

# Academic Policy and Procedures



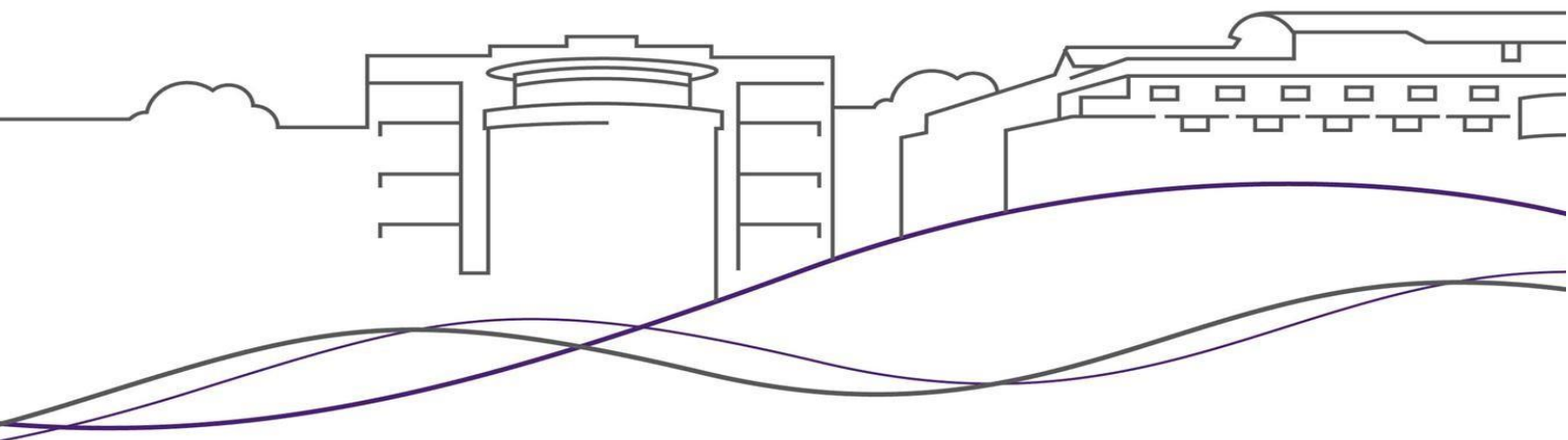
UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE  
SOUTH DEVON

[ ] South Devon College

HIGHER EDUCATION

## HE ADMISSIONS POLICY

V7.0



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# Admissions Policy - University Programmes

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This policy should be read alongside UCSD's Applicants with Criminal Convictions and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Procedure, which sets out detailed guidance on the process for consideration for HE programmes.

## **“South Devon College is passionate about providing accessible, employment focussed and high quality Higher Education”**

This admission policy provides the framework for admission practice for all university programmes defined as ‘Prescribed’ Higher Education by the Higher Education Funding Council. The Policy has been developed by the Higher Education Team and reflects relevant legislation and good practice provided by higher education organisations, including the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA). The policy makes explicit the position in relation to a range of areas of admissions. These areas include: fair admissions and widening participation, the processes for handling applications from those with criminal convictions and our commitment to equity and efficiency in dealing with applications. This policy was approved by the College Higher Education Board of Studies.

### **1. Aims and Principles**

The College's mission is reflected in its admissions policy:

The College aims to enable individuals to develop their full potential and thus to provide access to higher education to all who may benefit from it. The College recognises its responsibilities towards all those who apply to study at South Devon College and will endeavour to ensure that students are only enrolled on a programme for which they have the skills, academic ability, motivation and commitment to succeed. The College is particularly keen to recruit students from groups under-represented in higher education.

These aims will be achieved by:-

- Being committed to recognising the academic and other relevant achievements and experiences of each applicant
- Marketing to its own level 3 students to encourage them to progress to Higher Education
- Welcoming applications from motivated applicants from all backgrounds
- Being committed to promoting equal opportunities for all applicants and students from the UK, EU and overseas
- Treating all applicants fairly, consistently and expeditiously
- Clearly identifying and communicating the entry requirements for each programme
- Selecting applicants for entry on the basis of a range of criteria including; academic, professional, experiential and personal experience
- Safeguarding applicants interests by only accepting students who have a potential to complete the programme of study, and
- Complying with appropriate legislation and South Devon College policies

### **2. Accountability**

The Dean of Higher Education, Quality and Academic Registrar is responsible for ensuring that this policy and its integrated procedures for the administration of the admissions process are adhered to, and that the College's policy and procedures are in line with the requirements of the QAA Code of Practice on Admissions and Office for Fair Access (OFFA) requirements for Access Agreements.

### **3. Recruitment Process**

Those who are applying for admission to a Full-time university programme will normally do so through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). There may be times where an internal applicant progressing from South Devon College who is only applying to the University Centre South Devon (UCSD) will do so via an internal application form, which is entered in to UCAS via the Record of Prior Attendance (RPA) process. Those applying to a Part-time university programme will normally do so direct to the college. Those applying to a higher/degree apprenticeship will do so in accordance with the apprenticeship team.

The process for admitting students at South Devon College is centralised by the Higher Education Faculty Office. The process itself is administered by the Higher Education Admin Team, with the Dean of Higher Education, Quality and Academic Registrar in accordance with the approved Admissions Procedure.

Prospective applicants are advised to carefully read through the following section before submitting an application.

#### **3.1 Selection**

Entry requirements for each programme are set out in programme specification documentation and College advertising literature. Such entry requirements would normally show the expected number of UCAS points a student should hold. The colleges' requirements will be published on the course pages of the college website, the UCAS website and in the South Devon College prospectus. Applicants are advised to always check South Devon College course pages on the UCSD website for the most up-to-date information. Entry requirements may be changed for individual students who can demonstrate alternative qualifications, or experience that leads tutors to believe that they will be successful on the programme. Applicants may be required to provide documentation which verifies the level and grade of qualifications achieved.

In the event of an offer being made for a programme still in the pre-validation stage, any advertising materials and any offers will make this clear. Where a programme does not run due to the programme not being approved, or where there are significant changes to a programme (as defined by the University of Plymouth Major change process) between the offer being made and the student commencing the programme, the Higher Education team will advise the applicant of this and the options available to them as soon as is feasible in writing.

#### **3.2 Safer Recruitment Process**

A safer recruitment discussion with a collection of references may take place for relevant programmes, including those with placement requirements. This will be led by the programme team with staff trained on safer recruitment and will take place prior to enrolment.

Further to this discussion, a DBS may also be required for programmes involving placements. The DBS may be undertaken after enrolment where necessary.

If through the safer recruitment discussion or through the DBS process, something is flagged, this will be referred to the HE Admissions Panel.

#### **3.3 HE Admissions Panel**

A HE Admissions Panel will be held for applications that require further review. This can include a referral from a safer recruitment discussion or DBS, where an applicant has informed us of a criminal conviction or if an applicant has studied at UCSD previously and has not achieved their qualification.

UCSD reserves the right to withdraw an offer from a student.

### **3.4 Interviews and Portfolios**

In general, South Devon College does not require applicants to be interviewed; however the selection process for some programmes may require additional stages such as; interviews or auditions. Interviews provide an opportunity for an applicant to demonstrate their skills and abilities, and interest in studying with South Devon College. Interviews will be conducted using predefined criteria to ensure a fair and equitable experience for applicants. Refer to the Interview Procedure for more information on the interview process.

The interview and decision-making will be consistent with the University's policy on equal opportunities. Following an interview, applicants will be notified of the outcome via UCAS Track. Interviews and portfolios may be a requirement for some Arts programmes as well as Health programmes such as (but not limited to):

- Contemporary Arts Practice
- Film and Photography
- Games and Interactive Design
- Illustration with Graphics and Animation
- FdSc Assistant Practitioner
- FdSc Hearing Aid Audiology
- FdSc Nursing Associate

Applicants may be required to submit a portfolio as part of the selection process and attend an interview. The portfolio assessment and interview will be consistent with the University's policy on equal opportunities.

### **3.5 UCAS similarity detection and suspected fraud**

South Devon College is notified by UCAS if their similarity detection system identifies any possible instances of plagiarism or fraud in applications made to us via UCAS. Direct undergraduate application documents submitted are also examined, and qualifications are verified with awarding bodies wherever necessary.

Offers of a place are conditional upon the information supplied to South Devon College. False statements or omissions of relevant information may lead to the withdrawal of an offer or a place. It is your responsibility to ensure that the information that you provide is accurate and complete.

### **3.6 Criminal convictions**

In accordance with our principles, South Devon College provides a fair and transparent decision-making process for all applications, including applicants declaring a criminal conviction. Applicants with an unspent criminal conviction are required to inform [university@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:university@southdevon.ac.uk). This information will be considered by the HE Admissions Panel who reserve the right to withdraw the offer. For some programmes all criminal convictions will be considered as part of the DBS process with which disclosure is required by law, particularly for programmes in health and related areas, social work, teaching or working with children. South Devon College will follow the procedures outlined by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (provide link) in respect of the application. The decision to make an offer rests with the subject to a DBS risk assessment by the HE Admissions panel, in some cases before a DBS has been provided. In cases where an offer has been made, and a DBS indicates an unsuitability for the programme of study, the college reserves the right to withdraw the offer.

If it is discovered during the application process, that an applicant has a relevant criminal conviction that is not spent, and the box has not been ticked on the UCAS form, South Devon College may deduce that the applicant has knowingly withheld information and the college reserves the right to withdraw the offer.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the information you provide is accurate, and to quickly respond to our requests for additional information in support of your application. If you do not respond to our requests, we will assume that you do not wish to progress any further, and will terminate your application.

### **3.7 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

A number of our programmes require an enhanced DBS check. The DBS procedure is a discreet part of the admissions process, separate from academic decision making. All applicants who have been offered a place onto one of these programmes are required to complete a DBS application form (provide a link to convictions requiring disclosure).

Prior to the DBS check:

If you have ever received a caution, reprimand or conviction, you must declare this on your application form. If you declare a conviction on your application form, then you will be required to provide further details regarding the conviction so that we can assess your suitability for the programme. You may be contacted by the programme Manager to provide further information and/or be interviewed. This will happen once the DBS form has been returned.

If a DBS check reveals a disclosure, a HE admission panel will be convened, and DBS risk assessment undertaken and will consider the information in light of the relevant professional criteria, bearing in mind:

- The nature of conviction/offence/police notes
- The likelihood of harm to clients and peers
- How recent the conviction is, and the time which has elapsed since the offence/notes were recorded
- Your age at the date of the offence
- What has been done since conviction
- And in cases where the offence was not disclosed on the UCAS application form; the reasons for this.

This is standard procedure for all disclosures which indicate particular types of offences or where police notes raise any concerns. It does not mean that your application will be automatically rejected. However, in some cases a HE Admissions Panel will take place.

Your personal and sensitive data will be held by us, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018).

### **3.8 Criminal convictions obtained following the submission of an application**

If you receive a criminal conviction during your application process you must declare this to the HE Team via [university@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:university@southdevon.ac.uk), where it will be reviewed in a HE Admissions Panel. You will be contacted by the HE Team to discuss the progress of your application. A conviction obtained during the application process will not always result in the withdrawal of a place, but early advice is essential.

### **3.9 Disability**

South Devon College welcomes applications from applicants with disabilities, and complies with relevant legislation regarding disability. Applicants will be subject to standard academic selection procedures. Some students may be invited to attend an information meeting to ensure that the college can provide the required support, to indicate where any adjustments may need to be made and to discuss the capabilities required to complete the programme. Exceptionally, a 'Reasonable Adjustment Review Panel' may be convened to review if it reasonable for the level of support a student requires to be provided by the College. Therefore, it is essential that students notify [HEdisability@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:HEdisability@southdevon.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

Early disclosure of a disability will assist South Devon College with understanding and supporting your individual needs. It is your responsibility to ensure that you make the college aware of your disability. If during the process of your application, your personal circumstances alter, or you are affected by an injury or disability, please contact the admissions office.

### **3.10 Minors (Under 18s)**

South Devon College welcomes applications from minors admitted as students. If we offer a place to an applicant who is under the age of 18 it is because South Devon College believes that this individual has the ability, potential and intellect to successfully complete the programme offered.

South Devon College does not expect to act 'in loco parentis' and the applicant will need to provide details of their legal guardian. Minors are subject to any legal age restrictions.

Overseas migrants who are under 18 are legally required, under the rules of the UKBA, to provide a letter of consent from their parent/legal guardian, consenting to the arrangements with regard to the migrant's application, travel, reception and care arrangements in the UK. Migrants aged 16 or 17 have the legal right to live independently in the UK, and so may make their own arrangements for accommodation. But they require the consent of their parent(s) or legal guardian to do this and (if applying from overseas) to travel to the UK.

### **3.11 Non-traditional learners and returners to study**

South Devon College has a long tradition of admitting students who are returning to study, and for this reason we do not set an upper age limit. We welcome the admission of non-traditional learners to the South Devon College community and the diverse range of skills and experiences that you bring with you. We will consider entry based on any previous experience under APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) or AEL (Accreditation of Experiential Learning). Applications should be sent to the admissions office in the first instance.

### **3.12 Extenuating, mitigating or medical circumstances**

We take into account extenuating, mitigating and medical circumstances that are brought to South Devon College's attention during the application process up until enrolment. We require a supporting statement from the academic referee, and we welcome direct communication from a senior staff member or official from a school/college or local community in support of an applicant's circumstances.

### **3.13 Complaints**

Each application is processed in a fair and transparent way. If an applicant believes that, in the processing of their application, the actions of the college have fallen below the standard expected then an applicant may make a complaint. A complaint relates to the operation of the College's application process and/or its outcome, or the actions or behaviour of a member of staff involved in the admissions process.

Should an applicant wish to make a complaint/grievance, they are advised to put their complaint in writing to the Higher Education officer who will acknowledge the complaint, investigate and respond on behalf of the College. Under normal circumstances, applicants should expect to have a response within 15 working days of receipt of the letter.

If, having received a response, an applicant is still dissatisfied, then the query should be put in writing to the Higher Education Manager who will review the situation.



### 3.14 Appeals

Each application is considered in accordance with our principles and offers are made based on the information provided on the application form. If an applicant believes that, in its consideration of their application, the actions of the College have fallen below the standard expected then an applicant may make an appeal. An appeal should relate to the process of decision making rather than the decision itself which is a question of academic judgment. There is no automatic right of appeal against a decision on whether or not to offer a place.

Should an applicant wish to appeal, they are advised to put their concerns in writing to the Dean of Higher Education, Quality and Academic Registrar who will acknowledge the appeal, investigate and respond on behalf of the College. Under normal circumstances, applicants should expect to have a response within 15 working days of receipt of the letter.

### 3.15 Applicant feedback

The University is committed to providing appropriate feedback to an applicant upon written request only. The request for feedback must be received within 28 days of the College's decision. Feedback will be provided via email direct to the applicant within 10 days.

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint or request a review of an admissions decision after they have received feedback, this must be directed to the Dean of Higher Education, Quality and Academic Registrar in the first instance.

## 4. Entry requirements and qualifications

The entry requirements will be published on our UCSD website course pages, the UCAS website and in the South Devon College prospectus. Applicants are advised to always check UCSD course pages for the most up-to-date information. Programme handbooks and factsheets are uploaded to the UCSD course pages prior to the start of the programme.

South Devon College will make available entry requirements for all its programmes. All admissions decisions will be made against detailed criteria which will specify:

- Typical academic entry requirements
- Relevant experience and/or other qualities
- Achievement of a specific grade in a subject

South Devon College's minimum entry requirements are intended to:

- Ensure that applicants are appropriately prepared for study in higher education
- Draw attention to the diversity of qualifications that can prepare applicants for higher education
- Support admissions tutors in recruiting suitably prepared students

### 4.1 General requirements

Applicants should normally be able to demonstrate a level of literacy and numeracy appropriate to the programme which they are undertaking. The admissions process will identify whether an applicant meets this requirement. For an applicant from the United Kingdom, appropriate minimum entry qualifications might normally be one or more of the following:

- GCSE English; at **grade 4 / C or above**
- GCSE Mathematics; at **grade 4 / C or above**

South Devon College will welcome applications, from those applicants holding the new English Baccalaureate (achievement of 5 GCSEs grade A\* to C which includes English and Maths). Achievement of the 'English Bac' is not a condition of entry.

Recognising that not all learners enter Higher Education straight from school/college, South Devon College welcomes applications from applicants with vocational qualifications. A number of these qualifications are not currently 'tariffed' under the [UCAS tariff](#) scheme, but candidates should not be put off making an application.

For applicants whose previous studies were not undertaken in the English Language, in particular for international applicants, the following qualifications may be used as a guide to an appropriate level of competence in English language:

- British Council International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) - overall band 6.0 or 7.0 depending on the programme, with a minimum 6.0 score across all elements.
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) - the internet-based test is the only score accepted.

## **5. Non Academic Policy**

Prospective applicants are advised to carefully read through our non-academic policy.

### **5.1 Entry to Stage 2**

The entry requirements for stage 2 are higher than those required for entry onto stage zero or one. Evidence of the modules already taken will be requested. Where applicants fail to meet the enhanced requirements but meet the standard requirements for stage one entry, an offer will be made. Enquiries should be made to the Admissions Office in the first instance.

### **5.2 Progression to Top-Up Year**

Those applicants applying to top-up their Foundation Degree to the agreed top-up programme at South Devon College, and meet the entry requirements for the specified programme, will be guaranteed an offer of a place. However, due to the availability of places this may not always be for the immediate year following the attainment of your award, and an offer will be made on the basis of first-come-first served. The offer of a deferred entry place will be valid for up to three years. Applicants are advised to take notice of the initial application deadline of 15 January.

Internal applicants wishing to apply to top-up their Foundation Degree can do so via the internal progression form, these applications are added to UCAS via the RPA process. External applicants are to apply via UCAS.

### **5.3 Accreditation of Prior Learning**

The achievement of formal qualifications is not the only way of identifying a student's potential. Admissions staff, including the admissions tutor, will assess the application 'holistically', taking into account skills, experience and abilities as well as commitment and motivation to study to establish whether the applicant has the potential to benefit from the programme and graduate successfully. Experience may include knowledge or practice gained from previous work or study, voluntary or community involvement or care responsibilities. Applications will be dealt with on their individual merits.

### **5.4 Deferred entry**

South Devon College welcomes applications from students wishing to defer their application to the following year. On occasions, an applicant may wish to defer their clearing application; this is at the discretion of the admissions tutor of the programme. Undergraduate candidates are encouraged to select the deferred option on the UCAS application form, or if a candidate decides to defer during the admissions process, to contact the HE Faculty Office.

### **5.5 Confirmation**

Applicants who narrowly fail to satisfy the specific academic conditions of their offer come results time, may still be offered a place, subject to the overall availability of places. Applicants in the UCAS scheme are notified of their acceptance through UCAS Track.

### **5.6 Discontinued Programmes**

If South Devon College has cause to discontinue a programme during an admissions cycle, applicants will be notified as soon as is practicable.

### **5.7 Re-admission following student led withdrawal**

If an applicant has withdrawn from a programme in an academic year and wishes to re-apply for a future academic year, the applicant is required to use the UCAS admissions process.

### **5.8 Re-admission following College led withdrawal or exclusion**

If an applicant has previously been withdrawn by the college or excluded from study at South Devon College, re-admission will be considered on a case by case basis. The college may require evidence of improved academic performance in the case of exclusion due to unsatisfactory progress. In the case of exclusion for an academic offence or other reason further restrictions or conditions may apply.

### **5.9 Applications from progression agreements**

Those applicants applying from Further Education, Sixth form, Partner colleges or Training providers where a progression agreement for their programme has been established with South Devon College for undergraduate study, and meet the entry requirements for the specified programme, will be guaranteed an offer of a place. However, due to the availability of places this may not always be for the immediate year following the attainment of your award, and an offer will be made on the basis of first-come-first served. The offer of a deferred entry place will be valid for up to three years. Applicants are advised to take notice of the application deadline of 15 January.

### **5.10 Assessment of tuition fees**

Applicants will be assessed as eligible to pay either Home or Overseas tuition fees. Applicants will be required to self-assess their residential category as part of the application process. The applicant may be asked to provide further information if their fee status is unclear. Inaccurate information may make an applicant's offer void. South Devon College will reserve the right to identify an applicant as eligible to pay overseas tuition fees at any point in the admissions process, up to and including the point of enrolment.

To clarify an applicant's personal situation, especially if an applicant is seeking to check their International/Overseas status, please reference [UKCISA](#) which is a service that offers advice for international students.

### **5.11 UK Borders Agency**

International applicants will be required to comply with UK immigration legislation and the requirements of the UK Border Agency. South Devon College holds Highly Trusted Sponsor status under Tier 4 of the Points Based System and takes its obligations very seriously. Therefore, any student, who has been admitted and does not comply with the UKBA or immigration requirements, is at risk of having their registration revoked. The guidance from the UKBA is subject to change, and applicants are advised to regularly check the [UKBA website](#).

### **5.12 Contextual data**

From 2012 South Devon College collects contextual data from UCAS, but does not use this as a basis for admission. Publicly available datasets from government and other agencies will be collated and stored. No decisions will be made on the basis of this information and all undergraduate applicants must meet our standard academic criteria to be considered for entry. Information provided within the personal statement and the reference will continue to be considered in the holistic assessment of candidates.

### **5.13 Consideration of occupational health assessments**

- The College has a responsibility to the general public and to individuals. It therefore reserves the right to deny admission to applicants who are unable to supply a satisfactory occupational health assessment for those programmes which require such an assessment as a condition of entry, as stated in the programme handbook.
- Where such an applicant is deemed unacceptable as a result of an occupational health assessment, feedback will be provided to the candidate to this effect. All information provided by an applicant relating to his/her occupational health assessment remains confidential between the applicant and the designated occupational health assessor.

### **5.14 Contact Information**

You are welcome to contact us throughout the admissions process. Please email [university@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:university@southdevon.ac.uk) or write to the address below including your full name, date of birth, University or UCAS reference number

University Centre  
South Devon College  
Long Road  
Paignton  
Devon  
TQ4 7EJ

Appendix 1: Admission Procedure

