



**TRAFFORD &
STOCKPORT
COLLEGE GROUP**

FE Admissions Policy

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. SCOPE	3
3. AIM	3
4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	4
5. APPLICATIONS	7
6. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	8
7. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS	10
8. COURSE OFFERS	11
9. ACCEPTANCE OF AN OFFER	13
10. COURSE CLOSURES	13
11. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS	14
12. RISK ASSESSMENT	14
13. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS	15

1. INTRODUCTION

The Trafford and Stockport College Group (TSCG) is committed to enabling progression into successful careers by providing outstanding opportunities through education into further study and/or employment. We do this through an open and transparent admissions process that considers all applicants on their individual circumstances and gives them the best possible opportunity to study with us. We aim to support aspirations by offering a broad range of courses and opportunities for students of all abilities and backgrounds, regardless of their starting points. The underlying principle of the Admissions Policy is that all students choosing to study at the Trafford and Stockport College Group will be offered an opportunity to do so, on the most appropriate programme, following appropriate consideration of their career aspirations and their individual circumstances.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all prospective students of all ages applying for a full-time or substantial part-time programme or apprenticeship. Applicants applying for HE (Higher Education) courses need to refer to the HE Admissions policy on the College Group's website.

3. AIM

This policy has been developed to standardise how applicants are dealt with prior to enrolling at the Trafford and Stockport College Group and is part of our commitment to providing an excellent quality experience for all applicants. This policy and procedure will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on grounds of sex, race, ethnicity or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, socio-economic status, gender identify, offending background or any other protected characteristic.

The Trafford and Stockport College Group is committed to ensuring that all applicants are:

- appropriately guided and supported through a timely and efficient admissions process
- treated fairly in their application via an open and transparent process
- provided with accurate information, advice, and guidance at all stages throughout the process including providing clear entry criteria and information on fees for all courses, to enable them to make informed decisions about applying for a course
- provided with information about the future careers and routes to further study and/or employment of their preferred course to assist in their choice
- offered the opportunity to disclose any learning difficulty and/or disability and to be referred to the Inclusion team at the earliest opportunity
- offered, where appropriate, a place on a course best suited to their ability and aspirations
- aware of how to provide feedback and/or make an appeal.

This process supports the College Group's commitment to equality and diversity. It also underpins the Group's duty of care to ensure that all those seeking to study at the college are placed on an appropriate level of course that will allow them to succeed.

All applicants are encouraged to apply for their chosen course(s) via the College Group's websites. Paper application forms are also available from Reception at all sites, or can be provided upon request

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Staff

- Have the responsibility to make a full and active contribution to the admissions process by ensuring that this policy is known, understood, and implemented.
- Have the responsibility for ensuring that potential students are signposted to the Careers team who will provide them with appropriate Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)
- Have the responsibility to ensure that applicants have had an opportunity to disclose any learning difficulty or disability, and that potential students are signposted to the Inclusion team for further guidance and support
- Have the responsibility for ensuring that applicants are aware of all the support available (financial, academic, and pastoral), and that potential students are signposted to the relevant team

Team Leader – Customer Services, Admissions & Student Finance

- Have full responsibility for implementing this policy.
- Will monitor, review and report on admissions activities on a regular basis

Schools Liaison Team

- Liaise with schools and other stakeholders to ensure they are up to date with the Admissions policy, key changes and dates
- Attend school and stakeholder events to provide information on the offer and key dates and activities
- Ensure that accurate information about the Group's offer is made available through various channels, including the prospectus, social media, and the different Group's websites, and that the information is updated throughout the academic year
- Plan, organise and facilitate events such as "Taster", "New Student" and "Open" days, tours and visits for applicants, schools, and any other stakeholders

Admissions and Customer Services Team

- Record and monitor applications, providing reports when required
- Work closely with the curriculum teams to ensure that the policy is effectively implemented and all applicants receive a high-quality experience
- Work closely with the leadership team to review and update the policy as appropriate.
- Respond to course enquiries and assist applicants
- Ensure all application forms are triaged to the relevant department
- Contact applicants for missing information to enable curriculum teams to triage forms
- Send offer letters/information to applicants
- Support at key activities and events throughout the year
- Ensure quality of data is maintained

Transition Team

- Discuss with the applicant and parents/carers, if appropriate, how the College Group can make reasonable adjustments to support their needs
- Liaise with schools regarding arrangements with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) including attending review meetings.
- Attend transition meetings with schools to discuss safeguarding, Looked After Children (LAC) and vulnerable students to support the transition process into further education.
- Provide guidance to tutors and teams to enable appropriate support during key events and activities
- Make the necessary arrangements to assess students' specific needs and agree a support plan in collaboration with the curriculum team and the relevant Local Authority, if appropriate.
- Ensure that students are aware of the range of support options available, such as assistive technology and exam access arrangements, and that plans are in place to ensure access to that support.

Careers Team – Information, Advice & Guidance

- Support in key recruitment activities throughout the year including Open events and enrolment dates
- Provide additional support to applicants by offering impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG), enabling applicants to make informed decisions about their course choices.
- Support applicants when making their application with entry criteria and requirements for their chosen programme of study.
- Support applicants who do not meet the entry criteria or are unsuccessful in securing an offer in their preferred course for any other reason, in choosing alternative educational or employment pathways based on their personal circumstances and career aspirations.

- Liaise with curriculum and support teams to ensure that all those seeking to study at the College Group are placed on an appropriate level of course that will allow them to succeed, based on their personal circumstances and career aspirations.

Curriculum Teams

- Support in key recruitment activities throughout the year including Open events and enrolment dates
- Ensure that current entry criteria and any other conditions for all courses are clear and available in the prospectuses and on the website.
- Ensure that adjustments to the stated criteria are available for applicants who are assessed as having a disability or learning difficulty
- Process applications in a timely and efficient manner and provide outcomes to the Admissions team (offer, conditional offer, or invitation to interview for further IAG)

Apprenticeship Admissions Team

- All applications relating to apprenticeship opportunities are facilitated through the Apprenticeship department who will undertake initial screening assessments and assist with securing suitable employment opportunities
- Apprenticeship offers are subject to an offer of employment as an apprentice by an employer

Applicants

- Complete an online application form via the College Group websites. Paper application forms are available upon request for applicants who are unable to apply online or are available from the Reception teams at each campus.
- Seek appropriate information, advice, and guidance, to ensure that they make informed choices when applying for a course
- Meet all pre-course requirements, complete all forms and provide any information as requested.
- Attend any interviews, assessment or meetings arranged with any members of the staff to support the application process
- Where applicable, disclose a learning difficulty and/or disability to enable support to be put in place where appropriate in a timely manner
- Bring in evidence of any learning difficulty and/or disability e.g., Education Health and Care Plan, medical information.
- Apply for any financial support required and provide any supporting evidence in a timely manner to allow the college to process the application in readiness for the start of their chosen course.
- Inform the College Group of any changes in circumstances as soon as possible

5. APPLICATIONS

Young Learners and Adults

- All applicants, including applications for an Apprenticeship, are required to accurately complete an application form providing a range of information to allow the College Group to process their application. Missing or inaccurate information may delay the processing of an application.
- Online applications will receive an automatic acknowledgement on submission and applicants will be able to access up to date information about their application throughout the application process by contacting the Admissions team.
- For certain curriculum areas where applicants meet the entry criteria for the course, a conditional offer may be made without the need to attend the College Group for an interview. All entry requirements are set out in the relevant College Group publications and websites and this information is reviewed and updated regularly so applicants are strongly encouraged to check.
- All applicants are advised to attend an Open Event where possible to obtain key information regarding their course choice, to become familiar with the campus they will be studying at, to get to know the staff and other applicants
- All applicants are able to access an impartial careers guidance interview at the College Group at any point in their journey, either prior to submitting an application or after they have done so to explore further options.
- Applicants requiring further advice and guidance will have an interview with a member of the curriculum team to discuss their course choice further.
- Applicants which do not require IAG or an interview will be advised how to enrol for their chosen course.
- Every application is considered on an individual basis, considering any relevant contextual information. Additional information can be provided by school or other agencies as appropriate to support the application, if appropriate.
- Adults may apply for any of the following courses provided by TSCG following the process described above:
 - Access to Higher Education courses for those who wish to progress to University level study but who do not hold the necessary Level 3 qualifications.
 - Higher Education courses
 - Apprenticeships in specific vocational areas
 - A range of part-time courses encompassing leisure and professional.

- Short courses to develop specific skills, including literacy, numeracy and digital
- English courses for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Part-time vocational programmes for those wishing to up-skill or train for a new career.

Apprentices

Applicants who are already in employment:

- The College Group Apprenticeships Team will liaise with the applicant's employer to undertake a workplace visit with the applicant who will undertake a skills needs analysis to ensure the applicant has the ability to succeed.
- Following a successful assessment, a programme start date will be agreed with both the applicant and their employer.
- If the applicant is unsuccessful at assessment, they will be referred to the College Group's Careers Team for advice and guidance and an alternative and suitable study programme will be sought.

Applicants who are not in employment:

- Applicants will be advised on how to apply for Apprenticeship vacancies available on the College Group websites, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website and any other appropriate services available.
- Applications received from NAS or through the College Group will then be shortlisted by the Apprenticeship Team to ensure the application meets the needs of employers.
- Shortlisted candidates will then be sent through to the respective employer organisations who then select candidates to attend an interview.
- The employer organisation will then update the College Group Apprenticeship Team of the result of the interview.
- Successful candidates at interview are notified to the College Group Apprenticeship Team and unsuccessful candidates will be included in the College Group's candidate pool for follow up and a review of available and alternative options.

6. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Each application is considered against the academic and other entry requirements set out in the relevant College Group publications for each course and, where appropriate, will also be reviewed in light of any additional information provided by the applicant. Entry requirements may include academic skills and/or other non-academic behaviour and/or knowledge and experience.
- Entry requirements are set at a level that ensures that applicants are placed on a course that matches their academic and skills ability and therefore gives them the best chance to

succeed, as it supports progression through levels of learning for those applicants who are able to advance.

- Government legislation states that all 16 – 18 students must continue to study English and maths as part of their studies until they achieve a minimum grade 4 (grade C). For this reason, all courses now have a minimum English and maths entry criteria. Students who do not have a minimum grade 4 on entry MUST participate in English and maths lessons as part of their study programme.
- Clear and current entry criteria for courses will be published both in our printed materials and online. The criteria will reflect the minimum entry criteria that applicants must meet; this information is reviewed and updated regularly in light of changes to qualification reforms and the changing labour market
- Applicants may be required to provide an acceptable reference as part of the entry criteria; for those in education this will be from their current / last education provider.
- For some courses, as well as meeting the minimum entry criteria for that level of study, we may ask applicants to meet additional entry criteria relevant to that particular subject area. This may be specific subject-related testing or activities (e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for Childcare and Health and Social Care, production of an art portfolio for Art and Design courses)
- All applicants are required to provide evidence of their qualifications in order to show that they meet the course entry requirements. This evidence must identify the institution (i.e. the previous school) and /or the accrediting body as well as the qualification and level achieved. We reserve the right to determine the acceptability of any evidence provided and may require the applicant to provide further evidence if there is any ambiguity or lack of clarity.
- Arrangements are in place for applicants who have not lived in the UK for a minimum period of three years or can't provide evidence of their existing qualifications if this is a requirement of the course they are applying for. Although we need to satisfy funding and entry course requirements, every effort will be made to support students with their application.
- The College Group's application forms ask the applicant to identify any additional support requirements they might have. The objective of this is for the College Group to begin to assess the needs of the individual so that the College Group can provide transition support and agree suitable support and/or reasonable adjustments for the duration of the course, therefore full disclosure is strongly advised.
- When a disclosure of additional needs has been made, the Inclusion Team will contact the individual to discuss the type of support and reasonable adjustments required so that we can assess whether the Trafford and Stockport College Group has the provision to meet those needs. In order to support the assessment, TSCG will require documentation which details the additional needs and recommended support strategies/adaptations. Applicants

will be asked to provide this information, or to provide their authorisation so that the Group can contact the necessary agencies, e.g. previous provider, GP, medical professionals, social services or Youth Offending Team (YOT). Any information disclosed prior to enrolment will be held with the Inclusion Team.

- For applicants with an Education, Health Care Plan, the Trafford and Stockport College Group recommends that one of the TSCG Transition Coordinators is invited to the Year 11 review so that the suitability of the College Group environment can be discussed, and a transition plan agreed. As per current legislation, the College Group will need to be consulted on the potential offer of a confirmed place. This decision will be based on information gathered as part of the transition process. If the required information has not been made available, TSCG will request the documents for assessment prior to a consultation response.
- For applicants presenting with more complex needs, a risk assessment may be carried out. This is a supportive measure to establish whether TSCG can offer the expertise and reasonable adjustments required to support those needs.

As part of the Children's and Families Act, a SEND Local Offer is a requirement for schools, colleges and local authorities to publish the provision available to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities.

- At Trafford and Stockport College Group we are committed to meeting the needs of all our students. Our Local Offer describes how we support the special educational needs and disabilities of young people and adults and is available on our websites and included in our SEND Policy
- On self-funded courses, the student will be responsible for the costs of any additional support.

7. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- In accordance with the College Group's safeguarding requirements, all students/prospective students are asked to disclose any unspent criminal convictions or prosecutions pending; this includes enrolled students who receive a criminal conviction whilst on a programme of study at the College Group.
- If the programme of study requires an Enhanced DBS, applicants are required to declare all convictions (including warnings, cautions, reprimands) which are 'spent' and 'un-spent' due to certain professions being exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and applicants are required to check what the course or future planned employment requires as part of their applications process.

- Declaring a criminal conviction does not automatically prevent anyone from becoming or continuing as a student and we offer appropriate support when necessary. However, if a risk assessment is identified as 'high risk' then admission could be refused. Applicants assessed as 'medium risk' will be robustly monitored in partnership with appropriate external agencies.
- We reserve the right to refuse a place to an applicant if they are assessed as a high risk to themselves or others, or if the College Group is unable to ensure a safe environment for the College Group community if the applicant is admitted. We will also undertake risk assessments if information is received at any time which suggests that the learner may present a risk to themselves or others. This will include referrals from external agencies relating to criminal activity, organised gang crime (weapons, drugs) or serious gang affiliation. Any student who is clearly evidenced to be involved with serious criminal and / or violent activity will be withdrawn from their course.

8. COURSE OFFERS

- For certain courses, applicants whose application form has been triaged by Admissions to the relevant curriculum area and have the necessary entry requirements will be sent a conditional offer letter from the College Group. In other courses, however, further assessments need to be completed before a conditional offer can be made, particularly if courses are oversubscribed.
- Applicants who receive a conditional offer will then enter the College's "Keep Warm" programme which includes further opportunities to visit the College Group to discuss the applicant's existing offer and whether any additional advice or guidance is required to support their initial choice and offer.
- Applicants whose application needs to be discussed further will be contacted by the Admissions team to have a meeting with a member of the curriculum or Student Support team.
- After a meeting with the relevant member of staff, the applicants will receive written confirmation of their offer. College Group offers are conditional upon applicants achieving certain stated grades or providing other evidence of prior learning or achievement, such as the completion of some pre-course assessment.
- Learners who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may require High Needs funding to fully access their course. They will receive a conditional offer, which will include a requirement for High Needs funding approval by the Local Education Authority that the learner resides in, prior to starting their course.

- All offers are conditional, and the College Group reserves the right to amend or withdraw any offer on the basis of subsequent information received or becoming evident.
- If the College Group chooses not to run a course, applicants will be advised of alternative provision, if available, but the College Group is not obliged to make alternative provision in such circumstances.
- Formal acceptance of offers is subject to learners accepting the College Group's terms and conditions and completion of any other documentation or expectations that the College Group may reasonably request or accept.
- Where a course is full but the applicant meets all the set entry criteria then the applicant will be offered a place on a waiting list, and they will be informed if a place becomes available. In oversubscribed courses, applicants may be required to complete further assessments and demonstrate commitment to their programme by attending extra events and/or sessions in the relevant curriculum.
- If the course an applicant has applied to is not suitable for them, they will be advised of the following options:
 - If the subject area is an appropriate choice, but the course level is not, then a conditional place on a lower or higher-level course within that same subject area will be offered.
 - The applicant's second choice or a suggested alternative
 - A referral to the College Group's Careers Team for further guidance
- If an offer of a place to an applicant isn't possible, the reasons will be clearly explained. Some of the reasons for not offering a place or withdrawing an offer of a place can include:
 - The applicant does not meet the minimum entry requirements based on actual or predicted grades
 - A poor reference from a current or previous school, college or training provider that gives negative feedback on attendance, attitude to learning, and suitability for the course.
 - The applicant does not successfully complete any additional subject-related testing or subject-related activities to the expected standard.
 - An applicant is not going to be able to complete the specific work placements required for a course due to the outcome of a DBS check or safeguarding risk assessment.
 - The College Group is unable to provide the support required.
 - The applicant misses two arranged appointments without letting us know in advance that they cannot come.
 - The applicant does not attend the identified enrolment session without letting the Applications team know in advance.
 - An agreement cannot be reached between the College Group and the Local Education Authority regarding supporting an applicant with an EHCP.

- High Needs funding has not been approved by the Local Education Authority for an applicant with an EHCP.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF AN OFFER

- The process for accepting an offer will be shared with applicants when an offer is made. Applicants must respond within the time stipulated in the offer letter either accepting or declining their offer of a place in order to guarantee a place on the course. Where demand is high for a course, applicants that have not accepted an offer within this timeframe may be placed on a waiting list.
- We encourage applicants to only hold one offer of a place with the College Group. Where an applicant holds two offers, they will be asked to decline one of these offers. This is to make sure that the maximum number of applicants can have the opportunity to join the College Group
- The exception of this is where an applicant is holding an offer for both an apprenticeship and a place on a full-time course.

10. COURSE CLOSURES

- Where a course is under-subscribed or there is a significant change to how a course is funded, the College Group reserves the right to withdraw the course. In such circumstances, applicants will be offered support and advice on the availability of suitable alternative courses.
- Where a course is over-subscribed to a level where it will be impossible to accommodate a student safely or appropriately, the College Group reserves the right to close the course to further applicants. Alternative options will be discussed with applicants in these instances.
- Where a course is no longer viable to be offered at a site as courses are run at multiple sites, the College Group reserves the right to only offer the course(s) at the viable sites and applicants will be notified as soon as these decisions are made.
- Where an employer withdraws their vacancy for an apprenticeship job opportunity the College Group reserves the right to advise applicants that the apprenticeship is no longer available. Where this occurs, applicants will be offered a suitable alternative or a pre-apprenticeship programme. Alternative options will be discussed with the applicants in these instances.
- Where applications for a vacancy are high, the employer and the College Group have the right to close the apprenticeship vacancy to further applications.

11. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS

- The College Group may communicate with parent/s carers or representatives of applicants aged under 18 and 18+ on study programmes where permission is given, for the purposes of providing information about the progress of the application and about the availability of financial and other support available to students.
- Applicants will be deemed to approve this communication unless they advise the Admissions department to the contrary.

12. RISK ASSESSMENT

- TSCG reserves the right to decline admission to an applicant who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution, following careful consideration. An excluded applicant may normally re-apply for admission two years following the date of exclusion. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) reserves the right to refuse admission to any applicant. The decision of the CEO shall be final.

TSCG has a duty to ensure that it spends / invests public funds, with care. It reserves the right not to admit an individual who previously attended the College Group but in the view of the College Group failed to make sufficient effort or progress towards successfully completing their studies.

- In the interest of duty of care, TSCG reserves the right not to admit an applicant where there is evidence that they could be a threat or danger to themselves or others.
- TSCG may choose not to admit an applicant where there are concerns that the student is not well enough to study or complete the programme fully, or where there are significant concerns that to undertake the course of study may not be in the best interest of an applicant's health or wellbeing.
- TSCG may choose not to admit an applicant who has outstanding debt to the College Group
- TSCG may choose not to admit an applicant who has failed to complete the first year of a two-year Study Programme.
- For progressing students, poor attendance without a valid reason and/or failure to engage in English and maths sessions may lead to a withdrawal of an offer.
- The vast majority of applicants with spent convictions are admitted to the College Group but TSCG has a duty of care to all employees and students. The College Group, where it deems appropriate, will consult with appropriate supporting agencies when considering the application and will carry out a risk assessment following disclosures of criminal convictions.

13. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

- If a prospective student wishes to appeal a decision regarding refusal of admission onto a programme of study, they may contact “Admissions” in the first instance. Admissions will seek to explain why the applicant has been refused admission on to a course. If further information is required or the applicant is not satisfied with the decision, then they will be referred to the relevant senior curriculum manager who will respond to the applicant either verbally or in writing within 10 working days.
- If an applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, their case will be considered by the relevant Assistant Principal/Vice Principal
- When the appeal has been decided the outcome of that decision is final.