

Student Admissions Procedure

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Lead Author:	Rebecca Bouckley (Quality Officer, Academic Governance and Quality Assurance)
Responsible Director:	Director of Education and Training
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Student Admissions Procedure

1 Introduction

1.1 *This procedure is a statement setting out structured steps, which need to be adhered to, in the process of admitting students to study at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust ('the Trust'), and Trust Associate and Alternative Centres of Delivery.*

1.2 *The Trust has a commitment and a responsibility to ensure that legislative requirements relating to equality and diversity are met and that the Trust aligns itself with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's Quality Code Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education, as well as other relevant guiding principles.*

2 Purpose

2.1 *The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the fair, transparent, reliable, valid and inclusive admission of students onto courses delivered at the Trust, and to ensure that admissions processes:*

- *are transparent*
- *enables the Trust to select students who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and their potential*
- *strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid*
- *seek to minimise barriers for prospective students*
- *are professional in every respect and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes*
- *support staff to recruit students who are able to complete their programmes*

2.2 *The procedure also works to ensure that admissions processes support the mission and strategic objectives of the Trust's training.*

3 Scope

3.1 *This procedure applies to all staff involved in the recruitment, admission and enrolment of students onto any course of study delivered at the Trust.*

3.2 *Associate Centres and Alternative Centres of Delivery shall follow this procedure. Associate Centres and Alternative Centres may have additional processes from a strategic institutional perspective, but the duties and responsibilities listed under (5) will be applied to all Associate Centres and Alternative Centres of Delivery.*

4 Definitions

4.1 *Admission denotes the application, selection and enrolment processes.*

4.2 *Applicant is any person who has applied for a course, up until the point of enrolment when they become a student.*

4.3 *Selection Criteria is the requirements that course teams and the Trust set out as the minimum requirements needed for a student to be offered a place on the course.*

5 Duties and responsibilities

5.1 *The Trust Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Committee are responsible for the approval and oversight of the Student Admissions Procedure and for regularly reviewing the policy.*

5.2 *The Trust Academic Governance, Quality and Registry Unit are responsible for ensuring the dissemination and updating of the procedure and for supporting the implementation and offering guidance on the procedure, and monitoring compliance of the procedure.*

5.3 *The Trust Director of Education and Training / Dean of Postgraduate Studies is responsible for ensuring that all staff delivering Education and Training at the Trust follow all relevant policies and procedures.*

5.4 *The Trust Associate Deans (ADs) within the Directorate of Education and Training (DET) may be consulted where there are queries about the outcome of a DBS check which raises queries with safeguarding (see 6.6 below). ADs will also support Portfolio Managers by offering guidance and advice.*

5.5 *The Trust Portfolio Managers ensure that Course Leads are equipped with the knowledge and training to make appropriate decisions in relation*

to the entry criteria, and the shortlisting, interview and ultimate selection onto the relevant course.

5.6 *Student Recruitment and Marketing Manager is responsible for the operational management of the Student Admissions Procedure including applications and interview. They assist course teams in ensuring that selection criteria are clear and accurate, and that the selection criteria within the programme specifications align with the marketing materials.*

5.7 *Trust Recruitment Advisors assist course teams in implementing the Student Admissions Policy including the management of applications and interviews. They assist course teams in ensuring that selection criteria are clear and accurate, and manage applicants from enquiry through to acceptance of unconditional offers.*

5.8 *Student Disabilities Lead (Operations Manager) is responsible for ensuring applicants with disabilities are supported, in liaison with the student recruitment and marketing manager.*

5.9 *Course Leads have the ultimate responsibility for all decisions relating to the selection of students for entry onto their course. They must ensure that they are familiar with this procedure and take responsibility for their knowledge and training to ensure they are equipped to make appropriate decisions in relation to the entry criteria, and the shortlisting and interview (where applicable) and ultimate selection of applicants. Course Leads may delegate authority to other members of the Course Team or other academic members of staff who have the knowledge of the course to enable them to come to a fair judgement on the suitability of the applicant. Course Leads are responsible for ensuring that anyone who has delegated authority has the relevant training, knowledge and expertise to make decisions on the selection of applicants.*

5.10 *Course Tutors may have delegated authority to shortlist, interview or select students for entry onto the relevant course.*

5.11 *The Head of Academic Governance and Quality Assurance ensures that registry functions including enrolment are carried out efficiently and in accordance with this Procedure.*

5.12 *All staff within DET are responsible for working in line with this Procedure, where they may have dealings with any part of the admissions, recruitment or enrolment (registration) processes.*

5.13 *The Trust Medical Director or equivalent post within Associate Centres (but not Alternative Centres of Delivery) may, in exceptional*

circumstances, be consulted where an applicant has disclosed information which needs to be considered from a safeguarding / duty of care to the public perspective.

- 5.14** *Complaints Liaison Officer is responsible for handling complaints or challenges to admissions.*
- 5.15** *Admissions Investigator: Normally a Portfolio Manager, who investigates any complaints or challenges to admissions.*
- 5.16** *Visiting Lecturers (VLs): Would not normally have responsibility for recruitment, but where the Course Lead of a large course has delegated authority to a VL for the recruitment of students, the Course Lead (or delegated member of the course team) must be involved in the decision making.*

6 Procedures

6.1 Selection Criteria (see section 4 for definition)

6.1.1 *In addition to the course-specific requirements (refer to 6.1.2 below), the Trust's General Selection Criteria exists to ensure the standards and rigour of the courses are maintained, and are based on nationally recognised, formal minimum attainment levels (where applicable):*

6.1.1.1 *Trust Courses (other than CPD): For courses delivered by the Trust but not validated by a University Partner, applicants must meet any requirements stipulated by Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) where a course has accreditation status, and/or meet any minimum standards stipulated in current marketing literature for the relevant course such as suitable professional skills and experience to be able to achieve the learning aims and outcomes of the course.*

6.1.1.2 *FHEQ Level 6 courses: For courses validated by a University Partner at Level 6, applicants must hold qualifications which demonstrate sufficient ability that those making selection decisions can be reasonably confident of an applicant's ability to complete the course. Applicants whose first language is not English must hold IELTSs 6.0 overall with a minimum of 5.5 in each area, or equivalent, although the course selection criteria may specify a higher score.*

6.1.1.3 *FHEQ Level 7 courses: For Postgraduate Certificates, Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters courses validated by a University Partner at Level 7, students must hold an Undergraduate Honours Degree or equivalent, or demonstrate sufficient prior experiential learning to satisfy those making selection decisions so that they can be reasonably confident of an applicant's ability to complete the course. Applicants whose first language is not English must hold IELTSs 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.5 in each area, or equivalent, although the course selection criteria may specify a higher score.*

6.1.1.4 *FHEQ Level 8 courses: For Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD), Professional Doctorates (DProfs) or any other Degree validated by a University Partner at Level 8, applicants must hold a Postgraduate award at FHEQ Level 7 or equivalent, or demonstrate equivalent prior experiential learning to*

satisfy those making selection decisions to be reasonably confident of an applicant's ability to complete the course. Applicants whose first language is not English must hold IELTSs 7.0 overall with a minimum of 6.5 in each area, or equivalent, although the course selection criteria may specify a higher score.

6.1.2 *The Course Team (led by the Course Lead) for each course leading to an award validated by one of the Trust's University Partners will produce a Programme Specification as part of the Validation process. This Programme Specification will clearly articulate the course-specific requirements for entry onto the course (Selection criteria). These requirements should:*

6.1.2.1 *Identify any qualification or awards needed to enter the course (e.g it is typical for entry to a Level 7 Postgraduate Award to require a BA (hons) or equivalent).*

6.1.2.2 *Identify any grades/classification of the stipulated award (e.g. applicants must hold a BA (hons) 2:2 or above) where required.*

6.1.2.3 *Identify any prior knowledge or skills in a specific subject area needed to enter the course (e.g. applicants must have a BA (hons) 2:2 in Psychology) if required.*

6.1.2.4 *Stipulate (where appropriate) certain requirements as part of the entry onto the course to demonstrate the applicant's resilience in the face of emotionally demanding situations. This includes Group Relations Conferences and courses that involve direct clinical work.*

6.1.2.5 *Identify any additional requirements, such as being in certain employment, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, references, examples of previous work, or PSRB requirements, for example.*

6.1.2.6 *Identify any progression routes whereby an applicant may enter the course at another point than the beginning through routes other than Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) (e.g. if they have successfully completed another identified course, applicants may be able to step directly onto the 2nd year (or a certain stage) of the course they are applying to).*

6.1.3 *All marketing material should use the Programme Specification as the primary source of information relating to selection criteria, although the language used in marketing materials can be amended as appropriate for the target audience.*

6.1.4 *Selection Criteria will form the basis of shortlisting and interview where necessary, and for ultimately offering applicants a place on the course in question.*

6.2 Marketing and Publicity

6.2.1 *All marketing and publicity (in addition to 6.1.3) will be clear, accurate, relevant, current and accessible, and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options. They will comply with the Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code Part C; and with the Consumer and Markets Authority (CMA) Consumer Protection Law.*

6.2.2 *All marketing and publicity for externally validated awards will comply with any requirements of our University Partner guidelines, policies or procedures.*

6.3 Admission with Advanced Standing (Accreditation of Prior Certificated and Experiential Learning)

6.3.1 *In recognition of the prior certificated or experiential achievement of applicants, the Trust follows the Accreditation of Prior Certificated and Experiential Learning (AP(E)L) procedures of the Validating Universities.*

6.3.2 *Where applicable, applicants must identify that they wish to begin the course with advanced standing at the outset of their application and will not be able to apply for AP(E)L once on the course of study.*

6.4 Application Form

6.4.1 *There is a standard Application Form for applicants to complete online. Additional, course-specific information can be included on the application form but will not replace the generic Trust requirements. Associate and Alternative Centres of delivery must use the Trust application for all validated course applications.*

6.4.2 *Any personal information relating to Protected Characteristics (as identified in the Equalities Act 2010) disclosed on the equalities form will not be shared with those making decisions about the suitability of an applicant. This information will be stored by the Admissions Team separately to the information used for selection and will only be used where special arrangements need to be made (such as for wheelchair access) during interview, or for anonymised, statistical analysis of applications, and/or submissions to bodies such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).*

6.4.3 *If an applicant discloses a disability, the recruitment advisors will follow the Students with Disabilities Procedure. They will not disclose any information unless expressly given permission by the applicant, and then will only disclose as much as is necessary to ensure the applicant receives a fair and equitable application process.*

6.4.4 *Application forms will be processed in a reasonable time-frame (a maximum of 4 weeks to offer interview or reject, with a target of 2 weeks) and application forms submitted within any deadlines stipulated in marketing materials or on the application form will be processed in good time to enable successful applicants to enrol before the beginning of the course. Furthermore, applicants will be kept informed of the progress of their application by having access to an applicant portal or via email.*

6.5References and other evidence

6.5.1 *All courses require references to be submitted as part of the application process, to provide evidence that the applicant will be suitable for entry to the course. These will be requested from the referees named in the application 72 hours after it is submitted.*

6.5.2 *Certificates for any awards (or the highest award at the time of application) will normally be requested as evidence.*

6.5.3 *Course teams may also ask for other information such as previous essays or examples of work.*

6.6Criminal records and Safeguarding

6.6.1 *Some courses of study require that students undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly the Criminal Records Bureau – CRB – check) where the students may be in contact with members of the public in the course of their studies. This will normally take place as part of the enrolment process. In these cases, all offers of a place on a course are conditional, subject to a satisfactory DBS check being carried out.*

6.6.2 *Declaring a prior criminal conviction either through the application process or by another means does not necessarily rule the applicant out of the process.*

6.6.3 *Prior criminal convictions will be considered carefully and investigated by the relevant Course Lead in consultation with the Portfolio Manager and Associate Dean. The Trust takes its Duty of Care in safeguarding the public extremely seriously. If the conviction is sufficiently serious, the Trust Medical Director will be consulted as part of the investigation.*

6.6.4 *Please refer to Withdrawal of Offer (6.9) below for further information.*

6.7 Interview

- 6.7.1** *Where an interview takes place, it will be conducted fairly and equitably, with applicants assessed solely on their skills, knowledge and capability to complete the course of study applied for.*
- 6.7.2** *Interviewers shall be using a standard interview form which is provided through the on-line student information management system.*
- 6.7.3** *Interviewers will use the form to base their questions and decisions on the course selection criteria.*
- 6.7.4** *The selection criteria will be made available to applicants prior to the interview.*
- 6.7.5** *Interview panels will be made up of the Course Lead, or at least one member of the course team or another suitable academic staff member with the knowledge and expertise in the subject area to make a fair judgement on the applicant's ability to complete the course of study. Members of staff or another suitable academic staff member who interview on behalf of the Course Lead will have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Course Lead.*
- 6.7.6** *At the interview, interviewers will be responsible for checking the interviewee's identity matches their application.*
- 6.7.7** *The opportunity to be interviewed either by conference call or by video link will be made available if applicants are unable to attend for reasons out of their control.*
- 6.7.8** *If the applicant confirms that reasonable adjustments need to be made for interview, the admissions team will liaise with the Student Disabilities Lead, estates and any other relevant member of staff on a need-to-know basis to allow applicants with disabilities to participate on equal terms. This can include assistance with access to the building, more time to undertake tests, offering text in Braille, or use of electronic screen reading software, for example. If it is relevant to inform the interview team, only as much information will be shared as is necessary to ensure the applicant is interviewed in an appropriate manner to enable the applicants to participate on equal terms.*

6.8 Selection

- 6.8.1** *Selection processes will be conducted fairly and equitably for both external candidates, and staff or students already at the Trust, with applicants assessed solely on their skills, knowledge and capability to complete the course of study applied for.*

- 6.8.2 Applicants who are also patients at the Trust will not be excluded from joining programmes, however their circumstances should be discussed at interview and they may be turned down if it is felt that admission to a particular course would adversely affect clinical treatment which they require.**
- 6.8.3 Staff members involved in any aspect of the selection of applicants will be compliant with the Trust's Equal Opportunities Statement and the Trust's Equality of Opportunities Statement on Disabilities, which are located in the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy, available to all staff and published on the Trust intranet and website.**
- 6.8.4 Information relating to the nine protected characteristics as identified in the Equalities Act 2010 are not made available to staff members who are involved in the selection of applicants.**

The ultimate decision on offering a place to an applicant lies with the Course Lead. The decision is based on the academic judgement of the Course Lead or delegate that in their opinion the applicant is likely to be able to successfully complete the course of study, based on the selection criteria for the course. The decision should be recorded on MyTap by the Course Lead.

- 6.8.5 Course teams who reject an applicant for entry onto their course may advise an applicant to apply for a different course which they feel is more suited to the applicant's current level of knowledge, skills and/or ability. This does not guarantee a place on that course and is subject to that course's admissions criteria.**

6.9 Withdrawal of Offer

- 6.9.1 The Trust reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place on any course at the Trust at any time, if information comes to light which means that an applicant is not suitable. This may be (for instance) where it comes to light that an applicant has a prior criminal conviction which may prevent them from being eligible to undertake clinical placements or observations on a course.**
- 6.9.2 The Trust reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place on the course where unforeseen circumstances mean that the Trust is unable to run the course (e.g., due to low interest in the course meaning there is not adequate funding to run the course). In this instance, the Trust may offer applicants alternative suitable courses, or to allow successful applicants to defer their place until such time as the course is delivered.**
- 6.9.3 The Trust is under no obligation to allow a student to continue on the course where information provided at application is found to be misleading or incomplete.**

6.10 Complaints and Challenges

6.10.1 *In accordance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, applicants have the right to access any documentation held on them. In addition, the Trust is committed to providing feedback to unsuccessful candidates.*

6.10.2 *An applicant may wish to raise a concern regarding the way in which, for example, their application has been dealt with or the way in which they have been communicated with.*

6.10.3 *An applicant will often raise an issue by telephone or email and the member of staff initially responding to that issue is responsible for listening to the concerns in full, taking note of all relevant information. If the applicant is not content with the response given by the member of staff, they should be asked to make a complaint or challenge, the procedure for which is given below:*

6.10.3.1 *Admissions complaints or challenges should be made no more than 20 working days after the communication of the admissions decision or after the cause of the complaint arises. Complaints made outside this period may, in exceptional circumstances, be considered at the discretion of the Director of Education and Training/ Dean of Postgraduate Studies.*

6.10.3.2 *A formal complaint or challenge should be made in writing, either by email or letter and should be sent by the applicant to the Complaints Liaison Officer (CLO).*

6.10.3.3 *The CLO will confirm if the complaint or challenge is within the scope of this policy. They will then confirm in writing to the applicant that the complaint or challenge has been received and will be investigated indicating to the applicant that they can expect a response, normally within 30 days.*

6.10.3.4 *The grounds for a complaint or challenge are procedural only (i.e. that this Admissions Procedure has not been effectively followed) and challenges to academic judgement will not be accepted (see 6.8.5 above for details about academic judgement).*

6.10.3.5 *The CLO will ensure that an Admissions Investigator is appointed who is independent from the issues under consideration.*

- 6.10.3.6** *The Admissions Investigator will conduct an initial investigation and forward all related paperwork to the CLO with a recommendation for action. The CLO will discuss the case with the Director of Education and Training/ Dean of Postgraduate Studies or Associate Dean, Academic Governance and Quality Assurance and will ensure they have a full understanding of the case before making a response.*
- 6.10.3.7** *A written response to the applicant's complaint or challenge will be made normally within 30 calendar days. The written response will include conclusions and any actions taken as a result of the complaint or challenge.*
- 6.10.3.8** *The written response will mark the completion of the complaint or challenge and the CLO will expect not to enter into further communication on the matter.*
- 6.10.3.9** *All correspondence and any notes relating to the case should be retained by the CLO.*
- 6.10.4** *The Student Complaints reporting carried out by the CLO should also include complaints raised through the Admissions Procedure.*

7 Training Requirements

- 7.10** *All Trust staff complete compulsory INSET training which includes equality, safeguarding and disability awareness.*
- 7.11** *All Trust staff also complete compulsory training in the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act (IG training).*
- 7.12** *It is desirable that Equality and Diversity training is undertaken by all staff members who take part in the interviewing and/or recruitment of students.*
- 7.13** *It is desirable that Disability Awareness training is undertaken by all staff members who take part in the interviewing and/or recruitment of students.*
- 7.14** *All staff processing applications will undertake mandatory information governance training (FOI and Data protection).*

8 Process for monitoring compliance with this Procedure

- 8.10** *The Academic Governance, Quality and Registry Unit will have responsibility for monitoring compliance with this procedure, alongside Portfolio Managers, Associate Deans and the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Committee (AGQA Committee).*
- 8.11** *Statistical data will be taken from the applications stage and compared with enrolments to analyse the effectiveness with the commitment to equality of opportunities.*
- 8.12** *A sample of interview forms will be requested by the Academic Governance, Quality and Registry Unit and reviewed for compliance with the process.*
- 8.13** *The Academic Governance, Quality and Registry Unit will bring this Procedure annually to AGQA Committee for review and amendments to ensure that the procedure continues to support the Trust's mission and strategic objectives, and any external changes which may impact the procedure.*
- 8.14** *The Complaints Liaison Officer reports on complaints against admissions, and actions will be taken based on intelligence gained from these complaints.*

9 References

- **Competition and Markets Authority: Competition and Regulation in Higher Education in England:** <https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/competition-and-regulation-in-higher-education-in-england>
- **Equality Act 2010:** <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- **QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education:** <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>
Student Disability Procedure

10 Associated documents¹

- **Application form:** <https://www3.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/tavcourseapplication/accessdenied.aspx?returnurl=/tavcourseapplication/?aspxautodetectcookie-support=1>
- **Regulations for Registry and Enrolment:** <https://tavistockandportman.uk/training/studying-us/your-application>
Course Fees Regulations: <https://tavistockandportman.uk/training/studying-tavistock-and-portman/fees-and-funding>

¹ For the current version of Trust procedures, please refer to the intranet.
Student Admissions Procedure, version 3, February 2018

Appendix A : Equality Impact Assessment

1. Does this Procedure, function or service development affect patients, staff, students and/or the public?

YES

NO

If NO, this is usually an indication that the Procedure, function or service development is not relevant to equality. Please explain that this is the case, or explain why it is relevant to equality even though it does not impact on people:

.....
.....
.....

2. Is there reason to believe that the Procedure, function or service development could have an adverse impact on a particular group or groups?

YES / NO

If YES, which groups may be disadvantaged or experience adverse impact?

Age – specific age groups & issues of inter-generational fairness YES / NO

Disability – people with impairments YES / NO

Gender – women, men, transgender people YES / NO

Race – people of different ethnic groups YES / NO

Religion and belief – people of different faiths and beliefs YES / NO

Sexuality – especially lesbian, gay, and bisexual people YES / NO

OtherYES / NO

3. If you answered YES in section 2, how have you reached that conclusion? (Please refer to the information you collected e.g., relevant research and reports, local monitoring data, results of consultations exercises, demographic data, professional knowledge and experience)

4. Based on the initial screening process, now rate the level of impact on equality groups of the Procedure, function or service development:

Negative / Adverse impact:

High

(i.e. high risk of having, or does have, negative impact on equality of opportunity)

Medium.....

(i.e. some risk of having, or there is some evidence of, negative impact on equality of opportunity)

Low X

(i.e. minimal risk of having, or does not have negative impact on equality)

Positive impact:

High X

(i.e. highly likely to promote, or clearly does promote equality of opportunity)

Medium.....

(i.e. likely to promote, or does have some positive impact on equality of opportunity)

Low.....

(i.e. not likely to promote, or does not promote, equality of opportunity)

N.B. A rating of 'High' negative / adverse impact' means that a Full Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out (available from the Trust's Policy Lead)

A rating of 'Medium negative' or 'Low' positive impact may mean that further work has to take place, especially where the Procedure, function, service development is designed to promote equality of opportunity

Date completed8/02/2018.....

NameSimon Carrington.....

Job Title..... Head of Academic Quality, Directorate of Education and Training

