UCAS and, if an offer is made, allocate as a firm or insurance choice. If the applicant fails to do this within the timescale set out by UCAS the application will be rejected by default.

The Head of School will:

- Monitor unsuccessful applications on a regular basis to ensure equality and consistency and to establish whether, where possible, staff have discussed alternative provision.

## Communication Flow

The Student Admissions and Recruitment Policy will be readily available to all internal and external stakeholders via the college website.

College managers and senior leaders will work closely together to ensure all relevant staff recognise and carry out their responsibilities throughout recruitment, admissions, and progression processes.

## Monitoring

The Student Admissions and Recruitment Policy is overseen and monitored by the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Wellbeing.

Managers responsible for admissions and apprenticeship recruitment will provide timely reports to the Senior Leadership Team as required throughout the year to monitor achievement of overall recruitment targets.

Response times will be monitored through departmental Key Performance Indicators with regular reporting to the Senior Leadership Team to track targets.

## Associated Information and Guidance

- Equality Act 2010 (Disability) Regulations 2010: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2128/contents/made>
- UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/>
- Student Loans Company: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loans-company>
- Gatsby Careers Guidance Benchmarks: <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>
- Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice by the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5284/1/finalreport.pdf>
- SPA Good Practice Statement: Admissions Policies: <https://www.ucas.com/file/233016/download?token=6dAVLopd>
- Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admissions: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/13489/2/Quality-Code-Chapter-B2.pdf>

## Related Chesterfield College Group Policies and Documents

- HE Access and Participation Plan (CSE04)
- Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures (CSE06)
- Fees and Refunds Policy (FIN09)
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (GOV03)
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (GOV05)
- Fitness to Study Guidance (GOV13)
- Data Protection Policy and Procedures (INF03)