

ACCESS AND HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT INFORMATION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION POLICY

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

Access & Higher Education Student Terms and Conditions, Access & HE Student Tuition Fees & Refund Policy, Complaints Procedure for HE Students

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1.0 Purpose and Scope

1.1 This document describes

- a) How the College will ensure that prospective students (applicants) and current students are able to access timely and accurate information in order to make informed decisions.
- b) The obligations of the College to applicants and current students in relation to the modules/units that are offered on its access and higher education programmes and the arrangements that will be made if changes to the course offer are required.
- c) The exceptional circumstances that will give rise to a decision by the College to withdraw an unconditional or conditional offer of a place on an access or higher education programme and the arrangements that will be put in place in such an eventuality.
- d) The arrangements to be put in place in the event of changes to the validation arrangements for a course.

1.2 This policy and the associated procedures seek to ensure that students' reasonable expectations for fairness and transparency of information and process are met as described in the Competition and Market Authority (CMA) guidance to students and higher education institutions. 2

1.3 The policy is to be read in conjunction with the College's Student Complaints procedure and ***Access and HE Students Terms and Conditions of Contract.***

1.4 The College has sought to follow, wherever possible, the Statement of Good Practice Guide published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) on behalf of HEFCE (Nov 15)

2.0 Information for Students

2.1 Students should expect to receive up front, clear, timely, accurate and comprehensive information at all points during the student journey. The student journey is defined as covering the student experience as a prospective student or applicant to enrolled student and finally to graduate at the end of their studies.

2 Competition and Markets Authority 'Higher education: guide to consumer rights for students' (March 2015); Competition and Markets Authority 'Higher education: consumer law advice for providers' (March 2015); HEFCE 'Information for Students: A guide to providing information to prospective undergraduate students' (2017)

2.2 Joseph Chamberlain College will seek to ensure that it provides clear, timely, accurate and comprehensive information to prospective students. It is important to recognise that the Diploma in Education and Training (DET) is offered in partnership with Birmingham City University and students are recruited directly by the College. Students do not apply through the UCAS system.

2.3 The information provided to prospective students comprises –

- a) Course title and final award (certificate)
- b) Name of the awarding organisation
- c) Length of the course
- d) Start and end dates of the course
- e) Details of work and study placements
- f) Location of study i.e. Main campus
- g) Timetable information – if not available details of when information will be provided to students
- h) Entry requirements including arrangements for the recognition of prior learning or experience where applicable; additional requirements such as Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) report etc.
- i) Overview of the course
- j) Course/academic year structure
- k) Details of modules/units including those that are mandatory and those that are optional. Information will also be given about how and when decisions are made about which units/modules are to be offered in any year and how students will be advised of these matters.
- l) An overview of teaching and learning activities
- m) Indicative class sizes
- n) Details of taught hours and independent study required (workload)
- o) Support available for students i.e. learning needs and disability support that can be accessed by students
- p) Details of the teaching team wherever possible.
- q) Information about assessment and feedback arrangements on the course including informal (formative) and formal (summative) assessments.
- r) Details of the assessment components of each module/unit including how they contribute towards the final award.

- s) Tuition fees, other course-related costs.
- t) Financial support that is available to students.

2.4 Prospective students will be supplied with this information via:

- a) The College website
- b) Open events
- c) Fact finding events/ Careers service (Internal students)
- d) Offer letter(s) and related communications
- e) The Student Handbook – provided to students at induction
- f) Course communications – Emails/ notices typically provided to students by the Programme Leader
- g) 'JCC Connect' (Moodle)
- h) Student representatives

2.5 The College will seek at all times to ensure that information on the College website is current and maintained by the College Marketing Team. The College will ensure that information is up-to-date in time for the.

3.0 The Course Offer – Communicating changes

3.1 The College recognises the importance of clear and transparent communications and the potential negative impact of any changes to the course offer. Such changes may include changes staffing, resourcing or accommodation. Formal discussion and explanation of any changes will be communicated directly to students via email and via tutors.

3.2 Wherever possible the College will make available the advertised modules/units to students.

3.3 It may not always be possible to make available the full range of optional modules/units on a course because of changes in teaching staff, availability, class size/group viability factors or timetabling constraints. Students will be advised of these changes at the earliest opportunity and when the modules/units might be offered at a future point.

4.0 Withdrawal of Advertised Programmes

4.1 When a programme of study is advertised on the College website, and other published channels including the prospectus, the College will always seek to honour unconditional or conditional offers to applicants. In exceptional circumstances the College may be obliged to withdraw an advertised programme. The specific circumstances that will give rise to the withdrawal of a programme of study will be limited to

- a) course viability e.g. lack of recruitment
- b) staff availability
- c) serious concerns regarding course quality or
- d) the absence of approval by the awarding organisation.

4.2 The College is mindful of the serious consequences of the late withdrawal of an advertised course for applicants and it is not a decision that will be taken without extremely careful consideration and as a matter of the last resort. Such a decision will require the approval of the College Senior Leadership Team after all other options have been considered. In order to be fair to applicants and their future study options, the College will aim to make decisions about whether to close entry to a course at the earliest possible opportunity.

4.3 When a higher education programme of study is to be withdrawn from offer, all course applicants will be contacted in writing. The reasons for the withdrawal of the course offer will be clearly described. If possible, applicants will be given an alternative course offer at Joseph Chamberlain College or advised on alternative providers. If there is not a suitable alternative or the student does not wish to take up the offered alternative, the College will endeavour to arrange a transfer to another suitable course at a local college or higher education institution.

5.0 End of Validated Programme

5.1 Closure of programmes of study are the exception and not the norm, but on rare occasions an Access or higher education programme with enrolled students may become no longer available. This could occur because:

- a) The College has decided to cease offering the course
- b) The College has decided to change the awarding organisation for the course

5.2 When a course is to be closed to new applicants, arrangements will be put in place to continue to deliver the course to continuing students until

they have completed their programmes. So that this process can be managed efficiently, teaching will continue to be offered until the last cohort of students would normally have completed their full course i.e. at the end of the second year for a two year programme. So that students who may have interrupted their studies because of properly authorised illness or deferral or who are retaking parts of a course are not unreasonably disadvantaged, remote support will normally be extended by one further year.

5.3 If there is a change to the awarding organisation and any enrolled students have failed to complete their intended programme the College will endeavour to ensure that that any remaining continuing students can transfer to the new course. This will require the development of suitable 'articulation' ^{4*} arrangements to be agreed with the awarding organisation for the new course.

*4 Where students are admitted to a course with advanced standing recognising prior achievement from another course.