HE Admissions Policy

Integrity, Valuing Others, Teamwork, Supportiveness

With excellence in
Environmental and Land Based Training

Recognising the best organisations
for training and development solutions

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">**Our Mission**

To inspire learners to recognise and achieve their full potential</td></tr>
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Our Values Excellence, Passion, Team Work, Integrity, Innovation, Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

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Sparsholt College Hampshire, incorporating Andover College	
The *HE Admissions Policy* was reviewed and reconfirmed by the Board of Governors in March 2017 and is effective from 30 March 2017.	
Equality Impact Assessment	Conducted: September 2016
Originator: Deputy Principal	Located: College Intranet
	College Website
Date of next scheduled review: *June 2018*	

Contents   Section

Higher Education Admissions Policy

1   Introduction

1.1   Sparsholt College is committed to making available relevant, effective, high quality education and training to meet local, regional, national and international requirements by:

- Meeting the needs of learners and industry through the appropriate range of courses securing higher level science and technical skills

- Developing and securing the competence and extending the knowledge of learners to ensure they are able to drive added value to their sectors

- Providing industry experts who deliver high quality teaching and support.

1.2   This policy has been developed adhering to the QAA's Quality Code of Practice and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions, SPA's Guide on Consumer Protection and complaints and the Competition and Markets Authority advice on Consumer Protection to Higher Education providers.

2   Principles

2.1   The College values and seeks diversity in the student community. The College will ensure that students are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in relevant subjects at appropriate levels.

2.2   The College recognise the value of life and professional experience and particularly welcome applications from individuals who might not necessarily have formal academic qualifications.

2.3   The College is committed to promoting equal opportunities for students. We recognise that student life is enriched by a diverse student body that is reflective of the wider community and includes students from the UK, the European Union and international destinations.

2.4   The College endeavours to ensure that students who can benefit from courses at the College are not prevented from doing so because they face financial hardship.

2.5   In accordance with the College commitment to fair admissions, selection is made on the basis of a range of criteria. Evidence of eligibility for study includes academic achievement, professional and personal experience and potential to succeed in the intended programme of study.

2.6   The admission of any student will be determined by an assessment of the potential of the student to contribute to and benefit from their proposed course of study and by academic, personal, professional and other relevant criteria.

2.7   Individual programmes of study may specify entry requirements in addition to this minimum requirement and include subject specific elements. These are established in accordance with any individual programme requirements.

3   Roles and Responsibilities

3.1   Overall responsibility for the College's HE admissions process is held by the Vice Principal Corporate. Day to day responsibility and management lies with the Admissions Manager. The Admissions Team will manage the admissions process with support from the academic teams. The College agrees and publishes the specific eligibility criteria by which applications are assessed.

4   Review of Borderline Applications

4.1   In cases of applications from non-traditional routes or borderline applications the application is reviewed by a panel chaired by the College Deputy Principal. Where the panel does not come to a consensual decision the Deputy Principal will make the final decision.

5   Information for Applicants and Entry Requirements

5.1   When applying to study a higher education course, applicants are given assistance to ensure that they make choices which are right for them. The College will provide clear, accurate and comprehensive information about programmes and the services and facilities offered.

5.2   The College admissions process will provide applicants with timely information which enables applicants to make sound and fully informed decisions.

5.3   Through prospectus, website, the UCAS website and other documents, the College will detail:

- the full-time and part-time higher education programmes offered

- the aims, content and structure of individual programmes

- entry criteria, skills requirements for individual programmes

- clear guidance about how to apply for individual programmes

- the expected fees and other costs of being a student and financial support available

- likely additional costs or unusual requirements of specific programmes (e.g. relating to work or study placements, field trips, materials, or equipment)

- the services and facilities offered to students

5.4   To ensure the applicant is able to make a fully informed choices, the information contained within the prospectus, website, and the UCAS website provides the necessary pre-contract information to enable an applicant to decide to study at the college. Any changes to these terms will be provided in writing prior to the applicant signing their learning agreement with the college and will also be detailed in the learning agreement between the learner and the college.

5.5   The college holds regular open days and 'interview days' providing opportunities to visit the College campus and review the facilities, curriculum area and

accommodation. Candidates have an opportunity to speak to staff and students about programmes, services and support needs that will assist them in making their choice.

5.6 Information about these open events and 'interview days' and how to attend will be provided on the College website and invitations will be sent to prospective students.

5.7 All applications are acknowledged by email on receipt, to confirm receipt. Applications that are received by the deadlines of the UCAS application cycle are guaranteed equal consideration. Applications received after deadline will be considered where there are places available on the programme.

5.8 The academic teams assess applications in accordance with the published entry criteria. When assessing an application, the College will consider the following:

- Whether the applicant's academic potential is such that it is likely they would be successful on the programme

- Whether sufficient spaces are available on that programme.

5.9 Academic Teams will first assess whether the applicant has met the minimum entry criteria for the programme. If entry criteria are met, the academic teams will begin to assess academic potential, taking into account a wide variety of factors which include, but are not limited to, actual academic performance to date and predicted results for qualifications currently being studied. Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits using UCAS and NARIC equivalencies of qualifications.

5.10 The College uses use the Personal Statement in assessing each applicant's motivation and suitability for the chosen programme of study. When looking at each applicant's Personal Statement, the College will look for the following:

- Knowledge of, interest in and commitment to the subject

- Non-academic achievement or experience

- Future career aspirations and how the course will support those aspirations

- Positions of responsibility

- Interests, hobbies and relevant work experience

5.11 The College is looking for references to provide:

- Predictions of examination results

- An overall assessment of the applicant

- Extenuating circumstances if earlier exam results are considered as a poor guide to ability

5.12   For applications received through UCAS, the College will use UCAS as a communication channel, supplemented by emails from the College email account and letters to applicants sent from the College. In the case of non-UCAS applications the College will communicate directly with the applicant. All correspondence will be sent, in the first instance, by email. If email is not suitable, alternative communication methods will be used. Undergraduate students wishing to transfer to the College for full time degree programmes should also apply through UCAS.

5.13   As soon as a decision is made concerning an offer, applicants will be notified if their application has been successful or unsuccessful, or that the College is not able to make a final decision until later in the cycle.

5.14   If the College decides that it cannot make an offer of a place on the specific course for which an applicant has applied, the college will consider alternatives and may make an offer on an alternative programme that it considers better reflects the candidate's needs. If the College makes an alternative course offer candidates will receive notification of this via UCAS.

5.15   Where an application is unsuccessful, the College will encourage the applicant to contact the course tutor who will provide a reason why their application has been declined.

6   Interview (for Vet Nurses Only)

6.1   The interview will review academic achievement including predicted grades and prior attainment, changes since application particularly academic results and work experience, aptitude and commitment / motivation to study. These will be undertaken in accordance with the College's policy on equal opportunities. Decisions will not be provided to the applicant at the interview. After a decision has been made and applicants informed, applicants may request feedback on the interview by contacting the interviewer.

7   Confirmation

7.1   The College receives most UK qualification results from UCAS for applicants who have accepted conditional offers. Applicants who achieve the grades required by their conditional offer have their place confirmed. Applications from those students who have not met the required grades are reviewed on an individual basis.

8   Mature Applicants

8.1   The College welcomes mature applicants. Applications will be considered on an individual basis including industry and academic experience. Mature applicants may be invited to interview or required to complete a written assessment set by the programme leader.

9   Part-time Application Process

9.1   Applicants who intend to apply for part-time study should submit their application on a part-time application form.

9.2   Part-time applications should be received by the end of June prior to enrolment. Applications will be considered outside of this period should places be available.

The Admissions Team will review the application and check that it is complete, has the minimum requirements and includes the relevant references and qualification certificates if applicable. Course tutors will review all completed part-time applications. Decisions are made as quickly as possible and a written offer is sent to the applicant, accompanied by a pro forma to enable the applicant to accept the offer.

10   Arrangements for Applicants who are Under 18

10.1   Sparsholt College welcomes applications from people of all ages. No applicant shall be refused admission on grounds of age.

10.2   However, the college has a duty of care towards all students, employees and visitors and in the case of students joining before their 18th birthday this duty is enhanced as such students are regarded as children under UK law. Students who will be under the age of 18 at the time of enrolment will be required to obtain a parent, carer or guardian to signature of a Registration Agreement to say they have read and understood safeguarding guidelines for under-18 year olds.

10.3   Principles, institutional responsibilities and procedures relating to the protection of under 18s and vulnerable adult students are set out in the college Residential Rules and Regulations document.

11   International Students

11.1   The Admissions Team, in conjunction with the International Team will make an assessment of fee paying status (where possible) using the information provided in the application and ensure this is consistent with UKCISA guidance.

11.2   Where required, the college will utilise NARIC guidance on qualification comparisons to ensure that programme entry requirements are met.

11.3   International and EU applicants for whom English is not a first language, and who are seeking to join undergraduate programmes, are expected to hold an IELTS certificate, with a score of 6.0, or an equivalent qualification. Applicants to postgraduate programmes are required to hold an IELTS certificate with a minimum score of 6.5 or an equivalent qualification. Further guidance and regulations for international student entry requirements can be found on the college website

11.4   When considering an application, the College will take into account of whether or not a student is able to meet the necessary UK visa requirements for the full duration of their programme. The College reserves the right to reject an application in circumstances where these requirements cannot be met.

12   Deferred Applications

12.1   Applicants that wish to defer their entry by one year are welcomed provided they have met the conditions by 31st August of the year that they make their application. If applicants wish to defer by more than one year, the College recommends that they contact the Admissions Team to discuss the best way forward.

13   Disability

13.1 Sparsholt College encourages participation in its learning programmes by all sections of the community and the industries it serves and welcomes applications from applicants who have a disability. Sparsholt College will, try to ensure that students with learning difficulties and / or disabilities are able to follow a programme of study most suitable to their needs, with appropriate support provided as appropriate. This support will be monitored and changed as necessary.

Applications for Veterinary Nursing (FE and HE) are subject to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) 'Guidance on Recruitment of Students with Disabilities' and the RCVS fitness to practice guidelines.

13.2 If the College is unable to meet additional needs, or can only do so by compromising the learning experience which would disadvantage the applicant, the College undertakes to inform the applicant immediately the situation is apparent.

13.3 All applicants who accept an offer will receive an email link to the Sparsholt College online Registration Form which will include a Disability Questionnaire. Once the applicant submits this form via the online portal, information from the Disability Questionnaire will be directed to the HE Specialist Study Support Tutors. This enables applicants, who have not declared a disability on their original application, an opportunity to inform the College of any access arrangements and support that they might require during their studies.

13.4 Information provided in relation to disability will not be used in the initial assessment of applications. Offers to study at Sparsholt can be made prior to disability and learning support information being received.

13.5 The Learning Support coordinator will arrange an interview with the applicant to discuss appropriate arrangements to support their studies prior to enrolment. Applicants who are aware that they have specific needs are strongly recommended to outline them at this stage so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students with a known learning disability need to be in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) funding in order to receive some forms of support, it is advisable to undertake the DSA Assessment and Needs Assessment prior to starting a degree course, to ensure that appropriate support is in place at the commencement of study

13.6 The Learning Agreement will contain clear statements specifying precisely what the College is offering to the student and details of the commitment the student is making to the College. Any changes to the student's circumstances will automatically require a full review of the Learning Agreement. Applicants with additional needs that are identified part way through their course of study will be counselled and guided through an assessment process to establish how they can be supported through the remainder of their course.

14   Data Protection

14.1 The College will handle data and information in a manner that ensures that it safeguards individuals and personal data. Information will always be managed in a manner that complies with the College Data Protection Policy. All staff involved in admissions will have received training that enables them to discharge their responsibilities in relation to data protection.

14.2   The College may share applicant data with programme delivery partners where the partner is directly involved in the admissions process. All such third parties are prohibited from using an applicant's personal information except for this purpose, and they are required to maintain the confidentiality of this information.

15   Fraudulent Applications

15.1   The college cannot admit applicants on the strength of information believed to be fraudulent and reserves the right to reject or cancel an application under these circumstances.

15.2   The College also reserves the right to:

- request additional information to verify an application

- place the application process on hold while investigating the alleged fraudulent application

- withdraw the application / place if it is proven, or if the College has reasonable belief that the information provided is false, or if the applicant / student refuses to provide the requested information

- terminate a student's registration if he / she is found at a later stage to have submitted a fraudulent application

- notify UCAS of the action it has taken in respect to the application

15.3   All students will be required to present original academic and personal documentation at enrolment prior to the start of the programme of study.

15.4   All documentation is verified by college admissions staff. If any information relevant to the application is found to be fraudulent, inconsistent with the application or missing, the application will be deemed void and the offer of a place may be rescinded.

16   Criminal Convictions

16.1   The College will use the information declared relating to criminal convictions to ensure the College fulfils its responsibilities and obligations for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults with whom College staff and students are in contact.

16.2   Applicants are required to declare any "relevant" criminal convictions on the UCAS or direct application form, where "relevant" is defined as 'unspent convictions for crimes involving drugs and crimes against the person'.

16.3   Applications are initially checked by the academic teams, to ensure that they meet entry requirements and other basic expectations for the programme. If the application is unsuccessful at this stage criminal conviction data is not considered.

16.4   If the applicant does meet the basic academic requirements for the programme but a criminal conviction has been declared, the applicant is asked to provide written details of the nature of the offence (conviction notices and any information about whether conviction(s) are 'spent' including dates, the sentence imposed and

the name of the court, with a copy of any date. This information is reviewed by the college Student Support and Safeguarding Coordinator. The applicant may also be asked to give details of their Probation Officer and to give their consent for the Student Support and safeguarding Coordinator to contact him / her in order to obtain the Probation Officer's views as to the likely danger or otherwise of the applicant's behaviour to other students and staff.

16.5   When the information detailed in 16.4 is received, the Student Support and Safeguarding Coordinator will consider the information provided and will complete the College's "Risk Assessment. In doing so, they will refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. The Head of Admissions (or nominee) will consider whether to offer a place or whether the conviction is of sufficient seriousness to warrant convening the Widening Participation and Admissions Group to consider the matter further.

16.6   The Widening Participation and Admissions Group will always be convened to consider the following convictions:

- Any kind of violence including (but not limited to) threatening behaviour, offences concerning the intention to harm or offences which resulted in actual bodily harm

- Offences listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003

- The unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the conviction concerns commercial drug dealing, trafficking, possession or with intent to supply

- Offences involving firearms, knives and weapons

- Offences involving arson

- Offences listed in the Terrorism Act 2006

16.7   The Student Support and Safeguarding Coordinator (or nominee) will have discretion to convene the group for reasons not covered by this list where s/he determines that there are possible grounds for withholding the offer of a place. In all cases the confidentiality of the applicant will be maintained and personal information will only be made available on a need to know basis.

16.8   When considering this matter, the opinion will be sought from the lead responsible for young person protection issues (or nominee) and the Head of Faculty where the course is taught. The group shall consult with such other departments or persons as it may require (e.g. Accommodation Services / Security / Student Services) and will be convened to consider whether the offer should be made. The group will consider the information provided by the applicant and any further information made available by the applicant's Probation Officer. The group may at its absolute discretion request the applicant to meet with the group to make representations in person and present any further evidence (e.g. references). The group will take a reasonable view as to the risk which the applicant could pose to the institution, its members and visitors, and admission will only be refused if this risk is considered to be unacceptable.

16.9   The College decision, whether made by the Head of Admissions or by a group, will be communicated to the applicant through the UCAS procedure or direct to the applicant if non-UCAS with an appropriate reason for rejection provided.

16.10   If an applicant is found to have a relevant offence which was not declared at the point of application or at any stage throughout the application process, the application may be considered fraudulent. Applicants who submit fraudulent applications may be reported to UCAS and have all applications withdrawn for the remainder of the academic year.

17   Complaints or Appeals

17.1   If applicants feel that the process has not been followed or the decision reached by the college is unfair or incorrect, they have the right of appeal or complaint. Complaints should be sent in writing for the attention of the Quality Administrator. Appeals should be put in writing for the attention of the Head of Faculty for Higher Education. The mechanism for Appeal is fully detailed in the College Complaints Procedure published on the college website

17.2   Applicants who have been unsuccessful are welcome to re-apply during Clearing for alternative courses if they feel that is suitable and where they have taken into account the reason that their original application was unsuccessful.