NORTH, WEST AND HEBRIDES
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Admissions (FE)
Policy

POL-NWH-004

Lead Officer (Post):	Head of Student Experience
Responsible Office/ Department:	Student Experience
Responsible Committee:	Learning, Teaching and Research
Review Officer (Post):	Student Services Manager
Date policy approved:	20.01.25
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	Not known
Date policy due for review:	20.01.28
UHI Single Policy / UHI NWH Policy:	UHI Single Policy
Public face / College internal facing only	Public Facing
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	10.01.25
Has a Data Privacy Impact Assessment been completed:	Data Protection Officer has approved that no DPIA is required

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy provides the basis for admissions into further education courses provided by the colleges within the UHI partnership.
Purpose	The policy governs the application process to be used by all students considering applying to a further education course in any of the colleges within the UHI partnership.
Scope	The policy applies to all colleges offering further education courses within the UHI partnership, current students seeking to progress their studies and prospective students considering applying.
Consultation	The policy was endorsed by Partnership Council and was subject to local consultation and approval processes at each partner college.
Implementation and Monitoring	Academic partners will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy.
Risk Implications	The policy reduces risk for the university and academic partners by creating a streamlined process and a community of practice for staff. Students will also benefit from a consistent approach across all partners.
Link with Strategy	How is this policy linked to University strategy?
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment:
	Privacy Impact Assessment:

1. Policy Statement

1.1 UHI North, West and Hebrides endeavours to be welcoming and inclusive in its admissions policy and processes, seeking to work in partnership with prospective students to match applicants with courses most appropriate to their aspirations and current level of skills, knowledge and ability.

1.2 UHI North, West and Hebrides operates a fair and open admissions process that is free of discrimination and reflects a commitment to widening access and equality of opportunity. The college aims to provide appropriate services to support students with learning support needs or disabilities.

2. Definitions

2.1 UHI and partners: UHI is an integrated university, made up of a distinctive partnership of independent colleges and research institutions. The partners are: UHI Argyll, UHI Inverness, UHI Moray, UHI North, West and Hebrides, UHI Perth, UHI Shetland, Highland Theological College UHI, Orkney College UHI, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS).

2.2 If you require assistance or do not understand any terms or language used in this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the Admissions Office.

3. Purpose

3.1 This policy is to provide UHI North, West and Hebrides with a robust framework to:

- Follow admissions processes that are free of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, ethnicity, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.
- Offer a curriculum aligned to local and regional need and in line with national priorities. Where there is diminished local need or low demand, a course may be amended or withdrawn before it commences. Equally, new courses may be introduced or the number of places on a course increased due to demand;
- Publicise courses through a variety of communication channels and in a variety of formats;
- Be fair, open and transparent in recruitment and selection processes;
- Provide clear and accurate information on available courses, entry requirements and/or selection criteria;
- Proactively encourage candidates to declare any disability or additional support need that may create barriers to their success in learning. This declaration enables UHI North, West and Hebrides to provide appropriate support during the application stage and throughout a student's course;
- Publish on UHI North, West and Hebrides website, details of the annual admissions cycle including when applications will be processed, when interviews take place and offers of places will be made.

3.2 **Contextualised Admission**

- To further our commitment to improving access to education for people from the widest possible range of backgrounds, UHI North, West and Hebrides operates a contextualised admissions policy and processes. This commitment enables the college to form a more complete picture of the characteristics of an individual applicant. To this end, UHI North, West and Hebrides:
    - Endeavours to take into account an applicant's background where an application falls short of the standard entry criteria for a course or where there is competition for places.
    - Will provide appropriate levels of support to prospective students who require it throughout the admissions process.

- Make provision for assessments of additional support required 'on-course' during the admissions process.
- Make reasonable adjustments wherever this is possible.

- UHI North, West and Hebrides particularly welcomes applications from specific priority groups in line with Scottish Government priorities and legislation, including:
  - Care experienced and looked after young people;
  - Those living in areas of multiple deprivation as identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation as being the 10% most deprived post-code zones in Scotland.
  - Those whose parents or carers have not accessed education beyond the compulsory school years.
  - Male and female applicants to courses with nationally recognised gender imbalances e.g. males into care, females into construction.
- UHI North, West and Hebrides guarantees an interview to those with a care experienced background. To support gender equality, the College also operates a guaranteed interview for specific courses that experience a severe gender imbalance.
- UHI North, West and Hebrides records all contextualised admissions, showing the number of applicants identified within priority groups, by course and by outcome of application.

3.3 **Discretion in making an offer of a place**

- All offers of places are subject to the college's discretion. The college reserves the right to reject applications or apply further criteria under particular circumstances such as the following:
  - Previous disciplinary sanctions under college or university disciplinary procedures or those of other institutions.
  - Record of outstanding debt with the college or university.
  - They do not meet the entry criteria.
  - Unsuccessful at interview.
- UHI North, West and Hebrides will:
  - Treat every application on its merits and will remove barriers to participation through making reasonable adjustments. However, there may be occasions when reasonable adjustments are not sufficient to enable participation on a particular course. In these circumstances, Academic Partner name will make every effort to offer an alternative course or an alternative mode of study if appropriate and / or available.)
  - Reserve the right to apply additional entry criteria in instances where an applicant has a record of previous enrolments without successful completion. In such cases, due consideration will be given to an individual's circumstances and support needs when reaching a decision.
  - Successful applicants to courses will be required to join the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) where the studies or placements require interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults. A previous criminal record does not, in the majority of cases, exclude an applicant from being offered a place. However, the college recognises that it has a duty of care to all students and staff and therefore reserves the right not to admit an applicant where there is evidence that they could affect the safety and welfare of students or staff. The college has the right to withdraw an offer of place if new information becomes available which has not been previously disclosed by the applicant and which could affect the safety and welfare of students and staff.

3.4 Fee Status

- Every student who enrols on a course incurs a fee. The vast majority of full-time further education students have their fees paid by the Scottish Funding Council, through the fee waiver system. Part-time students may also be eligible for fee waiver.

- On application, the college will make an assessment of fee status in order to determine the appropriate level of tuition fees, in line with the relevant regulations and based on the information provided on the application form. The fee status of an individual will be communicated in the offer letter to ensure that individuals are aware if they are liable to pay fees.
- The college reserves the right to change an applicant's fee status in exceptional circumstances such as the following:
    - If new information becomes available which was not previously disclosed by the applicant and affects the original decision on the fee status;
    - If errors are made within the initial fee assessment, either by the College or by the applicant, which affects the original decision on the fee status.
- In such cases, the applicant will be notified of any change to their fee status and any consequences of this change.
- Applicants assessed and determined to be international fee-payers may be required to pay full course fees prior to enrolment.

3.5 Appeals

- Any appeals relating to application decisions must be made in writing to the Student Records Manager

3.6 Monitoring

- Reports on the number of applications received and offers made will inform curriculum review and courses offered in subsequent years.
- Applications will also be monitored by postcode, gender, ethnicity, disability, care experience and carer status to inform equality and diversity action planning.

3.7 Use of Personal Data

- Personal data collected through the UHI North, West and Hebrides admissions process will be anonymised and used for statistical purposes to monitor applications by age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity status, ethnicity, religion and/or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic background.

4 Scope

4.1 This policy applies to all applicants for further education courses (full-time and part-time), including those classed as commercial.

4.2 Applicants for higher education courses (HNC, HND, Degree and Post Graduate programmes) should refer to the University of the Highlands and Islands Admissions Policy on the UHI web-site at: https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/about-uhi/governance/policies-and-regulations/policies/

5 Exceptions

5.1 This policy applies only to further education applications.

6 Notification

6.1 Staff responsible for administering the admissions procedures for the college will be briefed and offered training on changes to the policy.

6.2 The policy will be publicly available on the College's website, along with other current policies.

7 Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The responsibility for compliance with the Admissions Policy lies with all staff involved in the process.

8 Legislative Framework

- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Scottish Care Leavers Covenant 2015

9 Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- Learner Support Policy
- Policy on Student PVG Applications
- Student Conduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedure
- Student Criminal Offence Data Policy

10 Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
1	Dec 2024		Contextualised for UHI North, West and Hebrides	FH