



FE Admissions Policy

04th August 2025



SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW

PAGE NUMBER OR HEADING NAME	DETAILS OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE	CHANGES MADE BY
NA		
NA		
NA		

Equality Impact Assessment

It is proposed that this form be included in all college policy template from hereon before the contents page.

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students, and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	NA
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	

You will need to consider whether its possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy
Who can access the policy	Who cannot or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with 1 the lowest and 5 the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral, or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	NA			
Disability	NA			
Gender (Sex)	NA			
Gender Reassignment	NA			
Marriage or Civil Partnership	NA			
Pregnancy / Maternity	NA			
Race	NA			
Religion or Religious Belief	NA			
Sexual Orientation	NA			
Any other element that needs to be considered.	NA			

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010.
2. As part of the policy approval process Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved.

FE Admissions Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all further education applicants:

- are treated fairly in their application via an open and transparent process
- have access to information, advice, and guidance at all stages throughout the learner journey, including clear entry criteria for all courses
- are provided with information about the likely career or employment outcomes of the course to assist in their choice
- are provided with a timely and efficient application process
- have the opportunity to disclose any learning difficulty and/or disability so that support can be put in place
- are offered, where appropriate, a place on a course best suited to their ability and aspirations

This process supports South Essex Colleges Group's commitment to equality and diversity. It also supports the College's duty of care to ensure that all those seeking to study are placed on an appropriate level of course that will enable them to succeed.

This policy is applicable to all applicants applying for a further education programme starting in the academic year 2025-2026.

2. POLICY AIMS

The on-time application deadline to the College for September 2025 entry is 31st July 2026.

- By meeting the on-time application deadline, we will, where possible and appropriate, give you a conditional offer of a place on a suitable course. This does not guarantee a place on the course. You will be required to accept the offer and meet the conditions of your offer.
- Applications received after the on-time application deadline will be accepted; however, applicants may be invited to the College's main enrolment sessions with places offered on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to availability.
- The College accepts applications via our application form, which is available online via the College website – www.southessex.ac.uk or by attending an open evening, where the admissions team will support with the online application.

Applications from learners aged 16-18

- Applicants may be invited to the College for a workshop event where they will speak with tutors to find out more about the course and check whether it is suitable. All offers will be conditional on meeting any entry requirements, such as GCSE results, which are specified on the South Essex Colleges Group website – www.southessex.ac.uk.
- In the event of any changes to COVID-19 guidance and/or restrictions, we may have to adapt our application process to temporarily exclude recruitment events. In this situation, applicants will be made conditional offers subject to meeting the specific course entry requirements, will be set subject-specific tasks to complete at home, and/or invited to virtual information events.
- Applicants aged 16-18 applying for adult programmes will not be taken forward to course offer. Applicants will be guided towards enrolment on to a 16-18 study programme.

Applications from adults

- Applicants may be invited to the College for an assessment for Maths and English or attend an appropriate workshop. Following the computer-based assessment, the applicant will be given an offer for an appropriate course. The offer will be conditional on any entry requirements specified on the South Essex Colleges Group website – www.southessex.ac.uk.
- In the event of any changes to COVID-19 guidance and/or restrictions, we may have to adapt our application process to temporarily exclude recruitment events. In this situation, applicants will be made conditional offers subject to meeting the specific course entry requirements, will be set subject-specific tasks to complete at home, and/or invited to virtual information events.
- Applicants for 16-18 study programmes may be considered up to the age of 21 at the discretion of the academic head of department. No applicants over the age of 21 will be taken forward to course offer, unless the applicant holds an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP). In this case, applicants up to the age of 25 will be considered.

Accessing information, advice, and guidance

- We will offer all applicants access to information, advice, and guidance at all stages throughout their application process using a range of platforms. This may be with an Admissions Officer, a Careers Coach, Student Services, or a course tutor.
- The College works in partnership with other agencies including careers service, local authorities, schools, and other education providers, to manage appropriate information sharing and referral processes. We will ensure that the information and advice provided to potential learners is accurate.

Entry requirements

- We set our entry criteria at a level that ensures applicants are placed on a course that matches their academic ability and, therefore, gives them the best chance to succeed. It supports progression through levels of learning for those applicants who are academically able to advance.
- Government legislation states that all 16 to 18-year-olds must continue to study Maths and English as part of their studies until they achieve a GCSE grade 9-4/A*-C, or equivalent. For this reason, all courses now have a minimum Maths and English entry criteria. Learners who do not achieve this grade must participate in Maths and English qualifications as part of the study programme. Learners who have achieved the above grades will be required to enrol onto additional elements of the study programme.
- We will clearly publish the entry criteria for courses both in our printed materials and online. The criteria reflects the minimum entry criteria that applicants must meet. We regularly review our entry criteria, and we may at times need to amend them to ensure it is appropriate and provide access for suitable learners
- For some courses, as well as meeting the minimum entry criteria for that level of study, we may ask the applicant to meet additional entry criteria relevant to that subject area. This may be specific subject-related testing or activities, for example, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for childcare or the production of an art portfolio for art & design courses.
- The applicant is required to provide evidence of their qualifications to show they meet the course entry requirements. This evidence must identify the institution, for example previous school, and/or the awarding body as well as the qualification and level achieved.
- Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not been educated in an English-speaking environment (country and/or institution) are required to achieve a minimum overall score of IELTS 7.0 in each band or equivalent.
- The College accepts a range of English language qualifications as being equivalent to IELTS. Please contact the Admissions Team for more information.
- Entry requirements are published in the College prospectus and on the Website. The College reserves the right to amend its entry requirements (subject to approval by its validating institution) up to 12 months before the proposed point of admission.

- Amended entry requirements will be published on the College website. Student entry conditions will be applied as stated in the College Prospectus for that year of entry.
- The College accepts United Kingdom qualifications, which are clearly stated in the College prospectus. In addition, a variety of recognised international qualifications are also accepted. The equivalence of such qualifications will be evaluated in accordance with independent national guidance provided by UK ENIC, UCAS and other recognised sources. The Admissions Team is responsible for undertaking such evaluations in consultation with Admissions Selectors.

Supporting applicants with additional learning support needs

- We welcome applications from learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We encourage applicants to inform us of any needs during the application and enrolment stages. The Additional Learning Support team will agree reasonable adjustments and support programmes on an individual basis to meet the applicant needs.
- If the applicant has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), a medical letter or any other documentation relating to a learning difficulty or disability, they must notify the admissions team as soon as possible. The applicant will have the opportunity to disclose this information at any stage throughout the application process.
- Applicants with confirmed or in-progress Education Health Care Plans may not be eligible to enrol until the required internal assessments and formal consultation with the Local Authority (South Essex Colleges Group) are completed. These assessments and consultation process will be essential in ensuring that appropriate funding or resources are in place to support the EHCP Outcomes and the correct support is provided. During the EHCP consultation process with the LA we may respond to say we are unable to meet the applicants needs if we consider that we are unsuitable for the young person's age, ability, aptitude, or SEN, or that to place the young person at South Essex Colleges Group would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources or the efficient education of others. In line with the Children and Families Act 2014, we will admit an applicant with an EHCP if we are the named institution.
- Any applicant whose support needs are assessed as requiring additional Local Authority funding to support their more complex needs, will need to be approved prior to enrolment to enable South Essex Colleges Group to make the appropriate level of reasonable adjustments to meet those needs.
- We reserve the right to refuse a place to an applicant if the individual is assessed as a risk to others or if the College is unable to meet their specific requirements for a safe or controlled environment.

Supporting applicants with safeguarding support needs

- We welcome applications from learners from all backgrounds and with safeguarding needs. We encourage applicants to inform us of any needs during the application and enrolment stages. The Safeguarding & Pastoral team will agree on safety & risk management measures and support programmes on an individual basis to meet the applicant's needs.
- If the applicant is a Looked After Child, known to Youth Offending/probation, in-patient due to mental health, they must notify the admissions team as soon as possible. The applicant will have the opportunity to disclose this information at any stage throughout the application process.
- Any applicants with high-risk safeguarding needs may not be able to enrol until the required internal assessments have been carried out alongside relevant agencies. These assessments will be essential in ensuring the correct support is provided. We reserve the right to refuse or withdraw a place to an applicant if the individual is assessed as a risk to others or if the College is unable to meet their specific requirements for a safe or controlled environment.

Complex Applicant Panel

- The College will hold regular Complex Applicant Panels throughout the academic year to assess high need and risk applications from the Additional Learning Support team and the Safeguarding Team.
- Cases will be presented and heard by the Assistant Principal Student Experience, Head of Additional Learning Support and Head of Safeguarding, with an additional quorum of 3 Managers/Officers from ALS and Safeguarding.
- Complex Applicant Panels will be confidential, and all information shared will be treated sensitively. Outcomes and rationale for the decision will be held by the Assistant Principal.
- Appeals against decisions made by the Complex Applicant Panel must be made to the Assistant Principal Student Experience within 10 working days.

Criminal convictions

- In accordance with the College's safeguarding requirements, all learners or prospective learners are asked to disclose all criminal convictions to study at South Essex Colleges Group. This includes enrolled learners who receive a criminal conviction whilst on a programme of study.
- If the programme of study requires a DBS check, the applicant is required to declare all convictions – including warnings, cautions, reprimands – which are spent and un-spent due to certain professions being exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Please note that declaring a criminal conviction does not automatically prevent anyone from becoming or continuing as a learner at the College.
- Accessibility and Support for Applicants with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

As part of our commitment to providing a transparent and inclusive admissions process at South Essex Colleges Group, we wish to clarify the following:

- An interview with the Additional Learning Support (ALS) team does not automatically guarantee placement on your chosen course. Applicants are advised to review all correspondence within our applications portal for any specific course offer conditions.
- For those who have declared having an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) or complex additional support needs, please note that your offer is conditional. This is subject to a formal agreement between South Essex College and your Local Authority to ensure that appropriate support is in place.
- This statement aligns with the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice (2015), underscoring our commitment to ensuring the rights of learners with additional needs while maintaining clear communication throughout the admissions process.
- We aim to ensure that all applicants understand the criteria and requirements for their course admission and support needs, fostering an environment that is supportive, informed, and compliant with statutory obligations.

Course offers

- An applicant will be made an 'unconditional offer' if there is a place on the course, They can demonstrate that they have already met the entry criteria for the course and have successfully completed any required testing.
- All other offers to the College will be 'conditional.' We will ask the applicant to present evidence that they have met all the conditions of entry before enrolling on a course.
- If we believe the course applied to is not suitable, we will advise the applicant of the following options:
 - If the subject area is an appropriate choice, but the course level is not, then we will offer the applicant a conditional place on a lower or higher-level course within that same subject area
 - Refer and guide the applicant to a suggested alternative course in another academic department
 - The applicant must accept the course offer to guarantee a place on the course. Where demand is high for a course, the applicant may not be able to claim their place without taking this step.
 - The applicant will only hold one course offer with the College. Where an applicant has applied for two courses, they will be asked to select one. This is to make sure that the maximum number of applicants can join the College.

Appeals process

- Applicants may appeal if they believe the application process, including entry criteria, has been applied unfairly or inaccurately. Any appeals against the application process must be supported by evidence that demonstrates how the conditions of entry have been met, such as entry criteria or support requirements, or provide details of any mitigating circumstances.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to Joanne Carter, the Admissions, Careers & Recruitment Manager.

Joanne.Carter@southessex.ac.uk

Course closures

- There are occasions when we may have to close a course or move it to a different location. This can be due to several reasons such as low interest or changes to funding. In the rare case this occurs, the following steps will be taken:
 - We will let applicants and appropriate organisations know about the changes as soon as possible
 - Where the course runs at more than one campus and there are still places available, we will offer the applicant a place at an alternative campus
 - Access to Information, Advice and Guidance to discuss alternative options within the College, with priority offers made for interested applicants

Complaints process

- To raise a concern about the application process, please contact the Admissions, Careers & Recruitment Manager in the first instance.

Joanne Carter, Admissions, Careers & Recruitment Manager.

Joanne.Carter@southessex.ac.uk

- If the complaint remains unresolved, this can be escalated utilising the College's formal complaints process. Our Compliments and Complaints Policy can be found here: www.southessex.ac.uk/policies

Enquiry Service Agreement

The following services are covered by this agreement:

- Telephone
- Email support
- Website messenger (Pubble)
- Microsoft Teams

Service Availability:

- 8:30am to 5:00pm Monday – Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm on Friday.
- Website messenger will be accessible on www.southessex.ac.uk when advisers are available during working hours above.

All enquiries will be responded to within 3 working days, excluding bank holidays and site closures.

Further information

Questions relating to this policy should be directed to the Admissions, Careers & Recruitment Manager.

Joanne Carter, Admissions, Careers & Recruitment Manager.

Joanne.Carter@southessex.ac.uk



Senior Leadership Responsibility	Ray Banton
Policy Author	Joanne Carter
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