



**TRAFFORD &  
STOCKPORT  
COLLEGE GROUP**

# **HE Admissions Policy and Procedure**

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## **1. Policy Statement**

Trafford & Stockport College Group (TSCG) recognises the importance of admitting applicants to a course suited to their ability and aspirations and the selection process therefore takes account of all aspects of an application and not just an applicant's academic profile.

The student recruitment process takes account of a wide range of factors that support an application. TSCG welcomes applications from under-represented groups and is proud to admit students who meet the entry criteria of their chosen programme of study regardless of their background.

TSCG endeavours to ensure that policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, and explicit and consistently applied and are compliant with relevant legislation and meet the expectations of the UK Higher Education Quality Code and in particular the Advice and Guidance Section: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.

TSCG also recognises good practice in HE admissions as provided by UCAS and Advance HE.

Equal consideration will be given to applications received by the main annual UCAS deadline in January. Late applications will be considered at the individual department's discretion and appropriate offers made if places are still available.

TSCG expects that an applicant will, in line with the UCAS regulations where applicable, provide full and accurate information to be considered for admission.

Full-time undergraduate applicants suspected of submitting, or found to have submitted, false information will be referred to UCAS. In the case of international applicants, details may also be passed to the United Kingdom Visas & Immigration Service (UKV&I). TSCG reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place if fraud is discovered following an applicant receiving an offer.

TSCG applies the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and all data is held in accordance with the Act. Please refer to the Data Protection Policy for further information. All applicant and student data is regularly analysed to meet the requirements of Trafford & Stockport College Group and funding agency purposes.

In addition to these statutory data returns, TSCG will also use this data for teaching, learning and assessment planning and delivery, market research and resource audits and checks. All of these are routine TSCG activity to ensure Trafford & Stockport College Group meets the needs of its students.

## **2. Admissions Responsibilities**

- 2.1. Admission to Trafford & Stockport College Group is co-ordinated in partnership between different parts of TSCG and follows this Policy.
- 2.2. The admission criteria is decided at the validation and approval stages of programme design.
- 2.3. Applications are managed centrally by the Admissions Team who review applications against the published entry criteria and refer the application to Programme Teams for selection. Those applicants who do not meet the published entry criteria will be referred to the relevant Programme Leader or Head of Studies who will make a decision as to whether they should be interviewed based on work/life experience.

### **3. Pre-Admission**

- 3.1 TSCG aims to provide clear, accurate and transparent information about its programmes, that are appropriate to the needs of prospective applicants, in both internal and external publications regardless of the medium (*i.e.* printed, audio-visual, world wide web, etc.) enabling them to make choices in an informed manner. The main sources of information on entry requirements can be found in:
- The TSCG website
  - The TSCG prospectus
  - Course leaflets
  - UCAS website
  - Open events
- 3.2 Any changes made to entry requirements post publication of printed materials will be communicated as soon as possible via the TSCG website (and the UCAS website where applicable). These sources should therefore be considered the most up-to-date and applicable.
- 3.3 TSCG will inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme made between the time the offer of a place is made and registration is completed, and that they are advised of the options available in the circumstances.

### **4. Fair Admissions**

- 4.1. TSCG recognises the principles of fair admission to higher education set out in the QAA Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. Trafford & Stockport College Group's admissions practices are therefore characterised by the guiding principles which include:
- policies and procedures for application, selection and admission to higher education courses are transparent and accessible.
  - use of fair, reliable and appropriate assessment methods that enable the selection of students with the potential to complete the course successfully.
  - reduction or removal of unnecessary barriers for prospective students.
  - information provided to prospective students for recruitment and widening access purposes, supports in making informed decisions.
  - staff engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced.
- **Selection Criteria**
- 4.2 In considering applications, TSCG is interested in an applicant's academic achievements to date, predicted academic achievement and any other evidenced information that demonstrates an applicant's ability to pursue the course for which they have applied. In addition, the applicant's personal statement and the referee's report will be taken into account when making decisions.
- **International Applicants and English Language Requirements**
- 4.3 As Trafford & Stockport College Group does not currently hold a Tier 4 UK Border Agency Licence the recruitment of students from outside the EU, EEA or those not resident in the UK for the last 3 years is not permitted.

- 4.4 All programmes of Study at TSCG are taught, administered and assessed in English.
- 4.5 Applicants who do not have the required English language level may receive guidance about available English language courses that could help to prepare them for future studies before an application for a HE programme can be made.
- **Applicants with Disabilities**
- 4.6 TSCG welcomes applications from students with a learning difficult and/or disability.
- 4.7 It is very important, however, that applicants with a disability make this known to TSCG on their applications so that reasonable adjustments can be assessed.
- 4.8 Applicants with disabilities are asked to make this known via their application forms so that the College can discuss how to ensure applicant's health and safety and enable their academic success.
- 4.9 TSCG is committed to achieving an educational and working environment that incorporates these aims. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 were considered when drafting this Policy.
- 4.10 Students with disabilities should refer to guidance on the Disabled Students Allowance (administered by the Student Finance England) as they may be eligible for specialist non- medical help (NMH) to support their study at Higher Education.
- **Criminal Convictions and Duty of Care**
- 4.11 It is essential that all applicants should disclose all unspent convictions and all convictions as detailed in the UCAS application. Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent an applicant from gaining admission to Trafford & Stockport College Group. In reaching decisions on those with criminal convictions, TSCG will consider not only its own responsibilities and duties to the academic community at large but also the safety and well-being of the individual and its ability to provide any appropriate support arrangements.
- 4.12 The test TSCG will use is whether any criminal conviction disclosed by an applicant gives reasonable grounds for considering that the admission of the individual:
- (a) Poses a real threat to the safety or property of employees, students, visitors and those that may come into contact with the applicant during their studies or others involved in TSCG business or,
  - (b) Would be contrary to the law or to the requirements of any relevant professional or other regulatory body in accordance with the TSCG Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.13 Trafford & Stockport College Group has a 'duty of care' to students, employees and visitors. It considers that this duty is both 'moral' - a general responsibility to promote the welfare of their students and employees and 'legal' - in the form of a duty to take appropriate steps to protect students, employees and visitors.
- 4.14 To ensure it maintains this 'duty of care', TSCG will not admit students who may pose a significant risk to any of these individuals.
- 4.15 If it is discovered that the applicant has a 'relevant' conviction that is not spent and the box has not been ticked on their application, TSCG will wish to take a view on the circumstances.

- 4.16 It may decide that this is due to an error and can be easily rectified, or it may consider that the applicant has knowingly withheld this information in which case it may consider that the applicant has made a 'fraudulent' application.

If it is considered that the application was 'fraudulent' it will wish to take the matter forward including reporting it to the UCAS Verification Unit - if it is an application through UCAS - and possibly treating it as 'cancelled'; thereby refusing admission.

## **5. Deferring Entry, Direct Entry and Credit Transfer**

- 5.1 Deferring entry is recognised as an option for some applicants who may wish to utilise a gap year. Similarly, if personal circumstances change significantly which have an effect on the applicant's ability to undertake study.
- 5.2 Applications seeking deferred entry will be considered using the same processes outlined in this Policy.
- 5.3 Deferred applications will only usually stand for one year. Applicants wishing to defer a place for a second year will usually be required to contact Trafford & Stockport College Group to discuss their circumstances.
- 5.4 Applications for entry to the second or third year of an undergraduate degree course may be considered where applicants can demonstrate that they have undertaken and successfully completed the equivalent of the first (and second) year of the course applied for. This is known as Accreditation of Prior Credited Learning (APCL).
- 5.5 Assuming the credit is acceptable, i.e. certificated credit obtained from another institution, it can be recognised in one of two ways:
- Exemption from individual modules/units within or from the whole of Year 1 and/or Year 2 of an Undergraduate programme
  - Transfer of credit and marks in substitution for modules within an Undergraduate Programme that count towards the classification of that programme.
- 5.6 The appropriate levels of credit transfer will be different to each applicant and will be managed on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.7 TSCG will work with its partner Universities and awarding bodies where appropriate, to ensure consistency and fairness for all applicants.

## **6. Admission and Interview**

- 6.1 As part of the selection process for specific courses, applicants will be required to attend an interview before making an offer.
- 6.2 Interviews will be arranged and administered by the Admissions Team who will work with the relevant HE Course Leader.
- 6.3 TSCG reserves the right to invite any applicant to an interview to further assess an applicant's suitability.

## **7. Policy Relating to Undergraduate Admissions Practices**

7.1 Applications for full time applications can be made via Trafford & Stockport College Group website as well as UCAS. TSCG expects that an applicant will provide full and accurate information in order to be considered for admission. Full-time undergraduate applicants suspected of submitting, or found to have submitted, false information will be referred to the Head of Higher Education (Quality & Standards).

- **UCAS Procedure**

7.2 Applications for full-time undergraduate programmes can be made through the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service](#) (UCAS). A single course application may be made direct via the website and the UCAS fee will be waived.

7.3 Equal consideration will be given to applications received by the main annual UCAS deadline in January. Late applications will be considered and appropriate offers made if places are still available.

7.4 An applicant will receive notification of Trafford & Stockport College Group's decision on their application electronically (via UCAS) and/or by letter. If the applicant is to be made an offer of a place, the offer will specify any conditions of entry that they are expected to meet and the date by which these conditions must be met in order to take up that place. The offer will also detail the first-year tuition fee (or guidance on the likely figure if the fee has not yet been set).

7.5 An applicant will be expected to respond to an offer using the appropriate method e.g. online through UCAS for full-time programmes. Any deadline for reply and the method for responding will be indicated by TSCG, and where applicable, by UCAS.

7.6 Those applying after 30 June and who have not previously applied through UCAS may make a direct application via a Record of Prior Acceptance (RPA) form. Applicants must be in receipt of their results.

## **8. Applying for a Part Time Course**

8.1 Applications for part time programmes should be made using the online application form via the TSCG website and not through UCAS. Paper application forms are available upon request.

8.2 Part time applications are considered using the same processes described in this Policy.

## **9. Student Protection: Course Closure and Changes to Programmes**

9.1 TSCG recognises the statement of good practice issued by The Office for Students regarding changes to course information, content, and course closure. The HE Student Protection Plan outlines what may happen if a course is no longer able to operate.

9.2 TSCG will only close courses when it is not financially viable to run them or when the student experience will be compromised.

9.3 Normally for a course to run there must be a minimum of 10 firmed applicants. A decision will be made about whether a course will commence three working days after the confirmation and clearing period opens in the August before September enrolment. An exception may be made by Senior Management Team.

- 9.4 Where it may be the case that a course will not run, applicants will be contacted regularly so that they have all the information they need to make a decision about their application.
- 9.5 If a course does close, TSCG will assist affected applicants in identifying suitable alternatives, both internally and externally.
- 9.6 Trafford & Stockport College Group will not coordinate applications but will give advice and support.
- 9.7 TSCG reserves the right to make changes to programmes where it considers such changes to be reasonable. If such changes are made, applicants will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable and the TSCG website will be updated to reflect the changes. These changes will usually be for one or more of the following or similar reasons:
- To make updates on programmes to reflect best practice or new academic developments and to refresh curricula to ensure their currency for the benefit of students
  - To improve and enhance students' experience of a programme or to incorporate
  - changes arising from student feedback for the benefit of students
  - To meet external, professional or accrediting body requirements
  - To safeguard academic standards, for example, in response to external examiner feedback
  - To take into account staff changes
  - As a result of minimum numbers for study programmes or modules not being met.
- 9.8 TSCG will make all reasonable endeavours to avoid making changes to a programme later than 28 days before a programme starts. However, sometimes such changes need to be made, for example, for the reasons as set out above in Section 9.7. Most changes of this nature will be made to improve the programme for the benefit of students and will not adversely affect students. Most changes will become effective from the start of the next academic year, but sometimes in-year changes need to be made. Applicants will be notified of changes to the programme as soon as reasonably practicable.

## **10. Fees and Funding**

- 10.1 Trafford & Stockport College Group publishes its tuition fees on the website. Applicants will also be able to access information about additional financial support on those pages.
- 10.2 TSCG reviews its tuition fees annually. As TSCG charges above the minimum basic fee of £6,000 for some of its courses, it is required to submit an 'Access and Participation Plan' to the Office for Students which details how our fee income is invested into widening participation activity.

## **11. Feedback, Appeals and Complaints**

- 11.1 Feedback will be provided for unsuccessful applications upon request. Feedback will take one of two forms, either by telephone or by letter / email.
- 11.2 It is recognised that very occasionally applicants may have reason to question or express an opinion to Trafford & Stockport College Group about its decision or the way in which their application has been handled.



- 11.3 Applicants in this situation should direct their query to the Admissions Team for further clarification.
- 11.4 If they remain dissatisfied, the query should be directed to the relevant Head of Study for review.
- 11.5 TSCG reserves the right to refuse admission to applicants who have not met academic entry thresholds; or where there is evidence that they cannot (or are likely to be unable to) meet the academic, professional (such as DBS checks) or vocational requirements.
- 11.6 If an applicant remains dissatisfied after completing the processes described at 11.3 and 11.4, they will be referred to the TSCG Complaints, Compliments, and Incidents Procedure.