

HE Admissions Policy



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide prospective students, Kingston College Staff and partner organisations with a guide to our approach to the Admission of Higher Education Students to Kingston College. The policy has been drawn up following examination of sector best practice guidance from UCAS, Supporting Professionals in Admissions (SPA) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and aims to provide an efficient, fair and transparent HE Admission Function for Kingston College in line with our Equality Policy.

1.2 Scope

This policy covers admissions to directly funded, not indirectly funded courses, for definitions please see Appendix A. For Admissions guidance on indirectly funded courses please refer to Partner Institutions' Admissions Policies.

2 Principles of Fair Admissions

Kingston College seeks to ensure a fair HE admissions system which provides equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of background, to gain admission to a course suited to their ability and aspirations. This is consistent with the Kingston College Mission. (Appendix A)

Our approach to the admission of students also upholds the principles of fair admission outlined in the Schwartz report (2004) (Appendix B), through being:

- transparent
- fair
- honest
- consistent
- accessible
- personalised and
- timely

3 HE Admissions Function/ Responsibilities

The HE Central Admissions Team (HE CAT) sits within the Student Services Division alongside the Central College Admissions Team but it is a distinct and dedicated function comprising of the HE Admissions Manager and the HE Information Officer.

The HE Admissions function is devolved and the key roles are as follows.

3.1 Setting and monitoring of admission criteria and target numbers

The individual programme specifications define the entry requirements for each specific course. Entry requirements are reviewed annually by the Head of School to ensure a fair admissions system which admits students who are able to succeed. This review will take into account the progression and success of existing students. This will be conducted as part of the annual HE Planning Process.

Target Numbers are set by the Head of College and Deputy Principal during the Annual Planning Process.

The recruitment against target is monitored centrally by the Head of HE / The Head of School/HE Admissions Manager for each individual course. This is reported to the *HE Committee* on a bi monthly basis.

Limits on Offers made against planned place will be set by HE Committee as they become necessary.

3.2 Public information

All course entry requirements, course content, duration and fees will be made public in line with information in the programme specification. Primary sites of publication are Kingston College website and UCAS. It will be the joint responsibility of Head of School and the marketing department to ensure that all public information is consistent and in line with the programme specification.

3.3 Assessing, making offers and communicating with applicants

All applications are received through the HE Central Admissions Team (HE CAT). The HE Admission Manager is the Colleges' UCAS correspondent.

For courses that do not require interviews, e.g. BA (Hons) Business, the decision to make an offer is usually taken by the HE CAT based on the assessment criteria at 3.3.1. In unclear cases the application is *referred to the School for assessment and decision*.

For courses that require further assessment such as an interview, audition or portfolio the decision to offer an interview, or audition is usually taken by the HE CAT based on the assessment criteria at 3.3.1. In unclear cases the application is referred *to the School for assessment and decision*.

3.3.1 Assessment of Applications

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Academic achievement or predicted achievement – do they meet the entry requirements.
- Personal statements – to understand skills, motivation and interest in subject
- References
- Interview/ audition and selection events – to assess any non-academic requirements, such as level of self-awareness for counselling
- Portfolios to be assessed by tutors

3.3.1.1 Issues in considering application

Plagiarism

If UCAS notifies Kingston College of the detection of plagiarism in personal statements Kingston College reserves the right to decline the application or withdraw any offers made.

Criminal convictions

Please see the College's Criminal Convictions Procedure

Declared Learning Needs

Kingston College Aims to support all learners regardless of their support needs. For Applicants with a declared learning need Kingston College will conduct an assessment to ensure that the college can make the required, reasonable adjustment to support learning.

International Students

International applications are assessed by the School International and Professional Management Studies to ascertain:

- Fee Assessment (Home or Overseas)
- Verification of qualifications
- Visa Requirements

3.3.2 Communication with applicants

Decisions reached following assessment will be communicated to the applicant via UCAS and also directly from the HE CAT. In the regular admission cycle and where interviews are not required the applicant will usually receive an offer or decision letter within 3 weeks of the application being received. For International applicants and at the later stages of the admission cycle communication may also be made via email to ensure timeliness.

The decision to interview/ audition is communicated to the applicant via UCAS and also directly from the HE CAT. In the regular admission cycle applicants will usually receive an invitation to interview email within 3 weeks of the application being received. Any course specific additional information required for interview will also be sent with the invitation. There will be a minimum of 1- 2 weeks' notice given prior to interview dates. If the decision not to offer an interview is made, notification will be sent to the applicant within 3 weeks of the application being received. For applicants who are unable to travel to interview, such as International applicants, it may be possible to conduct an interview over Skype or upload portfolios of evidence/ auditions for assessment. Requests for this will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

3.3.3 Assessment at Interviews/Auditions/ Selection and Portfolios

The School/ Tutor will conduct the assessment at Interview/ Audition/ Selection or Portfolio. Following the assessment, the offer decision, type of offer and/or conditions of offer will be communicated within two weeks of interview both via UCAS and directly to the applicant by letter.

3.3.3.1 Feedback

Consistent generic feedback will be provided to applicants who are not invited for interview/audition/ selection or who are subsequently not offered a place. More specific individualised feedback may be available on request.

3.3.4 Appeals and complaints

Unsuccessful applicants have the right of appeal in writing to the Student Services Director within five working days of being refused admission to the College, explaining the reasons why the College should reconsider its decision. Appeals will be considered by a Panel chaired by the Vice Principal, whose decision is final.

3.4 Confirmation and Clearing

3.4.1 Confirmation on offers

HE CAT will be responsible for confirming conditional offers as soon as results have been confirmed via UCAS. In some cases it will be the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence of qualifications to enable confirmation decision to be made. Applicants who are required to provide evidence of qualifications will receive a request from HE CAT with a deadline for providing this evidence.

3.4.2 Clearing

Kingston College will publish available places and revised entry requirements when clearing opens.

3.5 Enrolment

Letter with enrolment times and dates will be sent out to all confirmed applicants in mid-August. The enrolment letter will include clear guidance on the next steps, what to bring to enrolment and a contact for any queries.

3.6 Internal Audit trail

A record of all decisions relating to applications will be kept centrally. Clear and consistent decisions, based on offers/entry requirements will be recorded and available to applicants on request.

This will include

- Interview approval process and subsequent communication to student.
- Evidence of interview outcome form

Where applicant is not successful the reasons for rejection will be recorded.

3.7 Support and training for admissions staff

HE CAT Staff will continue to attend UCAS, SPA (Supporting Professional in Admissions) and Student Loan Company training events as required for CPD.

Regular training on Admissions processes will be conducted by HECAT and Senior Managers.

Appendix A – Definitions

Directly Funded Course - *Courses which the tuition fees are paid directly to Kingston College (either by the student or SLC).*

Indirectly funded Course - *Courses which are taught at Kingston College but Tuition fees are paid to the Validating University.*

Kingston College Mission:

We will provide ever improving learning, teaching, support and progress to everyone from our community, working in close partnership within and beyond our Federation

Appendix B - Principles of Fair Admissions

September 2004 saw the publication of “The Admissions to Higher Education Review - Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice to Higher Education” the report was written by Steven Schwartz, Vice-Chancellor, Brunel University and Chair of the Admissions to Higher Education Review.

The report outlined the following 6 principles to fair admissions which this policy seeks to uphold.

Principle 1: A fair admissions system should be transparent

Principle 2: A fair admissions system should enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course as judged by their achievements and their potential

Principle 3: A fair admissions system should strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid

Principle 4: A fair admissions system should seek to minimise barriers for Applicants

Principle 5: A fair admissions system should be professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and processes

Principle 1: A fair admissions system should be transparent

Universities and colleges should provide, consistently and efficiently through appropriate mechanisms, the information applicants need to make an informed choice. This should include the institution's admissions policy and detailed criteria for admission to courses, along with an explanation of admissions processes. It should include a general indication of the weight given to prior academic achievement and potential demonstrated by other means. The latest available information should also be provided about the entry qualifications of applicants accepted on each course, and procedures for complaints and appeals. Institutions should conduct and publish a periodic analysis of admissions data, and provide feedback on request to unsuccessful applicants.

Principle 2: A fair admissions system should enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course as judged by their achievements and their potential

Ability to complete the course must be an essential criterion for admission. In assessing applicants' merit and potential, institutions may legitimately consider other factors in addition to examination results, including: the educational context of an applicant's formal achievement; other indicators of potential and capability (such as the results of additional testing or assessment, including interviews, or non-academic experiences and relevant skills); and how an individual applicant's experiences, skills and perspectives could contribute to the learning environment. However, applicants

should be assessed as individuals: it is not appropriate to treat one applicant automatically more or less favourably by virtue of his or her background, school or college. At any stage in the admissions process, all applicants should be given an equal opportunity to provide relevant information or demonstrate relevant skills. Admissions criteria should not include factors irrelevant to the assessment of merit: for example, institutions should not give preference to the relatives of graduates or benefactors. Admissions staff have the discretion to vary the weight they give to examination results and other indicators of achievement and potential and therefore to vary the offer that they make to applicants, providing this is done in a way which is consistent with the principles of fair admissions.

Principle 3: A fair admissions system should strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid

Assessment can legitimately include a broad range of factors. Some of these factors are amenable to 'hard' quantifiable measures, while others rely on qualitative judgements. This should continue: both legal and lay opinion place value on the use of discretion and the assessment of applicants as individuals. Admissions policies and procedures should be informed and guided by current research and good practice. Where possible, universities and colleges using quantifiable measures should use tests and approaches that have already been shown to predict undergraduate success. Where existing tests are unsuited to a course's entry requirements, institutions may develop alternatives, but should be able to demonstrate that their methods are relevant, reliable and valid. Where qualitative judgements are used, contextual criteria against which applicants are judged should accord with the Steering Group's guidelines. Universities and colleges should monitor and evaluate the link between their admissions policies and undergraduate performance and retention, and review their policies to address any issues identified.

Principle 4: A fair admissions system should seek to minimise barriers for Applicants

Admissions processes should seek to minimise any barriers that are irrelevant to satisfying admissions requirements. This could include barriers arising from the means of assessment; the varying resources and support available to applicants; disability; and the type of an applicant's qualifications (e.g. vocational or academic).

Principle 5: A fair admissions system should be professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and processes

An institution's structures and processes should be designed to facilitate a high quality, efficient admissions system and a professional service to applicants. Structures and processes should feature: clear lines of responsibility across the institution to ensure consistency; allocation of resources appropriate to the task; and clear guidelines for the appointment, training and induction of all staff involved in admissions. The Steering Group suggests that institutions would find it simpler and cheaper to implement these guidelines if at least part of the admissions process were conducted by centrally located staff.