

# HILLS ROAD SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

## Admissions Policy for full-time 16-19 students

Date last approved by the Corporation:	July 2012
Non-substantial changes agreed by the Principal	July 2016
Date for next review:	July 2017
Equality Impact Assessment	July 2013

Post of member of staff responsible: Assistant Principal (Planning & Quality)

### 1. Policy overview

- 1.1 This policy addresses admission to the College's full-time Year 12 advanced level courses for 16-19 year old students by applicants in the final year of Key Stage 4 or equivalent, except for section 6 which concerns applications from those already taking an advanced level course elsewhere. Only in exceptional circumstances will an offer be made to an applicant who is unable to follow a full-time course.
- 1.2 Hills Road Sixth Form College is a member of the Cambridge Area 14-19 Partnership (CAP – see 9). Although each of the eleven post-16 CAP centres has its own admissions policy, they seek collectively to ensure that all suitably qualified applicants are placed on an appropriate course at one of the centres. No individual centre is able to guarantee a place to all applicants, as the number may exceed the places available.
- 1.3 We shall determine annually the maximum number of places available by considering:
- the availability of accommodation, teaching and other resources;
  - the capacity of individual subjects;
  - our desire to maintain a broad curriculum.
- Subject to this, we aim to offer places to applicants with the potential to benefit from and achieve success through our study programmes and to contribute to the wider life of the College. Criteria for selecting applicants in the case of over-subscription are set out below in 3.3.
- 1.4 Applications must be made from the address at which an applicant is living with their parent(s)<sup>1</sup> at the time of application. Enrolled students are expected to live with their parent(s) for the duration of their course unless, in exceptional circumstances, an alternative is agreed with us in advance. Places are offered on the understanding that information provided on the application form is true at the time of writing. If false information is supplied, we reserve the right to withdraw an offer of a place.
- 1.5 Admission is open to all qualified applicants (see 3.2). However, initial priority will be given to 'in-area' applicants, defined to be those who, during the academic year prior to admission, are:
- attending a CAP institution (see 9), or;
  - living with their parent(s) in the Local Authority defined area served by the pre-16 CAP institutions<sup>2</sup>.
- Other applicants are defined as 'out-area', including those moving into the area (see 4).
- 1.6 For applicants who currently have an Education Health and Care Plan and intend to put Hills Road as their named first choice centre for post-16 study, it is important that a member of our Study Skills team is invited to their annual review in Year 11. This is to ensure that we are able to consider whether we are fully able to meet their needs and to

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<sup>1</sup> In exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement, it is recognised that a student may need to live with a legal guardian. Such situations should be discussed with us early in the admissions process.

<sup>2</sup> A postcode list for this area features on the 'Applications' page of the College's website.

support them with transition to post-16 study if we are the most appropriate centre. Students with Education Health and Care Plans will need to meet the admissions criteria for both the College and the subjects they wish to study.

## **2. Application and guidance meeting**

- 2.1 We shall publish a closing date for applications in our prospectus and on our website. Applications received after this deadline will only be considered if space is still available or subsequently becomes available at a later stage in the enrolment process.
- 2.2 Formerly referred to as interviews, we are now using the term 'guidance meetings', as we feel that this more accurately reflects the nature of this discussion. Although we reserve the right to make adjustments in the light of applications received, invitations to a guidance meeting are expected to be sent to those in-area applicants:
- whose application has been received by the closing date, and;
  - who place us as first choice A level centre in their CAP application\*, and;
  - who satisfy the minimum entry criteria in 3.2, and;
  - who are qualified in at least two subjects applied for (on the assumption that a third subject for which they were qualified could then be explored at the guidance meeting).

\*We shall decide which in-area applicants not placing us as first choice, if any, will be invited to a guidance meeting in the light of applications received.

- 2.3 For in-area applicants, the guidance meeting takes the form of an informal discussion at the College with a member of our staff. Its purpose is to offer advice on A level subject combinations and post-18 progression, to discuss the needs and extra-curricular interests of applicants and to answer questions about the College. Applicants do not need to make any decisions about their course during the guidance meeting. The meeting is designed to help applicants think about their current subject preferences, which they will be asked to enter via an online form, soon after the meeting. No offers are made at guidance meetings.

For out-area applicants, instead of a guidance meeting there is detailed information on the College website to ensure that we continue to provide appropriate advice about subject choices and career plans. In common with in-area applicants, out-area applicants also complete an online form designed to capture details relating to their subject preferences.

## **3. Offers of places**

- 3.1 The great majority of places will be offered to in-area applicants, to whom priority will be given. We reserve the right to offer some places each year to out-area applicants, particularly in order to help to maintain a broad curriculum and to utilise our resources.
- 3.2 Applicants who receive an offer of a place will normally have satisfied the following minimum entry criteria, though the Principal may use her discretion in exceptional circumstances or where extenuating factors apply:
- (i) The reference or supporting information provided by the applicant's school or college indicates no significant concern regarding record of attendance, punctuality, general behaviour, attitude to study or aptitude for the proposed course of study.
  - (ii) The applicant's overall combination of subjects at Key Stage 4 provides a suitable foundation for progression onto their chosen A level programme.

- (iii) The applicant is estimated **at the time of applying** to achieve a profile **averaging at least grade B<sup>3</sup>** at full GCSE/IGCSE level (or equivalent, eg 'merit' in a level 2 vocational qualification).
- (iv) The applicant is estimated to achieve the specific grade requirements for their chosen A level subjects, as specified in our prospectus.

- 3.3 Should the number of applicants satisfying the minimum criteria exceed the number of places available, places will be offered by taking into account the following extra criteria:
- the available capacity of the subjects applied for by an applicant;
  - whether an applicant satisfies a higher 'adjusted profile'<sup>4</sup>, which will depend on the subjects applied for and on that year's pattern of applications;
  - the extent to which an applicant is recommended by their school or college<sup>5</sup>.
- In making offers to the minority of applicants who fall below the relevant adjusted profile, preference will be given to those attending a CAP Partner school.

Adjusted profiles<sup>3</sup> are also used as follows. Based on our experience, and backed up by national research, success in some A level subjects tends to be correlated with stronger qualifications on entry (ie at level 2) than apply to most other subjects. National research has indicated that overall grade profiles tend to be more reliable indicators of success in an A level subject than individual grades (even in the same subject at GCSE level). This being the case, an adjusted profile is set each year, in the light of application patterns, for STEM subjects (science and mathematics) and potentially others if they are similarly affected. In recent years, the adjusted profile for STEM subjects has been at least the equivalent of an average grade of A/B (eg AAAABBBB).

- 3.4 Offers of places at Hills Road are normally sent to in-area applicants in March and to out-area applicants in April. Unsuccessful in-area and out-area applicants will also be informed about the outcome of their applications at these times. Unsuccessful applicants will have the opportunity to re-apply in late August for consideration in the light of their actual examination results, as further offers may be made at this time according to the space which becomes available.
- 3.5 Consistent with the linear A level structure, most offers will be for three A level subjects (alongside other study programme elements such as enrichment, tutorial support and extended project). However, we shall also make some four subject offers to particularly well-qualified applicants seeking a larger programme. These will include those offered Double Mathematics (plus two other subjects).
- 3.6 Offers will be made for a place at the College. Once an offer has been made, and providing that the applicant remains qualified for their course as specified in 3.2 (based on their actual grades rather than estimated grades), we shall aim to allow them to follow their first choice combination of subjects requested. Where this is not possible, for reasons such as timetable clashes or over-subscription of particular subjects, guidance will be offered about suitable alternatives. However, enrolment to a fourth subject will be conditional on the applicant's actual examination grades.

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<sup>3</sup> Further information about this profile is available on the 'New Student Information' page of our website, including an online calculation tool and how we shall treat the new-style numeric grade GCSEs being introduced in 2017 for Mathematics and English. We do not take account of level 3 qualifications in this profile.

<sup>4</sup> By a higher 'adjusted profile', we mean a set of estimated grades exceeding the minimum grade B average level indicated in 3.2 (iii).

<sup>5</sup> We shall also offer to speak to CAP institutions about their applications, either through a meeting or by telephone, before finalising decisions about offers of places.

#### **4. Applicants moving into the area (including from overseas)**

- 4.1 Applicants who provide evidence that they are intending to move with their parent(s) into the CAP area will be given a degree of priority within the out-area category, taking into account the above criteria (see also 1.4), similarly for applicants moving to live with a different parent in the CAP area. It is not possible to guarantee the offer of a place to applicants moving into the area, but CAP centres would seek collectively to ensure that suitably qualified applicants are placed on an appropriate course at one of the centres.
- 4.2 Applications from overseas will not be considered unless the applicant is moving to the CAP area to live with their parent(s) for the duration of the course for which they have applied. Applicants from overseas may have to pay tuition fees and they should contact the Admissions Office for further details.
- 4.3 If applicants apply with non-standard qualifications (for example, applicants with overseas qualifications), we shall consider whether those qualifications are equivalent to those recognised by the College and shall seek to assess whether or not the applicant is ready to progress to the course for which they have applied. Consistent with the Government's funding requirements, applicants claiming an overseas equivalent for grade C or better in GCSE Mathematics or English will need to pay a fee for this equivalence to be verified by an external organisation.

#### **5. Confirmation of places**

- 5.1 Applicants holding offers will have their places confirmed at enrolment provided that they meet the criteria in 3.2, following receipt of their examination results. If an applicant does not meet these criteria, we shall discuss at enrolment whether or not an offer of a place can be confirmed and in which subjects.
- 5.2 If particular subjects are over-subscribed, places in these subjects will be allocated on the basis of applicants' overall profiles, although consideration will be given to individual cases on their merits.
- 5.3 Guidance will be available to applicants who wish to consider a change of subject following the publication of examination results. We shall try to meet such requests, although this cannot be guaranteed.
- 5.4 It is highly desirable for each student's future progression and career prospects that they try to secure at least a grade 4 (or C) in both Mathematics and English<sup>6</sup> GCSE (or overseas equivalent – see 4.3). This being the case, and consistent with the Government's funding requirements, students enrolling without at least a grade 4 (or C) in either Mathematics or English GCSE (or overseas equivalent – see 4.3) will be required to re-sit the relevant GCSE subject(s), with the College's support.

#### **6. Applications to join the College in Year 12 or Year 13 from applicants already taking an advanced level course elsewhere**

- 6.1 Other than in exceptional circumstances we do not make offers to applicants to join us in Year 12 if they are already taking an advanced level course elsewhere.
- 6.2 An application to join us in Year 13 will normally be considered only if there is available capacity in the relevant subjects and providing that the applicant:

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<sup>6</sup> This means at least a GCSE grade C in English Language or English (combined), or equivalent. Although a grade C or better in just English Literature is sufficient to satisfy the Government's funding requirements, this does not seem to be widely regarded as sufficient for progression purposes.

- is moving into the CAP area with their parent(s) and is unable to continue at their current post-16 centre;
- meets the criteria in 3.2 above and is clearly recommended for progression to their A2 subjects.

The applicant would also need to provide us with details of examination specifications being taken at AS/A level, so that we can determine whether any transfers of Awarding Organisation are feasible.

## **7. Review/appeal procedure**

- 7.1 Should a parent of an applicant who is not offered a place believe that we have failed to follow our admissions policy, they have a right to request a review of the decision made. Such a request should be sent to the Principal within two College working weeks of receiving the decision, stating clearly the grounds for the review. Before writing, parents are encouraged to discuss the application with the Director of Admissions.
- 7.2 The Principal's judgement will be final in relation to the decision about whether or not to offer a place at the College.

## **8. Complaints procedure**

Parents who feel that their case has not been fairly dealt with may make a complaint to: The Education Funding Agency, Earlsdon Park, 55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH.

## **9. The Cambridge Area 14-19 Partnership (CAP)**

- 9.1 The CAP comprises the following group of maintained schools and colleges:

Bassingbourn VC, Bottisham VC, Cambourne VC, Chesterton CC, Coleridge CC, Comberton VC\*, Cottenham VC\*, Linton VC, North Cambridge Academy, Melbourn VC, Parkside CC\*, Sawston VC, Soham VC, St. Bede's Inter-Church School, Swavesey VC, Trumpington School, Witchford VC, Ely College\*, Impington VC\*, The Netherhall School\*, Cambridge Regional College\*, Hills Road Sixth Form College\*, Long Road Sixth Form College\*, College of West Anglia (Milton campus)\*, UTC Cambridge\*.

\* denotes the eleven post-16 centres in the Cambridge Area 14-19 Partnership

- 9.2 Under the current CAP guidelines, applicants may apply simultaneously to more than one post-16 centre, either for the same or for different courses, sending their application to each of their chosen centres. Applicants must indicate in their application their order of preference between the CAP post-16 centres.
- 9.3 Individual post-16 CAP centres determine their own policies for making offers of places.

### **Linked Statements, Policies and Procedures:**

Guidance Policy  
 Careers Information, Education, Advice and Guidance policy  
 Equality and Diversity Statement  
 Progression Policy for 16-19 Students  
 Student Code of Conduct

### **Further Guidance:**

For further guidance, please contact:  
 Ian Perry (Director of Admissions)  
 Claire Walker (Admissions Officer)