

Admissions Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) The evaluation of applicants and the enrolment of prospective student as registered student from the first stage of the Hibernia College student life cycle including recruitment, application, and entry criteria. The policy sets out the overarching principles adopted by Hibernia College and underpins all procedures relevant to the admissions process.

Scope

To whom does the policy apply?

(2) This policy applies to applicants to all Hibernia College programmes

(3) This policy can be applied, as required and as appropriate, to other programmes at Hibernia College.

Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

(4) The Registrar, or their nominee, is ultimately responsible for the decision to offer a place to an applicant and to register a student.

(5) The Admissions Office is responsible for ensuring that information is presented in a format that is accessible to all including, fully online, students and is written in plain English.

(6) This policy and related procedures are the responsibility of the Registrar, or their nominee, who consults with the relevant Programme Director, or nominee, as required.

(7) Any third party nominated to conduct any part of the [Admission Offers Procedure](#) (i.e. occupational health screening) reports to the Registrar, or nominee. Where a third party is nominated to conduct any part of the procedure, a contract or memorandum of association exists describing the relationship.

Definitions

(8) Prospective Student – A prospective student is any person who has interacted with the College with a view to becoming a student. Prospective Students have no formal legal relationship with the College and the College defines them for the purposes of guiding action in the areas of recruitment and marketing.

(9) Applicant – An applicant is a person who has submitted an application to undertake a programme of study with the College.

(10) Registered Student – A registered student is a person who has successfully completed the admissions procedure, complies with all terms, conditions and regulations for the relevant programme and has paid all fees due to the College at the time of commencement of the programme.

Section 2 - Context

Legal or Regulatory Context

Quality Assurance Guidelines

(11) This policy is designed with regard to both the [European Standards and Guidelines](#) and QQI's [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) requirement for the College to have and to implement a policy for all stages of the student journey. The policy is also designed with regard to the [QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes](#) (2023).

Access, Transfer and Progression

(12) This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's [Access, Transfer and Progression Policy](#) and [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) as it forms part of the College's response to the [QQI Policy Restatement: Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training](#).

Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL)

(13) This policy, in respect of provision of information to prospective students, is designed with regard to QQI's [Protection of Enrolled Learners \(PEL\): Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act Guidelines for Providers](#).

Professional Regulation

(14) Where a programme is designed to lead to registration as a member of a regulated profession, the relevant programmes-specific admissions procedure is structured to meet the specific entry criteria set out by the professional regulator. However, admission to a programme of study cannot guarantee registration as a member of a regulated profession and applicants are solely responsible for ensuring they meet all relevant requirements.

Garda Vetting

(15) This policy is designed with regard to the [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Acts 2012 to 2016](#), which make it mandatory for people working with children or vulnerable persons to be vetted by An Garda Síochána National Vetting Bureau (NVB).

(16) The Act also creates offences and penalties for persons who fail to comply with its provisions.

(17) The Act stipulates that a relevant organisation shall not permit any person to undertake relevant work or activities on behalf of the organisation, unless the organisation receives a vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person.

Effective Practice Recommendations

Teaching Council

(18) The College has adapted the Teaching Council's Procedures – Fit and Proper Assessments and Guidelines – Fit and Proper Person Assessments to inform our approach to the conduct of Garda Vetting Committee meetings (see Part D – Garda Vetting).

Section 3 - Policy Statements

Part A - Principles for Student Recruitment

Accurate Public Information

(19) Clear, up-to-date and accurate information is communicated, where available, and in line with the [Public Information, Promotion and the Recruitment of Students Policy](#) and resources published about:

- a. Programmes: details of the curriculum, including assessment and an indicative programme calendar
- b. Application procedures: deadlines, indicative start dates, application forms and supporting documentation
- c. Admissions criteria and procedures for all programmes
- d. Programme accreditation details, including any academic and professional regulatory approval and requirements for students
- e. Award details: the awarding body, NFQ level (if any), equivalency and award title
- f. Details of the arrangements for the Protection of Enrolled Learners
- g. Fees associated with the programme, including supplemental fees for services other than tuition

Impartial Advice

(20) Responses to enquiries from prospective student and members of the public are:

- a. Honest, factual and up to date
- b. An aid to inform decision-making
- c. Timely

Part B - Principles for Application and Admissions

(21) Applications and admission to our programmes are based on:

- a. Clear entry criteria
 - i. Academic entry requirements are kept up to date and at a minimum benchmarked against national and relevant international standards for the disciplinary area. The programme's entry requirements incorporate the requirements for professional registration where a programme leads to professional registration.
- b. Fair entry procedures
 - i. Entry procedures are fair and are only based on the entry criteria for the programme.
- c. Equality of opportunity
 - i. All applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability to enrol on their desired programme.
 - ii. Applicants are assessed on the attainment of the entry criteria only and the College does not discriminate on any other grounds.
- d. Reasonable expectation of success
 - i. Applicants are offered places where, based on the outcome of the application procedures, there is a reasonable expectation that they may successfully complete the programme.

(22) Applicant responsibility

- a. The applicant is responsible for informing themselves about:
 - i. The programme
 - ii. Hibernia College
 - iii. The entry criteria
 - iv. The workload and commitment required to complete the programme
 - v. Fees and associated terms and conditions
- b. The applicant is responsible for providing verifiable evidence that they meet all the entry criteria.
- c. The applicant is responsible for making themselves available to be contacted by the College in relation to their application.

(23) Repeat applications

- a. We accept one application per intake, per programme.
- b. Applicants may not be permitted to reapply to the same programme within the College where they have previously exited a programme without award, as per the College [Assisting Failing Students to Exit Programmes Procedure](#), unless in exceptional circumstances subject to approval by the Programme Director and the Academic Dean.

(24) Canvassing

- a. The College admissions process is based purely on merit and applicants who engage in canvassing will have their application immediately cancelled.

Part C - Entry Criteria

(25) Programmes have specific entry criteria set out in the relevant approved programme document. In addition, there are general entry criteria that apply to all our programmes. Applicants must provide verifiable evidence that they:

- a. Meet all entry criteria
 - i. As set out in the relevant programme document and these regulations
- b. Meet personal specification requirements
 - i. As part of the entry procedures, applicants must (through their application and/or interview) demonstrate that they meet the following specifications:
 - Familiarity with the prospective field of study: applicants have researched the subject matter relevant to the programme and are familiar with the academic content and demands of the programme
 - Familiarity with and motivation to join a profession: where professional registration is a goal of a programme, applicants have researched current issues and developments in the relevant profession. They are motivated to become a member of the profession
 - Other competencies: applicants may have to demonstrate competencies specified in the entry criteria and invitation to interview details
- c. Good standing
 - i. Applicants must commit to staying in good standing with the College, which means ongoing compliance with the policies and procedures that apply to students.
 - ii. Applicants who have previously failed to meet the professional practice requirements of particular programmes at another Provider will only be considered for admission to similar programmes in exceptional circumstances.

Part D - Garda Vetting

Public Trust and Confidence

(26) Hibernia College offers a number of educational and other programmes that require students to undertake placements, with external agencies, which will bring them into contact with children and vulnerable adults and in which they will assume positions of trust.

(27) To ensure the protection of the public, and justify public trust and confidence, Hibernia College is committed to ensuring that only suitable candidates are allowed to undertake these programmes.

Application

(28) All offers for programmes which require students to undertake placements, bringing them into contact with children and/ or vulnerable adults will be conditional on the successful completion of the Garda Vetting process.

(29) Accordingly, Hibernia College requires students to be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána before their registration on the applicable programme is deemed complete.

(30) The College reserves the right to suspend and/or withdraw a student from the programme in accordance with the terms of this policy and the [Garda Vetting Procedure](#).

Vetting Disclosures

(31) Vetting disclosure may contain the following types of information:

- a. Statement of specified information (if any) relating to that person which is information concerning a finding or allegation of harm to another person
- b. Particulars of a criminal record (if any) or prosecution pending
- c. Statement that there is no criminal record or specified information

The College Garda Vetting Committee

(32) The College Garda Vetting Committee is responsible for considering cases where criminal convictions are returned on the Garda Vetting disclosure and making a decision on the suitability of the applicant for the programme.

(33) The Garda Vetting Committee consists of the Registrar, or nominee, and two individuals appointed by the Registrar.

Work placement

(34) Hibernia College will not permit any person to undertake relevant work placement or similar activities as part of their College Programme on behalf of the College unless the College receives a satisfactory vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau in respect of that person.

Part E - Appeals

(35) College admissions decisions are subject to appeal on the following grounds:

- a. Evidence that Hibernia College did not follow an established procedure in the making of a decision
- b. Evidence of substantive bias by one or more of the decision-makers in arriving at a decision

(36) Any appeal against an admissions decision must be made within five working days of the issue of the decision.

(37) Disagreement with a decision does not constitute valid grounds for an appeal.

(38) Appeals against College admissions decisions are subject to the same principles for appeals as laid out in [Appeals Policy](#) (Section 3 Part A.)

(39) It is the responsibility of the applicant to establish the grounds for any appeal they wish to make.

(40) Complaints about individuals or about the established procedures do not constitute grounds for an appeal and must be addressed under the College's [policy](#) and [procedure](#) for complaints.

(41) Where a student makes an application to appeal a decision and that appeal contains content that potentially involves other processes, such as a complaints process, the Academic Dean as relevant, will decide which process is most appropriate to process the student request.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	5th March 2025
Review Date	5th March 2028
Approval Authority	Quality Assurance Officer
Approval Date	5th March 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Enquiries Contact	Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Applicant" - An applicant is a person who has submitted an application to undertake a programme of study with the College.

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)

"Prospective Student" - A prospective student is any person who has interacted with the College with a view to becoming a student. Prospective students have no formal legal relationship with the College and the College defines them for the purposes of guiding action in the areas of recruitment and marketing.

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