

Admissions Policy

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Policy

Purpose:

This policy outlines the types of provision delivered at the Lighthouse Learning Trust and provides the standards and guidance relating to the admission of new students of all ages and circumstances across all of our available provision.

1. Introduction

At the Lighthouse Learning Trust (LLT) we strive to meet the needs of the local community our member Colleges serve. We therefore welcome and will give consideration to applications from all sources, and will aim to offer places to as many applicants as possible in line with entry criteria and funding regulations.

This document outlines the admissions process, and explains the circumstances under which we would not be able to offer a place, or would have to withdraw an offer of a place.

As the LLT deliver a wide range of provision with a variety of entry criteria that differ depending on student eligibility and funding regulations, we will publish entry criteria both online and in our prospectus to provide prospective students with the clear information.

Links to other policies:

- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Careers Guidance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Examinations and Results Policy

2. Types of provision delivered by the LLT

The LLT offers a broad range of curriculum opportunities, each of which have bespoke variations to our admissions processes which reflect the type of provision to which members of our community are applying. For the purposes of this policy our admissions process is broken in to four distinct types of provision:

- Full-Time Study Programmes for students aged 16-19
- Enhanced provision for students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities aged 16-24
- Adult Education for students aged 19+
- Alternative Provision for 14-16 year olds

3. General conditions relating to an offer of a place

3.1 English language ability

By their very nature, our courses require a certain level of ability in both spoken and written English. Students who do not speak English as a first language and have not been in the UK for very long, may be recommended to apply to other local colleges for a period of intensive English study. Depending on the outcome of their studies they can then re-apply in subsequent years.

Students' ability to speak and write English is assessed by the conversation at the interview, an initial assessment, and the exam results the student achieves before they enrol with us.

We do offer additional support for students who do not speak English as a first language, but only in cases where their English ability is sufficient for them to enrol on one of our standard programmes of study.

Adult learners for whom English is not their first language should be informed of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision available within the LLT adult curriculum and supported to apply for this course where appropriate.

3.2 Course suitability

We offer a wide range of programmes which cater for the vast majority of students coming to us from local schools and the adult community. In a small number of cases we receive applications from students who need a programme we do not offer, and in this case we have to refer them to other local Colleges which specialise in those programmes.

3.3 Funding eligibility

We will assess each applicant's eligibility for funding in line with the current financial regulations for funding qualifications.

Our assessment of each individual's eligibility for funding will take into account factors such as age, nationality, residency status and the programme of study they wish to undertake. Our assessment will be in accordance with current funding regulations set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for all applicants. The Trust is required to ensure that we appropriately assess each applicant eligibility for funding in accordance with the financial regulations set for us.

In a very small number of cases we may not be able to offer a place to a student if:

- a) They are not eligible for funding but do not wish to pay tuition fees. (Information about tuition fees is available upon request).
- b) They fail to provide the evidence we need to see to assess their funding eligibility.

Please note that while there are funds available to help students deal with financial barriers to their education (like travel), we are not allowed to use these funds to cover tuition fees.

3.4 Fees and full cost provision

There may be some provision delivered by the Trust that is either unfunded or where individual circumstances for learners deem them ineligible for funding. In these cases, the learner may be charged a fee in line with our Charging and Remissions policy.

3.5 Criminal convictions / Safeguarding / other risks

We will not offer a place to a student if we believe that they pose a risk to the welfare of other students or the condition of our buildings and facilities. This may be based on information received from the student, their previous school / college or other agencies.

We have a statutory duty under the 'Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015' to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. Preventing terrorism also means challenging extremist views and intervening to stop people moving from extremist ideas into terrorism. As such we will refuse a place to any individual where we have reason to suspect they may hold extremist and/or highly discriminatory views which threaten to expose our students and staff to danger of any kind. This includes withdrawal of a place offer if concerns arise post interview.

Any applicant that declares some form of disclosure or safeguarding concern will be

asked for further details; the decision to offer a conditional place at the College will rest with the view of the Admissions Panel.

Lighthouse Learning Trust Admissions Panel exists to consider applications from specific individuals who may have complex needs that may impact on their ability to learn or for other students' ability to learn within the Lighthouse learning Trust learning community. The panel will consider any support that may be required to help that student achieve and make decisions about whether a place can be offered to an individual in line with the and Lighthouse Learning Trust Equality and Diversity Policy. See the Admissions Panel Terms of Reference for more information.

3.6 Special educational needs

While we cater for many students with learning difficulties or physical disabilities, we may be unable to offer a place to students who require highly specialised facilities or support. This will be discussed with students and the Local Authority after their application.

The LLT encourages students with additional learning needs to apply. Students who disclose learning or medical difficulties/disabilities will have the opportunity to meet with a specialist from the Learning Support Team. Together, they will discuss the student's needs and determine the appropriate support to be offered. In cases where an academy is unable to accommodate an individual due to the unique nature of their needs, the academy will promptly inform the applicant and make efforts to provide guidance on potential alternative arrangements at other institutions.

If the Trust has confirmed that we can meet need, the student's application process will then align with the standard LLT application process and student journey.

3.7 Previous conduct in a former institution

In a small number of cases, we will not offer a place to a student if reports of their previous behaviour indicate that they will cause excessive disruption to other students, or that they have persistently failed to apply themselves to their studies.

Students who exhibit poor conduct during their interview or at other events prior to enrolment, may also not be offered a place or will have a place withdrawn prior to the start of their learning programme.

3.8 Fit to study

All students will be assessed by our 'Fit to Study' welfare policy. Students who do not meet the policy criteria will not be offered a place or withdrawn from study for the benefit of their own health and well-being. In some cases students will be asked to provide medical evidence towards their ability to study. All 'Fit to Study' assessments and outcomes are at the discretion of the Vice Principal for Student Welfare, Experience and Progression.

3.9 Admissions where there is medical need

At the Lighthouse Learning Trust we are committed to inclusion and to ensuring all students are able to receive an education regardless of their medical requirements. To ensure that students can access our college and can be the most ambitious and successful versions of themselves we will consider each case presented to us to ensure that we can meet the need of the student and the student can progress in their education.

As such, our commitment is:

- We will consider the medical evidence presented to the college and treat each case uniquely in its own right
- We will baseline assess applicants using BKSB and free writing to decide on the most appropriate programme of study for the student
- We may seek references from previous education establishments as to the applicants' ability, attitude to study and the impact health has had on their learning to ascertain what further support may be required to support the student

3.10 Failure to disclose information

If information is falsified or omitted on a student's application form we reserve the right to withdraw our offer of a place.

4 Requirements of 16-18 Study Programmes

Any students funded by the Education Funding Agency (all 16-18 students and a significant number of 19+ students) must continue to study English and Maths until they have achieved a GCSE grade 4 or above. This is a reflection of the vital importance of English and Maths qualifications when looking for a job or a University place. Students do not have the option to refuse to study English and Maths.

Some students may be eligible for exemption, such as:

- Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who are assessed as not able to study either GCSE or stepping stone qualifications
- Students with overseas qualifications that are established as equivalent to GCSE grade 4 or grade C

All exemptions must be considered on a case-by-case basis. There is no blanket exemption.

Further information on exemptions can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-maths-and-english-condition-of-funding#exempt>

The requirements of the "Raising the Participation Age" programme are that all students remain in full-time education or training until they turn 18 (usually school year 13). We therefore aim to guide all our students onto full-time programmes, with the exception only of students who need a lighter programme because of learning difficulties, disabilities or other health problems.

4.1 Entry Criteria

The Trust will make the conditional offer of place to applicants who can demonstrate on their application form and at interview that they will benefit from further study with a Trust College.

Applicants will also need to achieve GCSE or equivalent grades in accordance with the Trust entry requirements for each level of course. The entry requirements for each course are designed to help students make informed choices and to ensure that a student starting a course has a reasonable chance of success on that programme.

- For level 3 study, students **must** have at least **5 GCSEs at grade 4** or higher. Some courses have specific entrance requirements.
- For level 2 study, students **must** have **successfully completed level 1 study or achieve an average GCSE grade profile of 3.**
- For level 1 study, students **do not require any formal** qualifications, such as GCSE's, but must demonstrate a willingness to engage in education and learning.

These may change. The most up-to-date requirements are available in the college prospectus which is available of each College website.

A few courses may have other, non-academic entrance requirements such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or certain health requirements.

4.2 Internal progression

Once enrolled on to a full-time study programme each student's progress will be monitored and where appropriate, the individual will be supported to internally progress to either a second year of study on a Level 3 programme or to progress to higher level study within the confines of funding regulations.

In order for a student to internally progress they must meet the required standards and expectations set for students, including appropriate levels of attendance, completion of set work and evidence of progression in line with the academic requirements of the course. For progression to higher level study, achievement of a full qualification at the preceding level is required to confirm enrolment on to further funded study.

Curriculum Managers have the discretion to allow a student to internally progress subject to appropriate funding regulations compliance where they deem it appropriate in line with the personal circumstances of each individual student. See also Section 6 regarding re-engagement and probationary periods.

4.3 Late Entry

Students who apply after the start of term will be considered on a case by case basis, taking into account the available places on courses, the student's needs, how much teaching they have missed and how much disruption their late start will cause to other students in the class.

Students who are offered a provisional place but are then absent at the start of term may in some cases have their offer of a place withdrawn. Consideration will be given to students who are ill, but students who choose to take extended holidays and return to the UK after the start of lessons may forfeit their place for that year.

4.4 Students over the aged of 18 accessing 16-18 Study Programmes

Students who are over 18 at the start of the academic year are encouraged to apply for our Adult Education courses. Applicants for daytime study will be considered but will be put on a waiting list for the following reasons:

- a) We must ensure that our younger applicants and continuing students have priority access to places on our courses. Only after enrolment is complete will we be able to confirm the availability of daytime places for 19+ students.
- b) We know from experience that most applicants aged 19-23 are entitled to full or partial funding for their programme of study and therefore cannot be charged full fees. However, this funding is provided from a fixed annual budget allocated to the college by the Skills Funding Agency, and the funding is always over-subscribed. Once again, it is only after we have completed enrolment (including enrolment onto the Adult Education courses) that we can assess how much adult funding is available to cover daytime adult applicants.

Applicants will be contacted during the first week of September to let them know whether they have a place. We understand that many applicants will want to keep their options open by applying to other colleges, and we only ask that we are kept informed of any decision made to go elsewhere.

Available places will be offered in order of application date BUT students who fail to turn up to interviews without letting us know in advance, or who have been unresponsive to our communications, will go to the end of the list.

All places offered will be "on probation" (please see section 6). This is because any adult students on daytime courses will be sharing a classroom with much younger students, and we must give consideration both to their safeguarding and to the importance of maintaining a culture of focused, full-time study. We may request a character reference during the application process to help us assess an adult applicant's suitability for daytime study.

4.5 Students who have already achieved a full level 3

This applies to students who wish to repeat level 3 qualifications (e.g. A levels) which they have already passed (e.g. to improve their grades) or who wish to re-start a new level 3 programme after having achieved a full set of level 3 qualifications.

We naturally wish to support students in every way we can to reach their career goals. However, we have to operate within funding and class size limits like every other college and therefore in most cases we will not be able to offer a place to students who have already achieved a full set of level 3 qualification (equivalent to 2 or more A-levels) unless there are exceptional circumstances.

5 Requirements of Adult Education

5.1 Access to Higher Education

Applicants will be invited to an interview at which time they will undertake an initial assessment to determine their level of academic ability in the subject(s) they wish to study.

Specifically aimed at students over 19, the Access to HE Diploma offers a recognised entry qualification to higher education. You can study the course full time over a year if you have GCSE English and Maths at grade 4/C or above.

For those candidates who still need to gain a GCSE in English or Maths, you may take the course over two years part-time, as you gain your English and/or Maths qualifications alongside. Please note this option of study is currently only available at St Vincent College.

Students who have yet to gain both GCSE English and Maths are not eligible to enrol on to Access, but will be supported with enrolling on to the relevant courses.

Please note that applicants are exempt from paying course fees if they are aged 19-23 and have not yet achieved a full level 3 qualification.

All students over the age of 19 are eligible to apply for an Advanced Learner Loan to fund this course. If you take up this loan and then go on to complete a higher education course, you will be eligible to have the balance of the loan written off. However, if you don't complete either course you will need to repay your loan in full. Applicants should seek advice regarding fees to ensure that they are clear on how their provision will be funded prior to starting their course.

5.2 English and Maths GCSE/Functional Skills

Applicants will be invited to an interview at which time they will undertake an initial assessment to determine their level of academic ability in the subject(s) they wish to study. Applicants will be offered places at one level of study higher than the outcome of their initial assessment result and in accordance with funding guidance.

5.3 Community Learning

Due to the nature of Community Learning programmes most courses only require students to satisfy the entry requirements where appropriate. Entry criteria may vary from course to course (please see the individual course pages for more information on our website).

Applicants must be aged 19 or over to be eligible to study any adult learning courses, there is no upper age limit. Interviews are not required for most Community Learning courses but where these are required the principles in section 4 will apply.

Students aged 19 -25 with an active EHCP are not eligible for Community Learning courses as they are required to enrol on a full timetable. If the student wishes to join Community Learning, they must cease their EHCP for funding eligibility. This decision must prioritise the students' well-being and future learning.

5.4 Upskilling and Work Based Learning

Applicants will be invited for an interview with an adult education Assessor or Tutor. During this interview, will include confirmation that the applicant has an appropriate work placement established and an assessment of the appropriate level of study.

The course programme can start once all application and admissions processes are satisfied.

5.5 Online Learning

Applicants for our online learning provision will be contacted by our admissions team directly. They will be invited to enrol on one of our partner online learning platforms subject to funding eligibility.

Further information on eligibility for funding can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2022-to-2023/adult-education-budget-aeb-funding-rules-2022-to-2023#provision-and-individuals-we-fund>

6 Arrangements for 14–16-year-olds

We do admit 14-16 students. All 14-16 students remain on roll at their school and are not directly enrolled. We work in partnership with local schools and authorities on projects and contracts. These projects are charged in accordance with our charging and remissions policy.

7 Probationary and Re-engagement places

At enrolment, the Trust reserves the right to place students on to a college course for a probationary period (or re-engagement period for returning students). This means that the outcome of the first four weeks will determine whether their probationary place is converted to a firm place or not.

This procedure is followed when we are unsure whether the college can meet the student's needs, or whether the student will be successful on a particular programme, and a trial period is required.

Probationary period can be implemented for the following example reasons.

- The student has a history of problems with behaviour, attitude, attendance, homework completion etc.
- The student may need specialist support or facilities which we cannot provide.
- The student may be too ill to complete the course.

- We need evidence that the student will tackle their studies with a new enthusiasm, particularly if they are repeating a programme
- We are concerned about the student's written or spoken English
- The student wants to study the second year of level 3 but failed to complete the first year or missed a lot of teaching.

These are not mutually exclusive and it will be for the relevant Curriculum Manager to determine which students are placed on probationary periods. Probationary students are reviewed after a four weeks and based on the outcome of the trial period will either have their place confirmed or withdrawn.

8 Reasons for changes to a programme of study

Sometimes students obtain a place at college but have to amend their programme of study from what was agreed at the preliminary interview. This is necessary if:

- a) The student has failed to meet the entry requirements for a course.
- b) We are no longer able to deliver the course e.g. due to low numbers of students. This is rare and we endeavour to let applicants know in advance if a course is at risk of not running.
- c) The course is full by the time the student enrolls. While we endeavour to fill courses in order of application date, students who miss their preliminary or enrolment interviews without notifying us in advance, or who cannot attend enrolment at the normal time, or are otherwise unresponsive to our communications, will lose the benefit of an early application date.

9 Appeals

Where a place is not offered to a student, or provisionally offered and then withdrawn, or a programme of study has to be changed, it is possible for the student or parents/guardians to seek a review of the decision by writing to the Principal within two weeks of the decision, explaining why they believe the decision was unreasonable.

The Principal will review the evidence upon which the decision was based, the reason for the appeal and any new information not previously available.

The Principal will decide within 5 working days of the appeal being raised, to either:

- Uphold the decision
- Offer a place
- Offer a probationary place

The outcome will be communicated in writing at the earliest opportunity.

Document History

Version	Purpose/Change	Author	Date
1.1	New policy	SMC	18.08.23