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## Admissions

## Policy and Procedures

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### Quality Assurance Benchmarking

This policy and procedure maps to the following external quality assurance frameworks: Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter 2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education

### Document History

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## POLICY STATEMENT

West Dean College is committed to ensuring that students are recruited, selected, taught, assessed and otherwise treated solely on their relevant merits and abilities. The College supports the principle of equal opportunities and therefore no student will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, religion, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, political beliefs, age, sexual orientation, gender or marital status.

The Admissions Policy and Procedures apply to all individuals applying to study on a Diploma or Degree Course at West Dean College, and all staff involved in any aspect of admissions within the College.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The following principles underpin the Admissions Policy and Procedures:

- The Admissions Policy and Procedures are clearly documented, reviewed on an annual basis and easily accessible for staff and students.
- Applications are processed as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Applicants are communicated with effectively throughout the admissions process from initial enquiry to enrolment. Applicants are appropriately informed and prepared for their studies at West Dean College.
- The decision to offer an applicant a place of study is based on clearly stated entry criteria, which are applied consistently and fairly. The College ensures that these criteria are fulfilled and that the applicant has the potential to successfully complete a programme of study by:
  - Assessing the information provided in the application form against the entry criteria
  - Assessing provided references (one of which should be a recent academic reference)
  - Inviting an applicant to the College for an assessment day (practical test and interview), portfolio discussion, or equivalent.
- Unsuccessful candidates are provided with feedback on request.
- The Admissions Policy and Procedures will comply with current appropriate legislation and take account of the relevant QAA Higher Education Codes of Practice.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with the College Generic Programme Document (September 2016), Chapter 4 Admissions., the Funding Policy and Procedures, and the Student Record Keeping Policy.

### 2. RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND RELEVANCE

- The College will ensure that policies and procedures will be informed and guided by good practice.
- The College will monitor and evaluate the relationship between the Admissions Policy and the applicants' performance and feedback, and will address any identified issues.
- The assessment methods used for student admission will be reliable and valid.

- o The process for assessing applicants will be transparent and the reasons for decisions will be recorded and made available.
- o The practical tests and (portfolio) interviews will be structured and consistent.

### 3. COMMUNICATION

The College aims to process applications quickly, efficiently and professionally. This will be achieved by:

- o Clear lines of responsibilities
- o Ongoing training and development of all members of staff involved with the admissions process
- o Continuous enhancement of the admissions procedure to ensure best practice
- o Consistent application of this policy and admission procedures by all staff involved with the admissions and application process

### 4. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

#### 4.1 Entry and English language requirements

The entry requirements for each programme of study are available on the College website, in the Diploma and Degree Prospectus, in the Programme Documents and from the College Registry.

#### 4.2 Application deadlines

The deadlines for applications will be published on the College website and in the Diploma and Degree Prospectus. Applications received after the published deadlines will be considered if there is availability on the relevant programmes.

#### 4.3 Submitting an application

All applicants will be required to complete an application form relevant to their chosen subject. Candidates will be able to download forms from the College's website or a hard copy can be obtained from the Admissions Officer.

The candidate will be required to fill out the following sections on the application form:

- o Personal details
- o Special Needs/Disability
- o Fee Payments
- o Education and Qualifications

- Information on English Language Requirements
- Reasons for wishing to study programme
- References – all applicants must provide two satisfactory references one of which must be a recent academic reference, if possible

The applicant will need to supply the following documents with the completed application form:

- 2 passport size photos
- Copy of passport
- Copy of qualifications
- Original transcripts
- IELTS certificate, if applicable
- Portfolio of work, where applicable

#### 4.4 Acknowledgement

The Admissions Officer will confirm receipt of the application form by email within 5 working days. The acknowledgement provides information on the next stage of the application process and contact details of the Admissions Officer.

#### 4.5 Initial assessment of application

All applicants will be assessed as individuals and will be given equal opportunities to provide the relevant information or demonstrate relevant skills and/or experience.

- On receipt of the application the Admissions Officer will initially assess whether:
  - The application is complete
  - The applicant fulfils the entry and English language requirements
  - An applicant requires a Tier 4 visa for study at the College
  - Submitted diplomas and transcripts are genuine through spot checking
  - If the application is incomplete, the Admissions Officer will request the required documentation from the applicant before processing the application
  - If the applicant does not fulfil the entry requirements and/or the English language requirements, the application may be rejected or a conditional offer may be made after assessment, practical test and interview by the subject Programme Tutor. The applicant will receive a communication from the Admissions Officer explaining why the application was rejected.
  - When the application is complete and the applicant fulfils the entry requirements, the Admissions Officer passes the application on to the subject Programme Tutor for further assessment of merit and potential.

#### 4.6 Assessment of merit and potential

- The potential to successfully complete a programme of study will normally be an essential criterion for admission to a course that leads to a West Dean College Diploma or a qualification validated by the University of Sussex.
- Prior educational attainment is a key indicator of potential retention and success. However, the College may consider other factors in addition to examination results. Where appropriate, the College will consider a broad range of information in addition, to, or instead of, previous academic achievement. This may include relevant skills and contextual factors, such as work experience.

#### 4.7 Practical test and interview day

Applicants will normally receive an invitation to the practical test and interview day within 10 working days after their application being assessed. The interview invitation will include information on:

- The date, time and location
- Any documentation the candidate should bring
- A brief format of the session(s) and expected duration
- College staff involved with the practical test and interview
- Accommodation and meals, if required

Candidates who applied for one of the Creative Arts programmes will be expected to provide a portfolio of work that reflects a commitment to their chosen practice. Candidates who applied for one of the Conservation programmes will also undertake a practical test to assess their standard of practical skills – for example candidates applying for the Furniture programme will be required to demonstrate their woodworking experience by completing a number of exercises including making joints: visual arts students will be asked to present and discuss their portfolio.

The practical test will take place at the College and the interview will be conducted by the subject Programme Tutor and the Assistant Tutor, or another member of the Teaching Staff.

Where required, provisions will be made during the assessment and interview days for applicants to:

- Be given advice on funding
- Discuss additional learning/disability support
- Visit the student accommodation

### Video-conference interview

If the applicant is unable to attend an interview at West Dean College, a video-conference interview will be arranged along with a long-distance test to be supervised where possible in the applicant's own country. The Admissions Officer arranges the video-conference interview with the Programme Tutor. If the connection fails due to technical difficulties, the subject Programme Tutor will reschedule the interview with the applicant. The subject Programme Tutor is responsible for making the necessary practical-test arrangements with the other institution.

## 5. OUTCOME/OFFER

After the interview, applicants will have the following possible outcomes:

1. Unconditional offer
2. Conditional offer
3. Rejection

The applicant will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days after the practical test and interview day.

**Unconditional offer:** Successful applicants will receive a written offer for a place of study. The applicant is required to accept the offer within 20 working days of the offer being made by returning the signed and completed acceptance form. Applicants will need to state whether they accept the offered place and if they would like to be a residential or day student. The applicant will be asked how they plan to pay the fees and must enclose a deposit. Applicants will have secured their place of study once they have accepted the offer and a deposit has been paid.

**Conditional offer:** A conditional offer will be issued listing the conditions and the timescale for these conditions to be met. The applicant will be required to accept the offer within 15 working days of the offer being made.

**14 Day Cancellation Right :** All students accepting the offer of a place of study will be informed of their legal right to cancel their contract to study at the College within 14 days of receiving notification of their acceptance. Students are required to make a clear statement to this effect by email or by post.

**Rejection:** Unsuccessful candidates will be notified of the outcome.

### Feedback

- On request, the College will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants
- Requests for feedback must be made by the applicant in writing to the Admissions Officer

- The subject Programme Tutor will provide feedback within 10 working days of receipt of the written request.

### **Deferral**

Applicants who have accepted a place of study and paid their deposit will have the opportunity to defer their place for one year if their chosen programme does not have a waiting list.

If a candidate would like to defer the Admissions Officer will confirm in writing that:

- A place of study will be held and guaranteed for the following academic year
- The paid deposit will be held for the following academic year
- The candidate will need to reconfirm by 1 February prior to the start of the academic year that they would still like to take up their place. After that date the College will not be able to guarantee a place of study.

### **High demand and waiting lists**

Where the programme of study applied for is in high demand the College may delay the offer for a place of study to ensure that all applicants receive equal consideration. When this is the case:

- The application deadline for the programme of study concerned may be brought forward. This will be communicated immediately through the appropriate channels, including the College website.
- Applicants will be contacted and advised of the timescale when a decision will be made
- Applicants may be placed on a waiting list.

### **Progressing and continuing students**

#### **Students on 2year courses**

Students on two year courses, which include West Dean Diplomas, and the FdA and MFA Degrees, will automatically progress to the second year following successful completion of the first year of the course. Students will be asked to confirm their intention to progress and asked to pay a deposit following the summative assessment in February of their first year.

#### **Student wishing to continue onto another course**

Acceptance to continue to a further course (e.g. Graduate Diploma level 6 to Postgraduate Diploma level 7 or Professional Development Diploma) is not automatic. Students, who are making acceptable progress, will normally receive a conditional offer after the summative assessments in February. Offers made at this stage will be subject

to successful completion of the current course and may include further conditions as defined by the Programme Leader. In the case of students whose progress is not at the appropriate level at the February assessment point, offers may be made later in the academic year once they have demonstrated sufficient progress as to indicate their likely success on a higher level or different course.

### Complaints and Appeals

- Where an applicant wishes to submit a complaint regarding the handling of their application or appeal the decision, the applicant should contact the Registrar in the first instance.
- If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the initial process they are entitled to submit a formal complaint in line with the current student complaints procedures as outlined in the Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy (section 4) as found on the College website and the Student Intranet pages.

## 6. KEEPING IN TOUCH

In the time between acceptance of a place of study and the course start date, the subject Programme Tutors, Admissions Officer and other staff will remain in touch with students on a regular basis. Students will receive course-specific information, information on term dates, fee payments, funding opportunities, visa requirements, information about forthcoming College events and other relevant information. New students will be invited and encouraged to attend College events prior to the start of their course.

## 7. STUDENT REGISTRATION AND INDUCTION

Students will be required to register on the Sunday evening before term begins. New and returning students will be welcomed by staff during a drinks reception following registration.

On arrival students will receive an information pack with the induction timetable, College information, student ID card, etc.

Student registration will be followed by a one-week induction programme. This will include a tour of the College and the Estate, and an introduction to:

- The academic framework
- Assessment requirements and processes
- Key staff and services
- The Student Forum and Association
- Health & Safety and Fire Procedures



- The Library and research facilities
- IT facilities and the Student Intranet

During the induction period students will be supported by the Director of Education, the Registry Office, teaching staff and all other College staff as required.

## 8. COLLEGE VISITS AND OPEN DAYS

- The subject Programme Tutors and the Admissions Officer will allocate 3 scheduled days each term for prospective student visits, and practical tests and interviews. These dates will be organised in advance of each term and published on the College website.
- Open Days: The College will organise 2 Open Days per year usually in November/February, and prospective students will be invited to the end-of-year exhibition week.

## 9. STUDENT DATA PROTECTION

The College's Student Record Keeping Policy complies with the provisions of the United Kingdom's Data Protection Act, 1998. The Student Record Keeping and Data Management Policy will be made available on the College website and on the Student Intranet.

The College may use student demographic data for recruitment and marketing purposes. However, students' personal details will not be disclosed or shared in line with the Student Record Keeping and Data Management Policy.

## 10. OVERVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Review and update	Responsible	Timescale/Notes
Policy review and update	Registrar	Annually - to be approved at the Academic Quality Committee Meeting in November
Review and update application materials and information (application form, interview form, offer letter, etc.)	Admissions Officer	Annually - August/September

Review and update visa and funding information	Admissions Officer	Annually - August/September
Review and update the practical test and interview process	Director of Education/Programme Tutors/Admissions Officer	Annually - August/September

<b>The Application Process</b>		
Dealing with initial enquiries	Admissions Officer	Ongoing
Acknowledging receipt of application	Admissions Officer	Within 5 working days after receipt of application
Initial assessment of application	Admissions Officer	Within 5 working days after receipt of application
Assessment of merit and potential	Programme Tutor	Within 5 working days after receipt of application from Admissions Officer
Invite applicant for test/interview	Admissions Officer	Within 10 working days after receipt of application
<b>The Practical Test/Interview</b>		
Organising 3 termly test/interview days	Programme Tutor	Prior to start of academic year
Ensuring dates are available on website/programme timetables	Admissions Officer	Prior to term
Organising meals/accommodation for applicant if required	Admissions Officer	As required
Organising room for interview	Admissions Officer	As required
Ensuring a second tutor will be available/present on the interview day	Admissions Officer	
Ensuring Tutors have all relevant information for interview	Admissions Officer	Tutors will receive information electronically
<b>Video conference interview</b>		
Organising date/time for interview	Admissions Officer/ Programme Tutor	Prior to interview
Rescheduling interview (due to technical difficulties) if required	Programme Tutor	Prior to interview
Organising long-distance test	Programme Tutor	Prior to interview

<b>The Outcome</b>		
Informing candidate of outcome practical test/interview in writing and providing further information about next steps in process (depending on outcome)	Admissions Officer	Within 10 working days after interview
Unconditional Offer	Student	20 working days from date of offer to return signed and completed acceptance form
Conditional Offer	Student	15 working days from date of offer to return signed and completed acceptance form
Feedback to applicant, if requested	Programme Tutor	Within 10 working days after written request
14 Day Cancellation Right	Student	Student has legal right to cancel contract to study at the College within 14 days of receiving notification of acceptance
<b>Student Registration and Induction</b>		
Organising student arrival and registration Day	Admissions Officer	Annually - August/September
Organising Induction Timetable	Academic Officer/Admissions Officer	Annually - August/September
<b>Deferral</b>		
Opportunity to defer place for one year	Student	To reconfirm that will be taking up place by 1 February prior to the new academic year.

<b>Progressing and continuing students</b>		
Students on two year courses (including West Dean Diploma and MFA) wishing to progress from the first to the second year of study	Student	Required to confirm intention and pay a deposit following summative assessment in February of first year.
Students wishing to continue onto another course	Student	On application. Students may be made a conditional offer following summative assessment in February of first year or later in the academic year subject to evidence of sufficient progress.