



<b><u>Policy Title</u></b>	<b>HE Admissions Policy</b>	
<b><u>Policy Category</u></b>	Compliant	
<b><u>Owner</u></b>	Academic Registrar, NCG	
<b><u>Group Executive Lead</u></b>	Deputy Principal HE, NCG	
<b><u>Date Written</u></b>	10 October 2019	
<b><u>Considered By</u></b>	Higher Education Learning Teaching and Enhancement Committee	
<b><u>Approved By</u></b>	NCG HE Academic Board	
<b><u>Date Approved</u></b>	June 2022	
<b><u>Equality Impact Assessment</u></b>	The implementation of this policy is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics.	
<b><u>Freedom of Information</u></b>	This document will be publicly available through the Groups Publication Scheme.	
<b><u>Review Date</u></b>	June 2024	
<b><u>Applicability of Policy</u></b>	<b><u>Consultation Undertaken</u></b>	<b><u>Applicable To</u></b>
Newcastle	Yes	Yes
Newcastle Sixth Form	No	No
Carlisle	Yes	Yes
Kidderminster	Yes	Yes
Lewisham	No	No
Southwark	Yes	Yes
West Lancashire	No	No
Group Services	Yes	No
<b><u>Linked Documents</u></b>		
<b><u>Document Title</u></b>	<b><u>Relevance</u></b>	
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy	Prospective students with relevant experience or qualification may be admitted with exemptions from part of a programme.	
NCG Information Policy	GDPR compliance	
NCG Complaints Policy	Recourse for unsuccessful applicants.	
NCG Equality Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Policy	To demonstrate our support for inclusivity in admissions.	
International Admissions Policy	Outlines the admissions process for International applicants.	
NCG English Language Policy (UKVI Student Sponsorship)	Outlines the tests and scores that are acceptable for admission in line with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations.	



<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Policy Summary</u></p>	<p>This policy applies to all staff involved in the recruitment and admission of students onto higher education awards and students undertaking a higher education award with NCG. Its purpose is to ensure that the institution follows the QAA's UK Quality Code "Advice and Guidance on Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access" and that these Guidelines are applied consistently across the organisation. The QAA expectation for quality is that: 'From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education'.</p> <p>1. QAA Expected core practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</li> <li>b) The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</li> <li>c) The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students</li> <li>d) Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.</li> </ol> <p>2. The Guiding Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and procedures for selection and admission to higher education should be readily accessible by prospective students and their supporters, and clearly articulate how the application and selection process operates.</li> <li>• Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully.</li> <li>• Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students.</li> <li>• Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.</li> <li>• All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.</li> </ul> <p>As result this policy is fully informed by the QAA and the admissions processes are mapped to the QAA's UK Quality Code "Advice and Guidance on Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access (see Appendix 1)</p> <p>The QAA guidance on recruitment admissions and widening access is located at:</p> <p><a href="https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/adviceand-guidance-admissions-recruitment-and-wideningaccess.pdf?sfvrsn=3628c181_6">https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/adviceand-guidance-admissions-recruitment-and-wideningaccess.pdf?sfvrsn=3628c181_6</a></p>
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Changes to Earlier Versions	
<u>Previous Approval Date</u>	<u>Summarise Changes Made Here</u>
20 January 2016	<p>New policy framework</p> <p>Part of routine schedule of policy updating</p> <p>Adopts updated QAA guidance</p> <p>Not currently applicable to Lewisham College but have included as this may change in the future</p> <p>Updates reflect additional colleges merging with NCG since last policy review</p> <p>Removed reference to admissions data being overseen by HE Academic Board as in practice this is considered at Executive Board and local College Boards.</p> <p>Terminology has been updated to reflect current use.</p> <p>References to an overarching institutional policy have been removed as this no longer exists.</p>
December 2020	<p>Changes to reflect linked documents</p> <p>Changes to reflect new accountabilities</p> <p>Changes to reflect new job roles</p> <p>Removal of West Lancashire College from the policy</p> <p>Terminology change: courses to programmes</p> <p>Added mapping document in the appendix to show alignment with latest QAAs Quality Code Guidance: admissions, recruitment and widening access (Nov 2018)</p> <p>Linked Document additions</p> <p>Wording changes in relation to English language proficiency requirements for international students</p>

## 1. Scope

This policy describes how NCG will make decisions relating to applications for admission to its prescribed Higher Education programmes.

## 2. Responsibilities

### Governance

Any changes to this policy will be approved by the Higher Education Academic Board.

### Management

The Academic Registrar is responsible for the management of this policy but may delegate implementation to others.

### Administration

The administration of this policy is the responsibility of the following:

#### Within Carlisle College:

Assistant Director for Marketing and Recruitment Programme Team

#### Within Kidderminster College:

Learner Services – Admissions

#### Within Newcastle College:

HE Admissions and International Office

#### Within Southwark College:

Relevant curriculum managers and programme leaders

## 3. Recruitment Process

### 3.1. Full Time Undergraduates

Those who are applying for admission to a Full-time Undergraduate course will normally do so through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

Within NCG the process for admitting students through UCAS is devolved to each college.

To remove unnecessary barriers colleges may establish their own processes for the admission of internally progressing students.

### 3.2. Part Time Undergraduates and Postgraduates

Part-time Undergraduate courses (in all NCG colleges) and Postgraduate course admissions can apply directly to the college delivering the programme.

### 3.3. Non-standard programmes

These programmes follow an NCG standardised admissions procedures and entry requirements are established by the professional bodies. The staff with responsibility for following these procedures are outlined on the previous page.

### **3.4. International**

In Newcastle College the admission of international students is administered by the International Office and is set out in the International Admissions Policy

### **3.5. Responsibility for Admissions**

Responsibility for all communications with UCAS, including the transmissions of decisions, is the responsibility of the HE Admissions & Progression Manager or designated staff within the colleges.

NCG Managers responsible for overseeing and implementing the admissions cycle are responsible for providing statistical information to enable the colleges to monitor the conversion of applications within the annual recruitment cycle.

### **3.6. Selection framework**

The Higher Education Academic Board will set the standard entry requirements, subject to the regulations of the awarding bodies that validate the particular programmes. Entry requirements will be reviewed annually prior to the onset of the recruitment cycle by the HE curriculum senior manager and the admissions manager. All colleges within NCG accept a broad range of qualifications and combination of qualifications for entry onto its programmes, including vocational and Access to HE, alongside a range of qualifications offered to European Union and International applicants.

All applications received by the relevant UCAS deadline (normally 15 January prior to year of entry) are to be given equal consideration. Such consideration will also be given to applications received after 15 January up to and including 30 June (end of main applications scheme through UCAS).

Applicants are expected to disclose information about any Disability or Learner difficulty that would help the college to identify and provide the appropriate levels of support.

Academic judgement will be applied to determine the standard entry requirements for each programme and whether there are any variations to these. Admissions staff will use these requirements to screen applicants and to issue either an offer or a rejection in accordance to a points system. In addition, at Newcastle College, the International Office will advise on the equivalence of any non-UK/EU qualifications obtained by applicants.

No applicant will be admitted unless there is a reasonable expectation that they can reach the required standard for an award

### **3.7. Referral to Curriculum Area**

If there is any doubt about a particular applicant's suitability for a course, admissions staff will refer the application to the relevant Manager and/or Team Leader. A decision will then be made in liaison between admissions and the college.

### **3.8. Interviews and Auditions**

For select programmes auditions, interviews or portfolios may be required as part of the admissions process. This will be facilitated through the colleges admissions teams with the final decision made by the programme staff.

For internally progressing students who require an audition, interview or portfolio review, this activity in all instances is to be embedded within their level 3 programme of study.

Feedback is available to all students on request via admissions staff. Applicants who are not made an offer can receive clear feedback on the decision. The request for this must be in writing and/or email.

### **3.9. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

NCG has processes to enable the gaining of credit towards courses for prior qualifications and/or learning through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which are guided by the RPL Policy and subject to NCG's regulations. Applicants who wish to apply to RPL should do so through the Recognition Service.

### **3.10. English Language Proficiency**

For applicants whose first language is not English, each course will publish a minimum score for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and this forms part of the selection criteria. The minimum requirement for admission onto a Higher Education programme is an overall score of 6.0 with no individual language learning component less than 5.5. Other tests may be accepted in place of IELTS as set out in the NCG English Language Policy (UKVI Student Sponsorship).

### **3.11. Criminal Convictions**

If it is a course requirement, NCG will carry out an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check on applicants.

### **3.12. Information**

Information to applicants and potential applicants

NCG will ensure that information supplied to applicants and potential applicants is clear, accurate, reliable, valid and relevant. This will apply to the following:

- UCAS Programmes Profiles will contain the most up-to-date information at any given time: [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)
- Prospectus (hard copy and online for each college)
- Website (including social media)
- UCAS publications
- WhatUni
- Communication of Changes

Changes to any courses involving significant restructuring or discontinuation will be communicated to applicants affected by such changes at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **3.13. Complaints and appeals**

Any complaints will be dealt in accordance to NCG's complaints and appeals policies and procedures as well as UCAS regulations for full time entry.

### **3.14. Data Protection and GDPR**

Higher Education Admissions will be conducted in accordance with the NCG's Information Policy and the relevant data protection and GDPR legislation.

### **3.15. Staff Training and Development**

All staff will receive appropriate and on-going training/development to enable them to perform their duties in a professional, accurate and effective manner.

## **4. Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring and review of this policy will take place through NCG's committee structure for Higher Education.

## **5. Linked Policies**

- Equality, Diversity Inclusion & Belonging Policy
- RPL Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Information Policy
- International Admissions Policy
- NCG English Language Policy

## **6. Linked Procedures**

NCG Enrolment Standard Operations Procedure for Higher Education  
Complaints and Compliments Procedure.

## **7. Location and Access to the Policy**

The Higher Education Admissions Policy is located as follows:

- Group Policies and Procedures SharePoint site
- Our Policies and Procedures - NCG ([ncgrp.co.uk](http://ncgrp.co.uk))

## **8. Person Responsible for the Policy**

Academic Registrar, NCG



**NCG HE Mapping to Quality Code for Admissions, Recruitment & Widening Access**

The Quality Code has three different sections: the expectations for standards; the expectations for quality; and the guiding principles. The relevant expectations for standards and quality are detailed below. The Guiding Principles are mapped to NCGs admission policies, procedures and quality mechanisms. There are two separate sections for the University’s practices, detailing what the University does and has in place to support that expectation/principle, as well as the supporting documentation, which includes reference to supporting policy, procedure, website or another document.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES**

Expectations for Standards & Core/Common Practices	EXPECTATIONS FOR QUALITY & CORE/COMMON PRACTICES
<p>The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.</p> <p>The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.</p>	<p>From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p> <p>The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</p> <p>The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</p> <p>The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p>





Guiding principles

QUALITY CODE PRINCIPLES	NCG PRACTICE	SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION
<p>1. Policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible.</p> <p>Policies and procedures for selection and admission to higher education should be readily accessible by prospective students and their supporters, and clearly articulate how the application and selection process operates. This will include expected timescales and key milestones, what communications they will receive and through which channels, what actions they will need to undertake and when, and how to request feedback or submit a complaint or appeal.</p>	<p>We ensure that admission is based entirely on merit and on the basis to achieve as is stated in our Admissions Policy. Entry requirements are outlined transparently in all recruitment material ensuring applicants are fully appraised of these requirements. We have a long-standing commitment to widening access. Our Widening Access web page provides clear information on the criteria which the University will consider when making an Adjusted or Access Threshold Offer. Our Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy provides further detail around the criteria used.</p> <p>Dedicated webpages ensure that different cohorts of applicants are informed of the timescales associated with each type of application and who to expect communications to come from.</p> <p>Appeals and complaints from applicants are considered under the appropriate University's Policy on Student Appeals and Complaint Handling Procedure.</p>	<p>Admissions Policy (Policy)</p> <p>Widening Access Criteria (Webpage)</p> <p>Contextual Admissions and Access Threshold Policy (Policy) Example of programme page with entry qualifications:</p> <p>History Entry Qualifications (Webpage)</p> <p>All Entry Requirements (Webpage)</p> <p>How to Apply - Study Here (Webpage)</p> <p>Appeals and Complaints (Webpage)</p>



<p>2. Higher education providers use fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable them to select students with the potential to complete the course successfully.</p> <p>An effective admissions process should select students based on their potential to succeed on their chosen course of study, and assessment should be aligned to this goal. Assessment methods should be fair and reliable: consistently applied and delivering consistent outcomes. Tools used to differentiate the suitability of applicants should be appropriate to the course of study and within reasonable expectations of prospective students.</p>	<p>The admissions process is managed by a central team led by the Directorate of External Relations, and selection is carried out by trained, professional admissions staff and by trained academic staff.</p> <p>Selection criteria are set out clearly on web pages managed by the Directorate of External Relations, with any changes to entry criteria considered and approved by the University's Student Recruitment Committee. Criteria are applied by staff consistently at a programme specific level and are designed to take account of an applicant's ability to cope with the challenges of a university education in addition to academic achievement to date.</p> <p>We review our admissions policy and guidelines for admission on an annual basis to ensure that these continue to set out fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods and criteria.</p> <p>For certain degree programmes, e.g. education, music, medicine, interviews and auditions are utilised to assess prospective students in the selection procedures. Prospective students are provided with information to enable them to prepare for, and engage with, the process.</p>	<p>Admissions Policy (Policy)</p> <p>Student Recruitment Committee (Webpage)</p> <p>Example: Interviews for Medicine</p> <p>Example: Interviews for Secondary Education</p> <p>etc</p>
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<p>3. Higher education providers reduce or remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students.</p>	<p>We have a long-standing commitment to widening access and removing unnecessary barriers for prospective students. Our Widening Access web page provides clear information on the criteria which the University will consider when making an Adjusted or Access Threshold Offer. Our Contextualised Admissions and Access Thresholds Policy provides further detail around the criteria used. We have a range of scholarships targeted at those from low-income backgrounds which are actively promoted through our webpages. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scholarships to support students from Scotland</li> <li>• scholarships for students from the rest of the UK from a lower income bracket</li> <li>• scholarships for those from low/lower-middle income countries</li> </ul> <p>In line with all university policies, those associated with admission are subject to assessment under Equality Impact legislation to ensure specific groups of individuals are not obstructed from undertaking any programme within the University.</p> <p>We have also introduced Covid-19 bursaries, to support those directly affected by the pandemic, perhaps because of a loss of part-</p>	<p>Aberdeen Global Scholarship (Webpage)                      525 Bursaries (Webpage)                      Covid-19 525 Bursary Fund (Webpage)                      Hope Heroes: Alumni (Webpage)                      Universities of Sanctuary (Webpage)                      Equality Impact Assessment (Webpage)</p>
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	<p>time employment, or to support digital access for online learning.</p> <p>To build further on support measures already in place, the University of Aberdeen has committed to become a 'University of Sanctuary' and work in partnership with City of Sanctuary and other partner initiatives to inspire and support universities to develop a culture of welcome within their own institutions and their wider communities.</p>	
<p>4. Information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes supports students in making informed decisions.</p> <p>Prospective students should have confidence that information supplied to them during recruitment and widening access activities is accurate and reliable, and enables them to make informed decisions about higher education. They should be directed to sources of further information to enable them to make informed decisions at the point of application for higher education courses.</p>	<p>We ensure that admission is based entirely on merit and on the basis to achieve as is stated in our Admissions Policy Entry qualifications are transparently set out in all relevant material. Entry requirements are outlined transparently in all recruitment material ensuring applicants are fully appraised of these requirements.</p> <p>We provide print and digital material specifically aimed at School and College partners and offer regular events (virtual when face-to-face is restricted) to supplement this material</p> <p>In addition to events, there are other ways prospective students can contact us when seeking information enabling them to receive tailored responses to their specific queries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• email</li> </ul>	<p>Undergraduate Studies (Webpage)</p> <p>Information Guides and Advice, Undergraduate (Webpage)</p> <p>Postgraduate Taught Studies (Webpage)</p> <p>On Demand Studies (Webpage)</p> <p>Widening Access Criteria (Webpage)</p> <p>Contextual Admissions and Access Threshold Policy (Policy)</p> <p>Widening Access (Webpage)</p> <p>Entry from College (Webpage)</p> <p>Open Days, Events and Visits (Webpage)</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enquiry form (“Enquire Now” option on web pages)</li> <li>• chat option on web pages</li> </ul>	
<p>5. All staff, representatives and partners engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.</p> <p>Admissions, recruitment and widening access activities should be conducted in a professional manner, and higher education providers ensure that anyone delivering these activities has received appropriate training and support. Training and resources should be reviewed, evaluated and refreshed regularly to ensure that practice and policy are fully aligned and reflect the current landscape.</p>	<p>Processes and activities relating to admissions, recruitment and widening access are managed by a central team led by the Directorate of External Relations, who receive regular and appropriate training, support, and professional development. The team’s activities include engaging with College partners and sector-wide networking groups, and engagement with professional development provided by these bodies (for example UCAS policy groups and UCAS Standing Group; Higher Education Liaison Officers (HELOA) and its Scottish counterpart (SHELOA)).</p> <p>To ensure appropriate allocation of resources, volumes of applications across the application cycle are monitored on a regular basis and resources allocated or re-directed to address any changing pattern of demand.</p> <p>All staff are required to complete Equality &amp; Diversity and Unconscious Bias training.</p>	
<p>6. Providers continually develop widening access strategies and policies in line with local and national guidance.</p>	<p>The University’s Widening Access Strategy is informed by national policy. This area of policy is overseen by the University’s Access</p>	<p>Widening Access (Webpage)</p>



<p>Procedures and policies governing the purpose and scope of widening access activities and initiatives are determined by a range of local and national bodies. There are different and evolving practices reflected across UK nations and providers should respond in line with stated expectations and develop their strategies in context with relevant frameworks.</p>	<p>and Articulation Committee, which reports to the University's Student Recruitment Committee. The University's Senior Management Team considers actively the direction to be taken by the institution in this area.</p> <p>The University has strong regional and national links in relation to widening access, with representation on the Universities &amp; Colleges Scotland Joint Articulation Group (JAG), National Access &amp; Widening Participation Mangers Group (NAWPMG), Scottish Community of Access and Participation Practitioners (SCAPP) and also as joint Chair of SCAPP Articulation Working Group.</p>	
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