



ADMISSIONS POLICY AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

Holy Cross University Centre (HCUC) aims to promote and provide the opportunity for successful participation in higher education to everyone who can benefit from it. We aim to make a significant and distinctive contribution to widening participation through a coordinated strategy of advice and guidance, targeted support and provision of accessible entry routes. We seek to encourage all students with potential to study at Holy Cross, without bias to their educational, cultural, religious or financial background.

2. BACKGROUND TO PARTNERSHIP

Holy Cross College currently works in partnership with Liverpool Hope University for the academic provision of its own courses at both Holy Cross and Carmel College campuses. The College also works with the following Higher Education (HE) providers: Edge Hill University and St Mary's University (Twickenham) in the provision of a small number of their courses on our site. This Admissions Guidance covers all HE applications delivered in partnership with Liverpool Hope University at Holy Cross and at Carmel College (St Helens). Admissions to degree programmes delivered in partnership with Edge Hill University and St Mary's University follow the admissions policies of those respective institutions although there are necessarily some overlaps with regard to recruitment activities and initial advice appointments. Holy Cross is unable to accept applications from students who are classed as international students due to the current funding regulations and the status of the College. If there is any doubt as to the status of an applicant, Holy Cross will seek advice from Liverpool Hope University who will complete further checks. Students with disabilities or learning difficulties are admitted based on the academic judgement that the student can, with reasonable adjustments by the University and/or the College, be reasonably expected to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course to achieve the award. Applicants are strongly encouraged to disclose related information within the application process so that appropriate support arrangements can be put in place. Holy Cross strives to be fair, open, transparent and consistent in its HE admissions. Holy Cross admissions procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered in accordance with professional standards (Quality Assurance Agency UK Code for Higher Education). Holy Cross HE Admissions Guidance is also informed by our work with GM Higher to raise awareness and remove barriers to higher education.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Holy Cross College Governors and Holy Cross College Core Leadership Team (CLT) are responsible for ensuring that an appropriate structure and resources are available to enable implementation of the HE Admissions Guidance.
- b. The Director of the University Centre and the Deputy Director of the University Centre are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the admissions guidance, facilitating annual review and maintaining a close working relationship with Liverpool Hope University and Carmel College.
- c. The team of Support Tutors at Holy Cross and Carmel College are responsible for carrying out initial advice appointments, assessing completed applications against entry criteria and making recommendations of offers via completion of holistic admissions forms.
- d. A Support Tutor and the University Centre Admin Manager at Holy Cross are responsible for processing offers through UCAS and e-mailing applicants with further information relating to their chosen degree programme at Holy Cross or Carmel College. Holy Cross and Carmel College staff send out further information relating to site-specific induction and support events at their respective centres.

4. ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- a. Information about available courses, including information on structure, content, entry criteria, application process and tuition fees, is displayed on the College website and the UCAS website.

Admissions Policy and Appeals Procedure

- b. All potential applicants (irrespective of how they initially enquire) are invited for an individual Initial Advice Appointment with an experienced support tutor. Applicants who apply without having an initial advice appointment are invited into the College to ensure they have received consistent information. This information and advice is fully documented and signed by both support tutor and prospective student. All applicants are e-mailed the power point slides which are used at the initial advice appointment. This ensures consistency of information given and allows Holy Cross, as the Lead Centre, to ensure that the information provided to potential applicants about the admissions process is fair and comparable across both sites.
- c. Currently, all degree provision under the scope of this admissions guidance is full time and therefore all applications are made through UCAS with applicants able to select their preferred campus (Holy Cross or Carmel College) for programmes delivered at both centres.
- d. Being part of the UCAS system ensures that potential students have access to the range of UCAS advice, help and information including guides about the application process, clear timelines and dates for action by both the student and universities, advice about writing the personal statement and advice about the reference.
- e. Holy Cross is committed to process all applications in line with UCAS guidelines and to give fair and equal consideration to all applications received before the UCAS deadline. Applications received after the official UCAS deadline date of 15th January are still considered as long as places are available.
- f. Later applicants (after 30th June) who meet criteria and are already in the UCAS clearing system can be accepted via clearing. Later applicants who are not in UCAS are required to provide personal statement, reference and proof of meeting entry criteria so that they can be accepted via the RPA route. Clear information on the routes for late applicants is given out at initial advice appointments.
- g. UCAS applicants who already meet entry criteria or who have passed an alternative entrance assessment prior to application are made an unconditional offer. UCAS applicants who are currently studying a level 3 programme and/or who have still to complete the entrance assessment are made a conditional offer subject to meeting this criteria. Offers are made through UCAS with additional information relating to terms and conditions being emailed to applicants directly from the College.
- h. In the case of an unsuccessful application the applicant receives information through UCAS and is also given the opportunity to see a support tutor who will explain the reason for the decision and/or to signpost to further study where appropriate.
- i. Holy Cross reserves the right to cancel or withdraw any offer made on the basis of an application that has been found to contain fraudulent, false or misleading information or which is supported by fraudulent documents including references and certificates.
- j. In the event that a programme is withdrawn after an offer is made Holy Cross in liaison with the University will ensure that applicants are offered a place on an alternative programme and also that applicants are given information in a timely and professional way to enable them to fully explore other options.
- k. We recognise that occasionally an applicant may wish to indicate concerns regarding the service s/he has received. We actively encourage applicants to contact us immediately with any concerns so that we can attempt to address any particular issues and continue to review and improve our services.
- l. Where an applicant feels that the situation has not been resolved to their satisfaction the Appeals Process (See Section 9 below) should be followed.

5. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Standard entry requirements are based on UCAS tariff points (currently 96 points) and detailed on the college website and the UCAS website. In line with widening participation this offer may be lower than the standard offer at Liverpool Hope University in a given year. Details are agreed in discussion with the Director of Enrolment at Liverpool Hope University, take account of any subject specific requirements and are reviewed annually. Any individual amendments to entry requirements are undertaken in consultation with staff at the University but the College has the final decision on applications to the first year of degree programmes.

We have a more flexible approach to experienced applicants, who may not necessarily have the required UCAS tariff points, but who have a wider range of experiential and professional experience and we encourage applications from a wide body of potential students. Central to our admissions practice is the principle that all applications are considered on an individual basis. Students who don't meet standard entry criteria but who demonstrate at initial advice appointment that they have the potential to study successfully at degree level are given the opportunity to sit an alternative entrance assessment or, in the case of English Literature, to complete a subject specific essay.

Access to HE students are required to pass the full Access to HE Diploma and, in the case of English Literature applicants, to have successfully completed a level 3 English unit.

All applicants must have sufficient competency in English language to study successfully for the proposed award.

The holistic form completed by support tutors for all applicants enables support tutors to provide evidence that each applicant has been seen for an initial advice appointment. This provides a rationale for recommending offers for students who do not meet 'standard' entry criteria. This was initially suggested by the University as a vehicle to allow some divergence from their own admissions criteria to reflect the differences in our target students.

Applicants are given clear information and guidance about the alternative entrance process at the initial advice appointment and are given the opportunity to attend preparatory sessions to help with this process.

Applicants who are completing the alternative entrance paper are offered feedback on up to two drafts.

The completed assessment papers are offered under timed conditions and marked following a standardised procedure to ensure parity. Feedback on entrance papers should be offered within 5 working days. English literature essays (for those who don't meet the subject specific requirement) are completed at home and marked by the English department at Liverpool Hope. Feedback should be given to students within 2 weeks.

6. STUDENT TRANSFERS

HCUC is sensitive to the fact that student's circumstances, aspirations and long-term goals may change over time. Transfers may result from a change from:

- a. one course to another within the institution, or
- b. another provider into a course at HCUC, or
- c. a course at HCUC to on at another provider.

Full details can be found in our [Student Transfer Policy](#).

7. PROOF OF QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants are asked to provide evidence of their highest qualification and any subject specific qualification if this has not been provided by the Awarding Body Linkage via UCAS.

If a student does not have a copy of their highest qualification but has met entry criteria by passing an alternative entrance assessment we will still confirm their place.

8. DISABLED STUDENTS

As part of our commitment to providing a fully inclusive learning environment, Holy Cross actively encourages applicants to disclose any relevant information early on in the admissions process, such as, at initial advice appointments and/or on the UCAS application.

If potential students require admissions information to be presented in a different format, we will try to meet their requirements.

If any applicant indicates a disability or additional support requirement, they will be given information about DSA and will also be asked for their permission for referral for further advice to Liverpool Hope's Student Development and Wellbeing Department (SDW) to determine their study support needs.

All requests for support are considered in the context of the criteria for 'reasonable adjustments' as outlined in the Disability Equality Duty (DED). However, if the provision of support following an assessment of need is considered unreasonable or unavailable, for reasons that are beyond Holy Cross, Liverpool Hope or the student's control, the application will be subject to further review in conjunction with the applicant. In certain rare circumstances, the outcome of such a review may be to defer or withdraw the offer of admission or enrolment. Assessment of need may take place before or after an offer is made.

If an entrance assessment is required to meet academic entry criteria, applicants who require extra time or adapted test arrangements will be expected to notify us in advance. They will be asked to provide either a copy of their Local Authority 'Statement', their Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a letter from their current or past school or college to confirm that the adaptations are normally provided.

9. APPEALS PROCEDURE

9.1 Introduction

At Holy Cross, we are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent higher education admissions procedures and to consider all applications in line with the College HE Admissions Guidance. If applicants feel that they have cause for concern about the application decision or about the way their application has been handled, they must use these procedures to inform us of their concerns.

9.2 Appeals

An Appeal is a formal request for reconsideration of a decision of an application, usually where the decision has been not to offer a place. Appeals will normally be allowed only if there is evidence of a material irregularity in the decision making process.

9.2.1 Appeals Process

The following process should be followed:

- a. Before deciding whether they have grounds for an appeal or not, an applicant should seek feedback initially from the Support Tutor they saw for initial advice. In cases where there has

been pertinent information missing from the application form this will allow for the appeal to be resolved informally.

- b. If the applicant proceeds with a formal appeal this should be submitted within 10 working days of an applicant being notified of their non-selection.
- c. The Appeal should be submitted in writing to the Director of the University Centre, Holy Cross College, Manchester Road, Bury, BL9 9BB or by email to universityadmin@holycross.ac.uk, stating clearly the grounds for appeal and making clear what corrective action is being sought.
- d. Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 10 working days and given an explanation for the decision. If the appeal is rejected, the applicant may, within 10 working days, appeal further to the College Principal, stating why the Director's decision is not seen as appropriate. The Principal will normally reply within 10 working days. The decision of the Principal is final and there is no further right of appeal.

9.2.2 Possible Outcomes of an Appeals

An appeal may be rejected as not constituting a clear case in relation to potential grounds as outlined above.

If it is accepted that there is cause for a reconsideration of a decision, the application would be reconsidered via due process and the response from the Director of the University Centre or College Principal will either include the final decision or indicate when that decision would be made.

If at any stage of the procedure it is deemed that the matter about which the complaint has been made might amount to misconduct by a member of staff, then the HR Manager will be informed and a decision taken by College senior staff as to whether Disciplinary Action is necessary.

10. DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

All applicants are required to make a disclosure in relation to any criminal convictions they have (both spent or unspent). Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar applicants from becoming a student. However, a risk assessment will be necessary to ensure Holy Cross 6th Form College and University Centre (HC&UC) meets its safeguarding responsibilities in relation to children and vulnerable adults, considers the risk to the HC&UC community and makes an appropriate assessment in relation to the personal qualities and professional standards expected. Assessment of disclosure forms part of the admissions process and can affect whether or not the University Centre (UC) will offer a place.

Our Policy on [Applicants with Criminal Convictions](#) contains further information.

11. HANDLING AND STORAGE OF PERSONAL DATA

HCUC needs to collect and process personal data in order to meet statutory requirements, function effectively as an educational institution and provide students with the support they require while undertaking their studies.

Our [Data Collection Notice](#) contains further information.

12. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

If your application is successful and you decide to accept an offer from Holy Cross College for a Liverpool Hope University award, a contract will be formed between you, the College and the University.

Further details are contained in our [Terms and Conditions](#).

13. RELATED POLICIES

Other relevant policies include:

- [Tuition Fee Policy](#)
- [Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Applicants with Criminal Convictions Policy](#)
- [Data Collection Notice](#)
- [Liverpool Hope Student Guide to Regulations and Policies](#)
- [Student Transfer Policy](#)

14. AMENDMENTS

The College may have to amend policies and procedures from time to time. The website will be kept up to date to reflect this. If we amend anything that materially impacts on your study, we will let you know and, where appropriate, involve you or your representative(s) in a consultation process. Policies and procedures will only be changed with the knowledge and approval of the Core Leadership Team and/or Governing Body of the College.