

Further Education and Apprenticeships Admissions Policy

*Integrity • Valuing Other • Teamwork •
Supportiveness*

Our Mission

Raising Aspirations, Unlocking Potential, Advancing Futures

Our Values

Excellence, Passion, Teamwork, Integrity, Innovation,
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

Sparsholt College Group

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The FE & Apprenticeships Admissions Policy was approved by the Board of Governors in December 2021.

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Further Education and Apprenticeship Admissions Policy

Scope

Sparsholt College Hampshire, incorporating Andover College, (the College) seeks to make the admissions process as smooth as possible. The College welcomes feedback on this policy and processes as part of its transparent and continuous improvement process.

This policy provides applicants with clear statements as to what they can expect from the College and also sets out a number of statements which the College will abide by and in some cases, restrictions which the College is required or has decided to adopt in order to safeguard its wider community or to protect the standards on individual programmes.

This policy applies to all applicants who are seeking admission to either campus of the College for any of the following Further Education (FE) course types including:

- First time applications to full-time programme of study
- Learners who are already at the College and wishing to progress from one programme of study to another
- Part time applicants to either classroom based or work-place study
- Apprenticeship applications

For Higher Education (HE) admissions, please see the Higher Education Admissions Policy.

Policy Statements

Information and Advice

The College will ensure that applicants receive information from the Admissions team, Apprenticeship team and/or the Course Tutors in order to help them decide on the course of study best suited to their needs.

The College will provide help, support and information to applicants at all stages of the admissions process and by offering applicants the opportunity to visit the College and view its facilities prior to the commencement of a long course through open days, taster events and/or through course interview days/afternoons.

Applicants with disabilities or learning difficulties are guided to access appropriate support from the College's Learning Support teams and will be given the opportunity to disclose their support needs at application, interview and at enrolment.

Applications Process

FE applicants make their application via the College website. Application forms are also available in hard copy on request from the college Admissions Team. Applications for full time or part time FE and apprenticeship programmes can be made either by completing and returning a hard copy application by post or by completing an application online.

Applicants are regularly updated as to the stage their application has reached and will receive replies to all correspondence within 10 working days of receipt.

Entry Criteria

The College has published academic entry criteria for all courses. Existing College students applying to undertake a further programme of study are required to fulfil the relevant entry criteria along with any special criteria for progression and follow the admissions procedure for internal applicants.

Applicants for whom English is a second language may be asked to complete an assessment of their reading, writing and comprehension as a condition of entry onto non-ESOL courses.

Students under the age of 16 would only be considered to study on a FE programme if they have achieved a minimum of 8 GCSE's at a grade 4 or above and are enrolled for sound educational reasons, that safeguarding arrangements are in place and that any admission is authorised by the College Designated Safeguarding Lead prior to enrolment.

Students under 18 who have not achieved a grade 4 or higher in their GCSE English and Maths examinations will be required to work towards a minimum of a 4 grade in these subjects alongside their main course of study. This is a mandatory study requirement and therefore attendance at Maths and English classes is a condition of study for learners aged under 18 who have not achieved a grade 4 or above in GCSE Maths and or English.

Most Apprenticeships are available to applicant aged 16 or above. There are different entry requirements depending on the sector and job which the applicant is applying for. Applicants will be considered against the individual entry criteria for the apprenticeship they are seeking to undertake. For apprentices who have not previously attained GCSE grade A* to C or grades 9 to 4 in English or maths (or both) on the day they start the apprenticeship they will be required to study towards a functional skills qualification which builds upon their prior attainment as a component of their apprenticeship programme and as a condition of study.

Initial Assessment

Any information from initial assessments will be used to determine the appropriate level of study and used as a diagnostic for assessing potential learning support needs for students to help them with their studies. Reasonable adjustments to the initial assessment process may be made for candidates with disabilities.

Equality and Diversity

The College welcomes applications from applicants irrespective of any protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and in line with the College's Single Equality Scheme.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

The College encourages participation in its learning programmes by all sections of the community and the industries it serves and welcomes applications from applicants who have a disability. The College will assess whether students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities are able to follow a programme of study most suitable to their needs, with best endeavour to provide appropriate support within available College resources. This support will be monitored and amended as necessary.

If the College is unable to meet additional needs adequately, or can only do so by compromising the learning experience which would disadvantage either the applicant or the community, the College undertakes to inform the applicant immediately the situation is apparent.

All applicants who accept an offer will receive an email link to the College online Registration Form which will include a Disability Questionnaire. This will give applicants who have not declared a disability on their original application, the opportunity to inform the College of any help and support that they will require during their studies.

Information provided in relation to disability will be used in the initial assessment of applications to ascertain whether the College offers an appropriate programme of study to adequately meet the needs of the learner.

The Learning Support coordinator will arrange an interview with the applicant to discuss appropriate arrangements to support their studies prior to enrolment. Applicants who are aware that they have specific needs must disclose these or risk a rescinded offer should the College subsequently determine that it is unable to meet learner need.

Fitness to Study

The College aims to nurture an ethos of independence, self-knowledge and personal responsibility amongst its learners. Learners must therefore take an active part in the process by taking appropriate measures to manage their own health and well-being so that they can achieve and succeed. Many opportunities are provided to learners throughout the academic year to engage in activities delivered through the tutorial system, which will incorporate safeguarding, British values, equality and PREVENT so that learners may learn about and develop their own well-being. The College therefore has an expectation that its learners should demonstrate that they have the capacity to study by showing both awareness and ability.

Awareness of:

- their own well-being, health and safety and that of others; the risk of physical danger to themselves and others.

Ability to:

- communicate effectively with fellow learners, staff and other professionals through which ever method is usual to that learner;
- attend and engage in classes, practical sessions, tutorials/progress reviews and private study, with their usual support adjustments as necessary;
- submit coursework and engage with the assessment process within the required timescales, within appropriate adjustments.

This Fitness to Study policy applies to learners, progressors and applicants, throughout all aspects of their College life, and where their behaviour impacts upon their capacity to fulfil the commitments of the study programme, or upon the reputation of the College community. It applies to learners if the Student Code of Conduct is breached whether this is on or close-by College premises, during travel to learn periods or during study activities offsite such as outings, visit, residentials, fieldwork or placements, or when brought to the attention of the College through a third party.

The Fitness to Study policy applies to applicants where there is cause to believe at application that they may not be fit to study or where all the information requested by the College, relevant to this policy, is not forthcoming within the stated time period.

The College strives for consistency and sensitivity in these matters so any decisions will only be reached following consultation and advice from relevant individuals. The learner's views will form part of the consideration, as will the views of the learner's parents, guardians or advocates where appropriate

However, the College senior staff's decision about a learner's awareness and ability to learn, study, achieve and interact with the College community will be final, subject to appeal to the Deputy Principal.

Applications for Veterinary Nursing (VN) including VN Apprenticeships are subject to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) '*Guidance on Recruitment of Students with Disabilities*' and the RCVS fitness to practice guidelines.

Criminal Convictions and DBS Checks

Applicants are required to declare criminal convictions within the application process, prior to starting their course. The course offer *may* be refused for applicants with certain criminal convictions on the basis of safeguarding the whole student community.

The College does not normally require applicants to be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked other than those who apply for specific courses in Health and Social Care and Child Care for reasons of professional requirement in that sector. This DBS checking will normally be completed as part of the interview process. All offers for courses where there is a DBS check requirement will be conditional on successful DBS clearance.

Under exceptional circumstances, the College might require an applicant to have a DBS check as an admission requirement.

Course Offers

Course offers may have conditions in addition to the standard academic entry criteria.

Course offers will be made in writing via the Admissions team within 10 working days of the application and interview subject to all relevant supporting information requested being received. The Admissions and Student Support Teams will advise of the next steps once the offer of a place is made.

Part time offers will be made in writing within 10 working days of receipt of application or interview (where interviews are applicable). The College will confirm place on course within 5 days of receipt of payment.

If a course is thought not to be suitable, or the applicant does not meet the required course entry criteria, they will be offered an alternative course where possible at the College which is believed to provide appropriate progression or referred to another provider where practicable.

Confirmation of Course of Study Post Enrolment

FE learners sign a Learning Agreement which will contain clear statements specifying precisely what the College is offering to the student and details of the commitment the student is making to the College. Any changes to the student's circumstances will automatically require a full review of the Learning Agreement. Applicants with additional needs identified part way through a course of study will be guided through an assessment process to establish how or in certain circumstances whether they can be supported.

Apprentices and their employers are required to contribute to and sign a Commitment Statement which outlines the training that will be delivered in the practical period of the apprenticeship and how all three parties (apprentice, employer and college) will support the achievement of the apprenticeship. If any circumstances change that affect the practical period of the apprenticeship, then the Commitment Statement will be revised and agreed.

Course Closure

Where a course is not viable through being under-subscribed or there is a significant change to government funding which creates non-viability, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course (including after an offer has been made or accepted). In such cases, applicants will be offered advice and guidance on the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other suitable alternative education providers wherever possible.

Data Protection

The College will handle data and information in a manner that ensures that it safeguards individuals and personal data. Information will always be managed in a manner that complies with the College Data Protection Policy. All staff involved in admissions will have received training that enables them to discharge their responsibilities in relation to data protection.

The College may share applicant data with programme delivery partners or employers, where they are directly involved in the admissions process, and with the applicant's previous places of study. All such third parties are prohibited from using an applicant's personal information except for this purpose, and they are required to maintain the confidentiality of this information.

Course Acceptance

The completion of the College online registration forms is the means by which applicants accept their place at College. Following acceptance of a place at College, the College reserves the right to:

- Request references and/or school/college reports for applicants.
- Refuse a course offer for applicants with certain criminal convictions.
- Require DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks prior to entry on courses that lead to careers where this is a requirement or where work experience providers have this as a requirement.
- Review and possibly refuse admission to an applicant/learner who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution.
- Conduct risk assessments, review, refuse or revoke a College place for individuals where there is evidence either at the point of application or subsequently when enrolled as a student that they could be a threat or danger to themselves or others in a College environment. This is in relation to the College's duty of care to learners and staff.
- Review and refuse admission or progression to an applicant/learner who has any outstanding debt to the College.
- Require that learners are funded by a government body, another funding body or are self-financing their course in order that the College receives payment for the cost of studying.

Complaints or Appeals

If applicants feel that the process has not been followed or the decision reached by the College is unfair or incorrect, they have the right of complaint. Complaints should be sent in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager and will be dealt with under the College's Complaints Policy.

Applicants who have been unsuccessful in obtaining a place on their chosen course are welcome to re-apply for and will be guided towards alternative courses (where appropriate) if they feel that is suitable and where they have taken into account the reason that their original application was unsuccessful.