

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Audience:	STUDENT
Requirement:	Essential
Policy Owner:	Director of Marketing, Careers & Admissions
Review Delegation:	Curriculum & Quality
Review Cycle:	Every 3 Years
Last Review:	June 2026
Due for Review:	June 2029

SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP

ADMISSIONS POLICY

1.0 Statement of Principles

- 1.1 South Hampshire College Group (SHCG) is committed to deliver a responsive curriculum that provides opportunities for all and supports the development of the local workforce and the local economy. Courses available range from Entry Level through to Degree Level (Higher Education) and we aim to offer all students a suitable programme of study which best meets their learning needs and aspirations.
- 1.2 SHCG embraces equity and diversity and operates an open access policy. We therefore welcome prospective students with different interests and abilities from diverse backgrounds. At all times SHCG will consider and adhere to its duty under its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in line with the College's Policies and the Equality Act 2010.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time applicants for further education courses at all college campuses and online, for those aged 16-19 and 19+ and apprentices. Additional requirements specific to apprenticeships are set out in Section 9. Separate arrangements apply for Higher Education.

3.0 Admissions Criteria

- 3.1 Many courses have minimum entry requirements which will be published in the full-time prospectus or on the college website. These requirements must be met and will be discussed with the applicant at interview. Some courses or subjects may require other skills and as such, students may be required to attend an audition, assessment or meet a minimum level of fitness. These requirements will be discussed with the student at the interview stage and students may be assessed during interview or at the start of the course to determine their levels of literacy and numeracy.
- 3.2 Students must hold a valid British passport or meet the criteria of ordinarily resident as set out in the current funding body's Learner Eligibility Guidance document. The Education & Funding Agency regards as ordinarily resident in a given country any person who habitually, normally and lawfully resides from choice and for a settled purpose in that country.
- 3.3 Students from overseas who do not have a UK passport or who have not been living in the UK for the past 3 years will need to meet UK residency requirements and may have to pay full tuition fees.
- 3.4 For students up to the age of 18, there are a number of exemptions to the 3-year residency rule that qualifies them for fee remission, based on Government guidance.
- 3.5 Prospective students must satisfy the qualification entrance criteria for their courses as

described in the prospectus and course information on the website, and the college must be satisfied the prospective student intends to complete their course.

- 3.6 Applicants with non-standard or atypical qualifications (e.g. applicants with qualifications gained in another country), will be asked to provide evidence of their qualifications equivalent to those recognised by the College and may be required to undertake additional assessments. The applicant will need to provide a Statement of Comparability, which can be obtained through an organisation such as Ecctis.
- 3.7 For some courses, Disclosing and Barring Service (DBS) checks may be required. If an applicant declares that they have any pending investigations or criminal convictions, the application will be subject to review before a formal offer is made as per the process in section 5.0.
- 3.8 Applicants over the age of 19 at the start of a full-time study programme, or who turn 19 before the start of their second year, may be subject to tuition fees.
- 3.9 Places on full-time study programmes are normally reserved for applicants aged 16-19. Applications from adults (aged 19+) for these courses may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but should expect to be directed to a more appropriate adult part-time or online course, where possible.

4.0 Applications

- 4.1 SHCG welcome applications from prospective students with different interests and abilities and from diverse backgrounds. Prospective students will normally be interviewed and usually offered a place, providing they meet the criteria described in section 3.0.
- 4.2 Admission decisions will be communicated to applicants directly either at the time of interview or by email, unless circumstances fall into 3.7 where the applicant will be informed after review.
- 4.3 For school leavers, the conditions of the offer may amongst other factors focus on GCSE attainment and suitable references from schools.
- 4.4 Applicants who have declared a physical disability or learning difficulty/disability will be referred to Learning Support to ensure that an appropriate support package is arranged.
- 4.5 Current students may apply to undertake a further programme of study following the procedure for internal progression. The College has the right to decline progression for students due to Government funding restrictions or previous non-achievement of the College standards for attainment, attendance and behaviour. There will be entry requirements for progression to the next level or to the second year of a two-year course which will be made clear to the student by their current lecturer.
- 4.6 After a data check, all full-time course applicants will be offered a college interview. The College reserves the right to offer interviews via telephone, online platforms or in person. Some part-time courses require an interview or assessment. Where required, this will be indicated on the course information page on the website.

- 4.7 Students may apply for more than one full-time course but will be required to identify a preferred choice and a final decision must be made prior to enrolment.
- 4.8 Where entry requirements are not met, or a course is considered not to meet the needs of the applicant, the College will offer an interview for a suitable alternative (where applicable) or offer a guidance interview.
- 4.9 Depending on the course and circumstances, applicants may be required to,
- Provide evidence of their previous achievements, attendance and conduct at their current school or college;
 - Provide evidence of exam access arrangements through their form 8 document;
 - Satisfy entry requirements for admission to the proposed course;
 - Undertake further assessment or provide information as necessary to allow the College to support any identified additional learning needs;
 - Agree in writing to adhere to the Rules of the College and to any agreements between the College, third parties or stakeholders that the College may reasonably require.
- 4.10 Students will be invited into the College prior to the start of their course to confirm their eligibility for their chosen course. Students will be required to produce evidence of their results or other requested information before being accepted and enrolled on to the course.
- 4.11 Where a full-time course is substantially changed, relocated or discontinued, all applicants will be informed and offered another course within SHCG. Part-time enrolments will be informed, and where possible offered other available dates/alternative course or a full refund if the course has been cancelled prior to starting.
- 4.12 The College reserves the right to limit the number of places on a course, to define a minimum number of students required for a course to be delivered, and to cancel an advertised course if required. All courses require a viable number of students before they can run and therefore, to ensure costs are covered, a minimum target number of students is set for each course. Please note that late withdrawals by students can affect viability right up until the course commences. In the rare event that a course is cancelled at short notice; the College will direct applicants to alternative suitable provision both within the college group and/or at other providers as appropriate.
- 4.13 The College aims to provide all applicants with a course which suits their individual needs. The college however reserves the right not to admit a student to a course if:
- They are unable to demonstrate that they hold the minimum entry requirements;
 - They are seeking to undertake a course which is not in their best educational interest;
 - They are considered unfit to study;
 - They have a criminal conviction which presents a risk to other students or that bars them from certain areas of work and they wish to follow a course which would normally lead to

that type of work;

- They have behaved inappropriately whilst on college premises or a reference indicates they have displayed poor behaviour or attitude in previous education/ employment;
- There are other circumstances which question their suitability for a course;
- The student was excluded or withdrawn from the college, the college group or from a previous education provider;
- References from other education providers or employers indicate they are unsuitable for a course;
- The College deems the adjustments needed to the estate or course are unreasonable as per the Equality Act 2010.

5.0 Criminal Convictions

- 5.1 SHCG takes its responsibilities for safeguarding extremely seriously. All students attending the College or taking part in an apprenticeship are required to declare any criminal investigations or convictions they may have or are pending.
- 5.2 Students are also required to declare any criminal convictions or investigations received whilst studying at the College.
- 5.3 Criminal convictions or pending investigations are not necessarily a barrier to entry for study at the College, however, a risk assessment will be carried out and the College reserve the right to contact agencies such as the Independent Safeguarding Authority, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Police and Youth Offending Teams if they feel this is necessary.
- 5.4 All criminal investigations or convictions, including those that are pending, will be taken to our Criminal Convictions Panel before applications can be agreed.
- 5.5 For some courses of study, it is a requirement that students do not have any convictions or investigations as they are required to go out on work placement in schools and care settings. Where this is appropriate, students will be notified in advance.
- 5.6 Where SHCG are unable to accept an applicant because of their disclosure, or where a current student is unable to continue on their course, the College will inform the applicant as soon as possible and will endeavour to advise on possible alternative arrangements outside of the college group.
- 5.7 Failure to notify the college may result in withdrawal from the course.

6.0 Applicants with a Learning Difficulty and/or Disability

- 6.1 We welcome applications from students requiring additional support on their chosen course. Applications of students with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) will be fully reviewed and responded to in line with the statutory consultation process, with SHCG initially assessing its ability to meet the identified needs. Liaison with the applicant, secondary school, SEN Personal

Advisor, other external agencies and the college will take place during Key Stage 4 in order to ensure a smooth transition.

- 6.2 Applicants without an EHCP are encouraged to discuss any support needs during the initial data check conversation with Admissions, prior to a course interview. A further interview with the Additional Learning Support team (ALS) may take place if appropriate.
- 6.3 Where SHCG are unable to meet the needs of an applicant because of the specific nature of their needs, the College will inform the applicant as soon as possible and endeavour to advise on possible alternative arrangements outside of the college group.
- 6.4 Applicants aged 19-24 with an EHCP are eligible for funding through their EHCP only when enrolled on a full-time study programme; those undertaking part-time courses will be funded through standard adult funding arrangements instead.
- 6.5 For apprenticeships, the College will also work with employers to ensure appropriate workplace support and reasonable adjustments are in place.

7.0 Fees

- 7.1 Students aged 16-19 – There are no enrolment or tuition fees for students under 19 where they meet the residency requirements and other criteria set out by the Local Education Authority. Most basic materials, including books and handouts are made available to students, but there may be requests for contributions towards personal equipment, trips and visits and specialist course materials.
- 7.2 Students aged 19 and over – Depending on personal circumstances and/or the course, there may be a fee to pay. Course and other fees, where applicable, will be clearly listed alongside the course details on the college website. Payment options and financial support information can also be found on the college website.
- 7.3 In certain circumstances, students (aged 16-19 and 19+) may be eligible to claim financial support. Students wishing to find out more about financial support and bursaries should visit the Financial Support page on the college website: <https://shcg.ac.uk/student-support/financial-support/>.
- 7.4 Apprenticeships are funded through the Apprenticeship Levy or co-investment arrangements. Apprentices are not charged tuition fees.

8.0 Admission Appeals

- 8.1 Whilst the college aims to be fully inclusive and offers a range of courses to suit individuals' aspirations, ambitions, needs and previous experiences, there may be occasions where an admission application is unsuccessful.
- 8.2 Any decision to decline an application will be made in writing. On receipt of this communication an applicant has 5 working days in which to appeal the decision.

- 8.3 Appeals must be made in writing as per the instruction on the communication received and must set out the reasons for appeal.
- 8.4 On receipt of the letter of appeal from the applicant, the College will:
- Review the written appeal and the evidence upon which the decision was made;
 - Consider any new information that was brought to their attention in the appeal;
 - Determine whether the correct decision has been made in accordance with this policy.
- 8.5 The College Principal or Director of Adult, HE, Online & Commercial, or Director of Apprenticeships and Business Engagement or a nominated delegate as appropriate, will make a final decision and will respond in writing with the decision within 10 working days (term time only). Responses outside of term time may take longer, but we will do our best to respond in a timely manner. This decision will be final and no further right of appeal will be available.

9.0 Additional Apprenticeship Admissions Requirements

9.1 Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be aged 16 or over
- Have the right to work in England and meet DfE residency requirements
- Spend at least 50% of working hours in England
- Not be undertaking another funded apprenticeship
- Be employed under a valid contract of employment

9.2 Employment Requirement

Applicants must be employed in a role aligned to the apprenticeship standard. Admission is subject to approval by both the employer and the College.

9.3 Programme Suitability

The College will ensure:

- The apprenticeship provides significant new learning
- The programme aligns with the job role
- The applicant is placed at the correct level

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be assessed and may impact programme duration and funding.

9.4 Admissions Process (Apprenticeships)

In addition to the standard admissions process:

- Employers may lead recruitment and selection activity
- Applicants must secure employment prior to enrolment
- A training plan and commitment statement must be agreed prior to enrolment

Applicants will be required to understand programme expectations, including off-the-job training and End-Point Assessment (EPA).

9.5 Employer Responsibilities

Employers must:

- Provide a role aligned to the knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs)
- Support off-the-job training
- Provide workplace mentoring and supervision
- Support timely completion

9.6 Refusal of Admission (Additional Grounds)

In addition to the ground included in the policy above, apprenticeship applications may be refused where:

- The employer cannot support the apprenticeship
- The role does not provide sufficient new learning
- Funding eligibility requirements are not met

10.0 Associated policies

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Fees Policy
- Student Privacy Notice