

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.



University of the
Highlands and Islands
West Highland College

Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean
Colaiste na Gàidhealtachd an Iar

Admissions Policy

ELT manager	Vice-Principal Academic Affairs
Responsible officer	Student Services Officer
Date first approved by BoM	December 2010
Date review approved by BoM	28 June 2017
Next Review Date	June 2020
Equality impact assessment	
Further information (where relevant)	

Reviewer	Date	Review Action/Impact	BoM
GM/FG	15/01/2012	Amendments to policy: Section 4 Applications added 4.5 Christmas school leavers Section 5 Course entry requirements . Points 5.1 – 5.8 revised and re-ordered. Minor amendments, some change throughout document, Change in titles in 3.2 – 3.4 and sentence inserted in 6.3	29 March 2012
GM/EB	11/11/2014	Amendments to policy: 4.3 Applications should be sent to the Admissions Officer at the Fort William campus.	18 Dec 2014
SM	Nov 2015	Update of policy following end-end review and internal audit	April 2016 (and final minor amendments by Education Cttee 20.Sept.16)
MMc	May 2017	Amendment to automatic progression criteria 5.11 at FE level to include agreement from course team that progression is appropriate. Amend 5.21 to include care experienced applicants.	28.June.17

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope	3
3. Curriculum for Excellence.....	4
4. Responsibilities.....	4
5. Key Principles	4

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. West Highland College UHI operates a fair and open admissions process committed to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. All applications are considered on merit and on the basis of ability to achieve, without discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. West Highland College UHI welcomes applications from all prospective students and aims to provide appropriate services to students with learning support needs or disabilities.

This is facilitated by the provision of:

- General information to prospective students designed to be accessible and socially inclusive with information about facilities and resources, including course information and support services;
 - Minimum entrance requirements for taught programmes of study which may include specific subject requirements;
 - An approach to admissions whereby the wider context of an applicant's background may be taken into account where an application falls short of the standard entry criteria for a programme, or where there is competition for places on a programme.
- 1.2. We will ensure equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection procedures by making available appropriate support during the application process including opportunities for students to visit their intended learning environments and/or discuss their particular needs with staff.
 - 1.3. We offer personalised information and guidance through the admissions process, to determine the most suitable subject area/level in order for the applicant to achieve their aspirations.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Admissions Policy applies to all applicants for full time & part time Further Education (FE) courses, including commercial provision. The procedures relate to both FE and HE.
- 2.2. The Admissions Policy for Higher Education (HE) students can be found on the UHI website - <https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/about-uhi/governance/policies-and-regulations/policies/admissions-policy/view>
- 2.3. Applicants should apply directly to our Business Enterprise Solutions Training (BEST) department for any of our commercial courses. Procedures for our commercial courses can be requested from BEST.
- 2.4. For the purposes of this policy and procedure, the definition of continuing students are current UHI students who are studying a specific subject area and are looking to progress on to the next level of course in the same area.

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

3. Curriculum for Excellence

- 3.1. West Highland College UHI welcomes Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland and fully supports its aims to ensure that all children and young people develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they will need if they are to flourish in life, learning and work, now and in the future. We recognise that the ability to succeed may be demonstrated in a variety of ways and will take this into account when applying our entry criteria to applicants who have completed the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. The Vice Principal – Academic Affairs is the final arbiter in the interpretation of this policy.
- 4.2. The Head of Student Support is responsible for overseeing and developing this policy.
- 4.3. The Curriculum Area Leads are responsible for ensuring that all Curriculum staff are aware of their role and responsibilities within this policy and procedure.
- 4.4. The Quality Officer is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of this policy.
- 4.5. The Admission Officer is responsible for the implementation and operation of the relevant procedures within this document.
- 4.6. All staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of their role regarding the effective operation of this policy.

5. Key Principles

- 5.1. The college endeavours to offer a place to all applicants where possible but is dependent on the following factors:
 - Entry requirements are met by the applicant
 - The chosen course has available places to offer
 - Course viability
- 5.2. We advertise a full range of courses through the college website and prospectus. Our range of full time and part-time equivalent courses are offered annually with most beginning in September and finishing in June of the following year.
- 5.3. We also offer a selection of full time, short courses at FE level. These courses start in January and run for 19 weeks. There are a selection of full time and part time HE courses also available from January.
- 5.4. Entry requirements for each course is set by Curriculum and can be found on each courses CDA2 form which is maintained by Quality and can be provided for reference on request.

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

- 5.5. The range of courses is offered to suit the needs of the local community, employers and from demand for places. Curriculum will inform Admissions of what their planned delivery is for the coming academic year.
- 5.6. When demand diminishes a course may be temporarily suspended for a full review of the course content, to ensure that the course is still relevant to its sector. In this occurrence our admissions team will work with applicants to find a suitable alternative. Equally, where demand and need is new or high, and where funding allows, new courses may be introduced or the number of places available on a course may be increased.
- 5.7. The College's admissions process is designed to give all applicants an equal opportunity to succeed in gaining a place in their chosen subject area and course. In the case of looked after children, young care leavers or carers the College takes positive action to support their applications. To this end, applicants who identify themselves as having been, or are currently, looked after children or applicants with caring responsibilities will always be guaranteed an interview for their chosen course.
- 5.8. Where a physical disability is highlighted on an application form, the needs required to accommodate the applicant have to be assessed. In this case a meeting will be held between Curriculum, Student Services and Estates & Facilities to discuss what reasonable adjustments can be made for students before an offer can be issued.
- 5.9. Applicants applying for FE and HNC's are permitted to have 2 active applications with the college at any given time. Degree applicants are allowed up to 5 choices in accordance with the UCAS policy.
- 5.10. Applicants for our Special Learning Programmes will go through a separate process due to the nature of these courses. The process for these applicants can be found on the policy section of our website.
- 5.11. Current students who would like to continue their studies at a higher level in September have an application deadline of 15th January. Continuing students are not called for interview but are given a conditional offer based on the successful completion of the current course they are studying and the agreement of the course team that they have the necessary academic capability to succeed at the higher level.
- 5.12. Offers of places are made to continuing HE students in February/March, where applications are submitted before the continuing student's application deadline.
- 5.13. New applications for HE courses which commence in September have an application deadline of 15th January, in line with the national UCAS deadline. Applications submitted after this date will be considered based on availability of places on their chosen course.
- 5.14. Any UCAS applicants that have not secured a Higher Education place by 30th June will go through a process known as Clearing. Due to the complicated nature of clearing and its independent timings, a separate procedure and process is cascaded down to all UHI partners by UHI Executive Office each year.

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

- 5.15. New applications for FE courses which commence in September have an application deadline of 30th March and interviews will be arranged within 2 weeks of receipt. Applications received beyond this date will continue to be processed,
- however, candidates will be advised that they may a) not be guaranteed an interview where courses are full or b) may be placed on a waiting list.
- 5.16. The admissions deadline for courses starting in January/February is 15th of October. Applications submitted after this date will be considered based on availability of places on their chosen course.
- 5.17. The Admissions Procedure has an annual cycle which details when applications will be welcomed and processed, when interviews, where applicable take place and when offers of places are made. All applications are required to go through the full application process regardless of when the application is submitted. Late applications will be subject to the same procedures and conditions as on time applications.
- 5.18. At the start of each new application cycle, Curriculum will provide Admissions with an interview schedule of dates that will start from October.
- Oct – Dec – one free morning/afternoon every 2 weeks
 - Jan – Mar – one free morning/afternoon every week
 - Apr – Sep – one free morning/afternoon twice a week
- 5.19. Applications are encouraged to be made online through the College website. Submission of a paper application is also possible with forms available from each learning centre.
- 5.20. The applicant is asked for their academic history, personal information and work experience, which is required to assess their motivation and suitability for their chosen course (if part of the course entry criteria only). This includes a personal statement where the applicant can set out their interests, motivation and reasons for their choice.
- 5.21. Applicants are also asked for details of any disabilities/accessibility issues or care experience they may have that may benefit from having additional support put in to place to give them the best chance of succeeding in their studies. This information is requested so that an assessment of whether reasonable adjustments can be put in place can be made prior to selection on to the course.
- 5.22. Personal data is also collected to ensure that all groups of people are dealt with equally. All information stored is done so under the regulations of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 5.23. All new FE applicants are invited to attend a presentation about the college and their chosen vocational area. This is followed by an interview for their chosen course with a member of the curriculum team. Some courses will require applicants to complete a skills test as part of the interview process. Applicants will be informed before the interview if a skills test is required.

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

- 5.24. All new FE applicants will be required to attend an interview. The purpose of the FE interview is to equip the applicant with the relevant information that will allow them to make an educated decision about the course they have applied for. This is done with a group presentation, which provides general information about the course, followed by a one to one personalised discussion with curriculum. It is also a vehicle for curriculum staff to make a decision on applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirements.
- 5.25. HE applicants do not normally attend an interview, except in the case of some programmes where an audition or portfolio review, forms part of the selection process. A selection interview may also be required where entry qualifications were obtained more than six years previously. If an interview applies, the assessment criteria and requirements of the interview will be clearly communicated to the applicants in advance.
- 5.26. When applicants are invited for interview, the interviewer will consider the best level of course for the applicant and their suitability for the chosen vocational area. The interviewer may recommend a different level of course from the level requested by the applicant after considering previous experiences, skills, knowledge and ability.
- 5.27. Where applicants have been successful an offer of place is made. In the case of unsuccessful applicants, they are invited to meet the information and guidance team to discuss any other suitable opportunities at the college that may still be available to study.
- 5.28. Conditional Offers can be made under a number of circumstances. The Conditional Offer will be subject to the Admissions process timeline. The College reserves the right to withdraw an offer of place under exceptional circumstances, e.g. unsatisfactory reference/s, funding constraints. All offers of place are subject to the College's Policies and Procedures which can be found on our website.
- 5.29. The College administers a discretionary bursary fund, Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), childcare fund and hardship fund on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council. Applications for funding support are welcomed from successful applicants. Information on funding available and how to apply is issued by the Student Services Team.
- 5.30. Higher Education applicants may be eligible for financial support which is administered by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), details of how to apply are provided to applicants along with their offer of place.

More information on funding available can be found on the college's website:
<https://www.whc.uhi.ac.uk/studying-at-whc/fees-funding>

- 5.31. The online funding system is activated June each year and applicants are encouraged to apply from June onwards. Applicants are only able to apply for funding once they have an Unconditional Offer which they have firmly accepted. This is referred to as U/F and this then creates a provisional enrolment record, which is needed to apply for funding.
- 5.32. When applicants are on the system as U/F, admissions will issue the funding letter which details the applicant's username, password and a suite of leaflets to aid in the funding application process.

Admissions Policy

WHC reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion. The most up-to-date version can be downloaded from our website.

- 5.33. Once Admissions issue the funding letter all further correspondence and guidance regarding funding is then directed to the Student Funding team within Student Services.