

HIGHER EDUCATION: ADMISSIONS POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Higher Education (HE) department aims to offer the highest quality in its academic provision and an outstanding student experience with high levels of student retention, progression, successful completion and employment. This policy applies to the admission of students to all undergraduate taught programmes at BCA, whether attended or distance learning. All members of staff responsible for the admission of students are required to comply with this policy.
- 1.2. The development of this admissions policy adheres to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Quality Code of Practice, the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA's) Good Practice Checklist for Admissions Policies and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Advice on Consumer Protection to Higher Education providers. Furthermore, this policy addresses the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Data Protection Act 1998 of handling student applicant information.

2. Admissions Responsibility

- 2.1. This policy on admissions to HE provision at BCA is approved by the Higher Education Quality Review Board (HQRB) and the Board of Governors and is reviewed by both on an annual basis. Details of admissions are included within the annual Student Performance Report presented to both HQRB and Board of Governors.
- 2.2. The Director of Higher Education has strategic responsibility for admissions to the College with operational responsibility delegated to the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager.
- 2.3. All student applications are processed by the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager, who will conform decisions on the suitability of an applicant for study on a particular programme in conjunction with the Programme Manager. Applications from non-traditional routes or borderline applications are reviewed by the HE Admissions Panel which sits as required and is chaired by the Director of HE.
- 2.4. All offers of HE places at BCA must be made by the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager or Director of HE. Any offer made to a student by any other means will be deemed invalid. Any official offer made and accepted cannot be withdrawn without the applicant's agreement except:

- 2.4.1. in the case of a cancellation of the programme of study, in which case the College will endeavour to offer a place on a suitable alternative programme, or
- 2.4.2. where information provided by the applicant is subsequently found to be incorrect.

3. Equality

- 3.1. The College acknowledges, seeks and values diversity within the student community, ensuring that equal opportunities are provided for students to achieve their potential in subjects across all levels.
- 3.2. Students experiencing financial hardship who can benefit from courses at the College are not prevented from doing so.
- 3.3. The College recognises that there are many individuals who, for a variety of reasons have not gained the formal academic qualifications for HE entry, or who have achieved qualifications and awards not specified within the standard programme entry requirements. The College therefore welcomes mature students (aged 21 or over for undergraduate entry) without traditional qualifications and encourages any motivated individuals to apply for a programme of study.
- 3.4. The College welcomes applicants with a wide range of academic qualifications, who feel they have achieved necessary programme academic requirements.
- 3.5. The College recognises that student life is enriched by student diversity, promoting equal opportunities for all students that is reflective of the wider community, including EU and international students able to meet the necessary UK visa requirements.
- 3.6. Fair admission at the College is reflected through a range of criteria, including entry requirements that are specific to each programme of study. Evidence in the form of academic achievement, professional and personal experience and potential to succeed in the intended programme of study are all taken into account. All applicants are therefore considered on an individual basis.

4. Applicant Admissions Information: Process and Procedures

- 4.1. BCA is committed to making admissions information and entry criteria for each individual programme of study available from the HE pages on the BCA website and printed documents detailing admissions information and entry criteria are available on request. Appointments to attend Open Days, 'taster' days and other meetings provide candidates with an opportunity to speak to staff and students about programmes, services and support that will assist them in making their choice.
- 4.2. Any changes made to entry requirements or standard offers are updated on both the College website and on UCAS.

- 4.3. Applicants for HE programmes must be 18 years or older. The College provides accurate, comprehensive and clear information about the programmes and the services and facilities offered and, where further advice is sought, provides assistance to ensure that applicants make choices that are right for them.
- 4.4. For undergraduate programmes where all applications must be made through UCAS, the College will give equal consideration to all applications submitted by the January UCAS deadline. Applicants received after this deadline will be considered where there are places available on the programme.
- 4.5. For undergraduate programmes where initial applications are made through the College website the College will give equal consideration to all applications where there are places available on the programme.
- 4.6. Undergraduate students wishing to transfer to the College for full time degree programme must contact the College.
- 4.7. The College will communicate with applicants through UCAS, supplemented by emails from the College email account and letters to applicants sent from the College. Potential applicants inquiring about the course will be able to contact the College by email and telephone and, where necessary, are able to arrange to meet face-to-face with relevant HE staff.
- 4.8. When assessing an application the programme team reviews whether the entry criteria have been met and the academic potential of the applicant in terms of their capacity for successful completion of the programme, including, but not limited to, academic history, current academic performance to date and predicted results for qualifications using UCAS and NARIC equivalencies of qualifications. Programme place availability will also be taken into consideration.
- 4.9. Applications from students who have not met the required grades are reviewed on an individual basis by the Director of HE and a member of the course programme validating body subject to programme place availability.
- 4.10. The assessment of applicant Personal Statements is also carried out by the programme team, looking for current knowledge, interest and subject commitment. Furthermore, non-academic achievement, work experience, prior HE experience, future career aspirations/how the course will support career aspirations, responsibility, interests and hobbies are all taken into consideration. The College also assesses references that provide exam predicted results, overview of the applicant and extenuating circumstances. The College is aware that these various applicant capabilities need to be assessed through the widest possible range of criteria to give a fair chance on entry routes to a programme of study.
- 4.11. Applicants must be competent in the English language and all programmes require at least GCSE English at grade C (pre 2017)/L4 (post 2017), or an equivalent qualification.

Students for whom English is not their first language must provide evidence of English language competence (see 6.3).

- 4.12. With the exception of those applying for the FdEd Children's Development and Learning, applicants will also be expected to have achieved GCSE Mathematics at grade C (pre 2017)/L4 (post 2017), minimum or equivalent, prior to commencing their studies.
- 4.13. The College accepts the full range of qualifications as the basis for admission, as defined in the UCAS tariff guide for HE application, providing the qualification is deemed appropriate for the programme for which the candidate has applied. The HE Registrar/Admissions Manager will advise on the suitability of a specific qualification for any application to a particular programme of study.
- 4.14. On receipt of an application for a programme of study, the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager will liaise with the relevant programme leader(s) to arrange an interview date. Applicants are invited via email to attend an interview either at the College or by telephone/Skype or other similar platform. During the interview students will be asked direct questions to ensure the course programme is suitable for them and, those attending interview at the College will be given a campus facility tour. Interviewees may be asked to complete a short formative assessment either onsite during the interview or via an online portal within a given time-frame. Following interview the programme team will consult with the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager to determine an appropriate offer or decline where an applicant has been unsuccessful. The HE Registrar/Admissions Manager is responsible for notifying all applicants via UCAS of the outcome of their application and interview.
- 4.15. The College reserves the right to refuse admission to all applicants who have not met the entry criteria, or who are considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place on a particular programme. Where appropriate, an alternative programme that is more suited to the individual's achievements and/or needs may be recommended at this stage. Unsuccessful applicants are welcome to contact the relevant programme manager who will explain the justified decision. Upon specific request from the unsuccessful applicants, advice on what can be done to support their career aspiration (where relevant to programmes offered by the College) can be provided via email or telephone.

5. Mature Applications

- 5.1. The College strongly encourages and welcomes mature applicants. Mature applicants will be considered on an individual basis assessing industry and academic experience. Mature applicants will be invited for interview and may be required to complete a formative assessment.

6. International Applications

- 6.1. The College does not hold a license to sponsor migrant students under Tier 4 but will consider whether or not a student is able to meet the necessary UK visa requirements for the full duration of the programme. The College reserves the right to reject applicants where requirements are not met.
- 6.2. The HE Registrar/Admissions Manager, using information provided by the applicant, will oversee the assessment of international fee-paying status ensuring consistency with UKCISA guidance.
- 6.3. EU and International applicants for whom English is not a first language are expected to hold an [IELTS](#) certificate, with a score of 6.0, or equivalent qualification for undergraduate programmes.
- 6.4. NARIC guidance on qualification comparisons to ensure that programme entry requirements are met will be utilised when necessary.

7. Deferred Applications

- 7.1. Applicants that wish to defer entry by one year must contact the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager who will then consult with the programme team and the Director of HE and the validating/partner university to discuss and agree whether or not deferral is a viable option.

8. Applicants with Disabilities or Specific Learning Needs

- 8.1. The College is committed to equal opportunities for all students and actively encourages potential students who may have a disability or a specific learning need to make an application to study at the BCA. The College aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment evidenced by continuous improvements to services and facilities. Offers to study at BCA may be made prior to disability and learning support information being provided, however applicants who are aware of specific needs are encouraged to outline them through the application stage so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Information already provided by an applicant will not be used in the assessment of applications.
- 8.2. All applicants are considered on academic grounds and those that may need additional support are encouraged to discuss their potential requirements with the College as early as possible during the admissions process to ensure these can be provided for. If the College is unable to meet additional needs, the College will inform the applicant immediately as this may compromise the learning experience thus putting the applicant at a disadvantage. Where appropriate the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager will arrange for the applicant to meet with a member of the BCA Student Support and

Welfare team to discuss additional support needs in advance of course programme entry.

- 8.3. It is strongly recommended for applicants with a learning disability to contact a local Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) assessment centre to arrange a 'Needs Assessment' prior to commencing a course of study, to ensure appropriate external support through DSA funding is in place.
- 8.4. The College Terms & Conditions for Higher Education Students states what the College is offering to the student and details of the commitment the student is making to the College. Changes to a student's circumstances or additional needs identified during the time of study will require a full review of this agreement. The student will be offered counsel through an assessment process to establish how they can be supported through the remainder of their course.

9. Advanced Standing/Accreditation of Prior Learning Applicants

- 9.1. Acceptance of Prior Certified Learning (APCL) and/or Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) for credit purposes is at the discretion of the validating university for the course for which they have applied. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide all information in support of a claim for either APCL or APEL and, where required by the validating university, to pay the appropriate fee for the assessment and award of credit. The candidate may be awarded where the prior learning or experience took place more than ten years prior to applying as dictated by the appropriate policy and the relevant validating authority.
- 9.2. The College does not award marks for credit obtained through prior learning or prior experience and restricts the total amount of credit that may be claimed to two thirds of the award in question, excluding dissertation or personal research elements, which must be completed by the College. Of this total amount, a maximum of two thirds of the degree awarded concerned may be claimed through APEL. APEL credit may be recognised in one of two ways:
 - 9.2.1. Providing exemption from individual modules within the programme of study, or;
 - 9.2.2. Providing exemption from a complete stage of a programme of study enabling an applicant to enter directly into a higher stage (for example, one third exemption from year one of a three year degree, with entry directly into year 2, or two thirds exemption where applicants seek to top-up from a Foundation Degree to a full Honours Degree).

10. Applicants with Criminal Convictions

- 10.1. BCA requires all applicants with criminal convictions or charges pending to declare these at the point of application. The College does not automatically reject applications and

each case will be considered individually in the context of the College Criminal Convictions Policy.

- 10.2. Applicants are required to declare any criminal convictions on the UCAS application form.
- 10.3. Where a criminal conviction is declared, the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager will write requesting further details on the nature of the offence, the date of conviction and the sentence and invite any relevant comments from the applicant. On receipt of the information, the Academic Registrar/Admissions Manager will determine whether the conviction should be set aside and the applicant considered for admission, or whether a Safeguarding in HE Panel should be convened.
- 10.4. Should the Academic Registrar/Admissions Manager determine that a Safeguarding in HE Panel is required to consider an individual application, the applicant may be asked to give details of their probation officer, where applicable, and to give consent for the Safeguarding Lead to contact the applicant and/or their probation officer for an additional information.
- 10.5. On receipt of this information, the application will be considered by a Safeguarding and Welfare in HE Panel chaired by the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality and comprised of the relevant course programme managers(s), the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager, the Director of HE and the Safeguarding Lead.
- 10.6. In making its decisions, the Panel will be mindful of the College duty of care to its overall student body, which is under 18 years of age and includes vulnerable young people, and its staff. In doing so, the Panel will complete a risk assessment, taking into account of the nature and seriousness of the offence, the circumstances surrounding the offence, the date of the offence and whether the applicant has demonstrated good behaviour following the conviction.
- 10.7. If the applicant is not to be offered a place of study at the College, the applicant will be notified of the outcome and justification in writing by the HE Registrar/Admissions Manager.

11. Fraudulent Applications

- 11.1. Information provided by applicants believed to be fraudulent will be rejected or cancelled.
- 11.2. The College reserves the right to:
 - 11.2.1. request additional information to verify applicant information;
 - 11.2.2. place the application on hold while undertaking an investigation for a fraudulent application;
 - 11.2.3. withdraw an application if information provided is false or if an applicant refuses to provide further requested information;

- 11.2.4. end applicant registration at any stage if a fraudulent application has been detected;
- 11.2.5. notify UCAS of any fraudulent action and outcome implemented by admissions.
- 11.3. All applicants will be required to present original academic and personal documentation at interview or enrolment, prior to the start of their study programme.
- 11.4. Applicant documentation is verified by the College admissions staff and if information is found to be fraudulent, inconsistent or missing, the application will be voided and the offer of a place may be revoked.

12. Data Protection

- 12.1. In submitting an application for study via UCAS or directly to the College, applicants give permission for the College and its higher education partners (the Royal Agricultural University and the University of Reading) to use their personal data for the purposes of managing the application, selection and admissions procedures and to maintain applicant records for individual programme of study. As part of government monitoring of HE in the United Kingdom, applicant data will also be used by the Office for Students and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).
- 12.2. To comply with various legal obligations, including the obligations imposed on it by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, the College Data Protection Policy states that BCA must ensure that all information about individuals is collected and used fairly, stored safely and securely, and not disclosed to any third party unlawfully.
- 12.3. Admissions decisions will be communicated directly with the applicant only, unless written permission has been received by the College to discuss an application with another person (parent, guardian, carer, advisor or school).

13. Complaints and Appeals

- 13.1. The College is mindful that an applicant may be dissatisfied with how their application was managed or about a decision not to offer a place on a programme of study. If applicants feel this way, they should in the first instance write to the HE Registrar explaining their concerns.
- 13.2. Applicants who have not been offered a place on their chosen programme should explain their case in writing to the HE Registrar who will explain why their application was unsuccessful. The HE Registrar can also refer applicants to relevant course managers involved in the admission process for further clarity.
- 13.3. Applicants that feel their case has not been resolved in the first instance can write appeals expressing their concerns to the Director of Higher Education.

- 13.4. Should the College have failed to adhere to any of its own policies or procedures, or if there is evidence of bias or prejudice, the HE Registrar will initiate a formal complaints procedure following the College's complaints policy.

14. The Admissions Process

- 14.1. A strategic goal for the College is to optimise the recruitment of new students. Ongoing review and refinement takes place throughout the year to ensure a smooth admissions process and to identify opportunities for training and the development of relevant academic and administrative skills in all staff involved in the admissions process.

15. Course Closures and Changes

- 15.1. The College operates a Higher Education Course Closures and Changes Policy and will take all reasonable steps to implement the provisions of the plan if the events set out in the plan take place.
- 15.2. If the College discontinues the programme prior to the student starting the first term of study, the student may:
- 15.2.1. withdraw from the College without any liability for fees or;
 - 15.2.2. transfer to another programme offered by the College for which the student is qualified