



Policies & Procedures

HE Admissions

The purpose of this policy is to provide prospective students and staff with a guide to the admission of Higher Education (HE) students at Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG). 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 NSCG.

1. Scope

This policy covers admissions to all HE courses at NSCG, both full-time and part-time. For further information regarding admissions to courses awarded by our partner institutions, please see the Staffordshire University admissions policy http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/admissions/index.jsp

2. Principles of fair admissions

NSCG 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. 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. Information and Guidance

NSCG will provide potential applicants with as much information as possible to enable them to make informed choices and appropriate applications. We will provide high quality information and advice on all aspects of recruitment, selection and admissions including our entry requirements and course 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 the NSCG website and UCAS. It will be the joint responsibility of relevant heads of school/curriculum managers and the marketing department to ensure that all public information is consistent and in line with the programme specification.

4. Applications

Applications will only be accepted electronically. The form used will depend on the course and whether it is full-time or part-time, but the website will link to the correct form. All applicants will be logged centrally and then passed to the relevant administrator who will liaise with the curriculum staff over assessment of applications.

5. 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
- Portfolios to be assessed by tutors

6. Issues in considering application

Plagiarism

If UCAS notifies NSCG of the detection of plagiarism in personal statements, we reserve the right to decline the application or withdraw any offers made.

Criminal Convictions

Criminal convictions will be dealt with by the college safeguarding committee in accordance with the risk assessment chart and using SPA guidelines.

Declared Learning Needs

We aim to support all learners regardless of their support needs. For applicants with a declared learning need NSCG 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 college accountant to ascertain:

- Fee assessment (home or overseas)
- Verification of qualifications
- Visa requirements

Accurate Information

The applicant is responsible for ensuring that NSCG is in receipt of all information required to allow the institution to make a decision on their application and that all information is accurate. Omission of relevant information, or the supply of inaccurate information, may invalidate the application or the offer of a place.

7. Communication with applicants

Decisions reached following assessment will be communicated to the applicant via UCAS or directly from NSCG. The decision to interview/ audition is communicated to the applicant directly from College. 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.

8 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.

9 Appeals and complaints

Unsuccessful applicants have the right of appeal in writing to the Director of Curriculum 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.

10 Support and training for admissions staff

NSCG staff will continue to attend UCAS, SPA (Supporting Professional in Admissions) and Student Loan Company training events as required for CPD. They will also attend meetings at partner universities to ensure compliance with university policies. Regular training on admissions processes will be conducted by the Head of Resources and Guidance.