

HE07

Admissions and Admissions Appeals Policy



**TEC
Partnership**

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HE07 Admissions and Admissions Appeals v1.4

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Version	1.4
Name of Responsible Committee	HECQS
Job Title of Responsible Author	HE Quality Officer
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Application to Collaborative Provision	Mandatory

Revision History

Version Number	Date	Type of Amendment	Amendment Details
1.0	December 2018	New Policy	
1.1	February 2020	Minor Review	Removal of reference to GIG and replacement with TEC Partnership Updating of job roles Remove use of RPA forms for UCAS Cycle outside of clearing Introduction of Person Specifications and Interview Forms Compliance with OfS Condition F2 and Transfers to and from other providers.
1.2	March 2021	Minor Review	Update to include ERC Removal of section 6 on Induction as covered in HE08 Retention and Engagement of Students. Changes to make GIFHE awarding powers TECP Awarding Powers Changes in job roles so can be applied at all colleges. Section 8 – Insertion of Early resolution Section 9 – Changes to appeals process Removal of APL and student transfer from this policy and implementation in HE21 Student Transfer and Accreditation of Prior Learning.
1.3	September 2022	Minor Review	Update to reflect changes with standard entry offers (4.2)
1.4	September 2024	Minor Review	Updates to committee names. Updating Accreditation of Prior Learning to Recognition of Prior Learning. Minor grammatical errors.

If you need any further advice on how the regulations work, you should contact the HE Quality Office.

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Admissions

1.0 General principles

1.1 Whilst considering the regulations of partner Universities and the requirements of the UK Quality Code (2018) for Core Practice Q1, "The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system", and Condition of registration B2, "The provider must support all students, from admission through to completion, with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education about the level of support given to students", this code of practice makes clear the processes that must be adopted in relation to the admissions of new students to Higher Education programmes. The code of practice reflects TEC Partnership's commitment to ensuring governance over academic standards and that judgments relating to admissions are carried out with rigour, fairness, and probity. This code of practice applies wherever higher education is delivered by TEC Partnership.

1.2 Whilst TEC Partnership welcomes applications from individuals who have the potential to succeed in Higher Education (HE), this section recognises the complexity of factors involved in the admissions process and therefore focuses on:

- i. identification and recruitment of prospective students;
- ii. selection of applicants suitable for a particular programme;
- iii. offer of a place on a programme of study;
- iv. enrolment of students onto a programme of study;
- v. induction and orientation of new students.

1.3 TEC Partnership's procedures for the recruitment and admission of students have been designed to be fair, clear, and explicit. Applications will be treated as 'standard' and 'non-standard' entries. The term 'standard entry' refers to applicants who obtain or expect to obtain the specified and traditional entry points or qualifications needed to progress onto a chosen award/programme of study. The term 'non-standard entry' refers to applicants at the Partnership who do not fulfil traditional entry criteria but can gain entry through other criteria as specified within approved programme documentation.

1.4 TEC Partnership has the following agreed definition for Widening Participation entry to its Higher Education Provision:

Non-standard entry is intended to support students who may not meet the standard academic entry requirements of a HE programme, normally level 3 qualifications which attract UCAS points (for instance A-levels or BTEC level 3 courses).

In order to qualify through the non-standard route, an applicant must be able to demonstrate recent work/experience in the relevant sector which would give them skills and knowledge comparable to applicants with Level 3 qualifications.

They may also be asked to prove skills and knowledge through other means and asked to provide evidence of GCSE Maths and/or English. These details may differ depending on the course and are explained on our website or UCAS.

1.5 In instances only relating to the University of Hull, some applicants will be categorised as 'special cases.' These are applicants who do not have entry criteria as specified in the approved programme documentation and require the University to approve the application before a place can be offered on the chosen programme of study.

1.6 The Schools Liaison and Admissions Manager (or equivalent within TEC Partnership) will ensure that the staff within the College Admissions team are appropriately trained, supervised and updated in order to implement relevant sections of the code of practice for Higher Education Admissions.

1.7 TEC Partnership will ensure regular monitoring and review of recruitment, admissions, and enrolment processes and procedures, and takes responsibility for ensuring all those involved in admissions are competent to undertake their roles.

1.8 Judgements exercised in the admissions process must be underpinned by transparent and justifiable criteria that is consistently implemented without undue variance. Prospective students will be offered support and guidance at all stages.

1.9 TEC Partnership's Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS) will review findings, themes and trends relating to recruitment, admissions and enrolment and report institutional themes to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

1.10 TEC Partnership is committed to widening participation and to promoting lifelong learning in conjunction with its Equality of Opportunity policies. It actively employs strategies within its recruitment and selection procedures to fulfil these aims. TEC Partnership is committed to pursuing non-discriminatory systems and practices inclusive of the following:

- i. age
- ii. disability
- iii. gender reassignment
- iv. pregnancy and maternity
- v. race
- vi. religion or belief
- vii. sex
- viii. socio-economic group
- ix. sexual orientation

1.11 This Code of Practice is informed by the following:

- i. Disability Discrimination Act (1995, 2005)
- ii. Equality Act (2010)
- iii. Data Protection Act (2018)
- iv. Age Discrimination Act (2006)
- v. Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- vi. Human Rights Act (1998)
- vii. Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
- viii. Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
- ix. Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001)
- x. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974, 2010)

1.12 Whilst TEC Partnership recognises the complex judgements that are made when assessing the relative potential of all applicants, admissions processes must, at all times, be fair and lawful.

1.13 Applications for all full-time undergraduate programmes of study must be made through the Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS) using UCAS Apply online. Applications for part-time study will be made directly to TEC Partnership.

2.0 Principles in the Selection of Applicants

2.1 The principles applied in the assessment of applications will consider a range of evidence to ensure that appropriate judgements are made about the potential of an applicant to succeed on a particular programme. Programme Leaders will consider an applicant's skills, knowledge, motivation, enthusiasm to learn and potential to succeed in each programme.

2.2 In the selection of applicants, Programme Leaders may consider different achievements and abilities which are relevant to the programme of study and/or are defined as an entry requirement within the approved programme document. These will be outlined to the student using HE07C – Person Specifications, which will be published on TEC Partnership website and emailed to the student with their interview invite.

2.3 Programme Leaders determine an applicant's suitability by means of an interview, audition, test, academic assessment and/or consideration of prior learning by experience or qualification. To ensure consistency and fairness there will be a minimum standard requirement, and this will be done by using form HE07D – Interview Questions. This form can be varied depending on the subject specialism of the programme.

2.4 Applicants will be assessed in light of the entry requirements clearly defined within the approved programme documentation, an approach intended to support applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and qualifications. Entry requirements for non-standard applicants may consider relevant experience, interests and ability to study at the required level, and within a single programme the same criteria must be applied for all non-standard applicants.

2.5 For international applicants from both within and outside the European Union (EU) (see list of those exempted in point 2.6), or for applicants for whom English is not a first language, entry requirements may include a range of criteria including proficiency in English language skills, evidence of academic qualifications and other specified criteria. Whilst the Partnership reserves the right to judge an applicant's suitability on an individual basis, students must evidence they possess a satisfactory command of the English language in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking and will normally hold the following:

- i. Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) Level B2 as defined by UK Visas and Immigration.
- ii. And for master's provision, a higher education degree in which English language or literature forms a substantial part.

2.6 Applicants who speak English as a first language and who are exempt from a minimum English language requirement as specified in 2.5 include those from:

- i. Antigua and Barbuda
- ii. Australia
- iii. The Bahamas
- iv. Belize
- v. Canada
- vi. Dominica
- vii. Grenada
- viii. Guyana
- ix. Ireland
- x. Jamaica
- xi. New Zealand

- xii. St Kitts and Nevis
- xiii. St Lucia
- xiv. St Vincent and the Grenadines
- xv. Trinidad and Tobago
- xvi. United States of America

2.7 For international applications from both within and outside the European Union (EU), qualifications from any country are considered, but as a general rule qualifications should be equivalent to standard UK entry requirements. For some postgraduate programmes, relevant work experience may also be required. Specific programme requirements are detailed in the prospectus and other relevant material.

2.8 For international applicants from both within and outside the European Union (EU), applications must be considered through TEC Partnership's International Office before a place can be offered. These can only be made where the validation document specifically notes that international applications are possible.

2.9 TEC Partnership will ensure that in all circumstances applicants' details are handled with confidentiality. Applicants are required to sign a declaration consenting to the processing of personal data.

2.10 Admissions records for unsuccessful candidates must be held for one year. Admissions records for successful applicants become part of the current student records.

3.0 Criminal Convictions

3.1 Applicants are asked to disclose relevant criminal convictions that are deemed not spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants are also asked to declare any pending prosecutions or other court proceedings. If a criminal conviction is declared, the admissions team reserves the right to request further information as part of its duty of care about the nature of the conviction prior to the TEC Partnership making an offer of admission.

3.2 The Learner Services department (or TEC Partnership equivalent) will be informed of any pending prosecutions, current court proceedings or criminal convictions before the application is processed and any offer made. The Learner Services department will undertake a risk assessment in terms of a duty of care and suitability of the applicant for the chosen programme of study.

3.3 As part of the conditional requirement, certain programmes necessitate applicants to undergo a check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Information relating to programmes that require DBS checks or more must be identified within the TEC Partnership's prospectus, and applicants must be further advised during the admissions process.

3.4 In instances where TEC Partnership establishes that a student has a criminal conviction(s) following enrolment, the student may be withdrawn from their programme of study.

3.5 It is the applicant's responsibility to explore whether any spent or unspent criminal convictions will have a negative effect on future study or career progression.

4.0 Process of Admission

4.1 Learner Advisors and Programme Leaders must process all applications received in a timely manner. Applicants must receive a response to their application within 7 days. A pre-interview questionnaire may be used prior to the interview stage to collect information such as criminal conviction status. Learner Advisors must ensure that this does not delay the progress of the applicant from acknowledgement stage to interview stage.

4.2 Where an applicant has submitted a UCAS application that indicates that they meet the standard entry requirements of a programme, or a student with TEC Partnership already, Programme Leaders or a nominated representative of the department may make a direct offer of entry to the applicant without interview. This must be completed within 7 days of the application being received by HE Admissions (or equivalent).

4.3 For any other applications (including non-standard applicants and standard applications where the PSRB/Placement requires an interview or level 3 subject differs), it is expected that applicants will be invited to a formal interview. The interview date must be arranged within 14 days of receipt of the completed application. The interview can occur through a variety of means such as face to face, or via videocall. Applicants will receive with their invite to interview a copy of the HE07C Person Specification for their chosen programme. The questions asked by the Programme Leader at interview will be defined in advance and used with every candidate (HE07D – Interview questions).

4.4 Applicants will be required to present their original certificates for inspection and the right is reserved to verify directly with the awarding bodies.

4.5 Programme Leaders are permitted to offer a place for standard entry applicants that is either 'conditional' or 'unconditional'. 'Conditional' places must have clearly defined conditions and written in unambiguous language, normally related to gaining an entry qualification.

4.6 Programme Leaders are permitted to offer a place for non-standard entry applicants that is 'conditional' or 'unconditional'. 'Conditional' places must have clearly defined conditions and written in unambiguous language, normally related to gaining an entry qualification. Non-standard entry applicants usually do not meet the stated academic entry requirements of a programme; in those cases, all entry essays/audition work set must be marked before an offer is made to an applicant.

4.7 In both cases, where an applicant who receives a 'conditional' place meets those conditions, Learner Advisors and Programme Leaders must not upgrade these to 'unconditional'. In these cases, the conditions should be noted as being met and the applicant should be invited to enrolment.

4.8 TEC Partnership reserves the right to refuse entry to applicants who do not meet the relevant entry criteria and if the Programme Leader is not satisfied that the applicant is academically able for the programme of study. Further refusal of entry, or mandatory withdrawal if enrolled, may also occur if an applicant provides false information.

4.9 Programme Leaders must communicate admissions decisions to Learner Advisors within Learner Services in a timely manner. The decision must be communicated to students within 7 days of interview.

4.10 Programme Leaders and Learner Advisors must report to the School Liaisons and Admissions Manager (or equivalent) and/or HE Quality Office any matters that are unclear or that may need further consideration such as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

4.11 Programme Leaders or managers from the curriculum team must be available during the clearing period.

4.12 In instances where a student does not achieve the results specified to gain entry onto a chosen programme at TEC Partnership, students can request a meeting with the careers team for further guidance and direction.

4.13 Upon being offered a place, it is TEC Partnership's responsibility to inform the applicant in writing and the applicant's duty to inform TEC Partnership of the acceptance or refusal of a place.

4.14 Decisions on programmes being discontinued or unlikely to recruit a viable number of students will be the responsibility of the relevant college's Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Students will be informed and advised as per the Student Protection Plan.

4.15 It is the responsibility of the Schools Liaison and Admissions Manager (or equivalent within the Partnership) to ensure applicants are formally notified at the earliest opportunity where programmes are discontinued. In such instances, it is the Partnership's responsibility to support students in line with our Student Protection Plan.

4.16 Where an applicant, having received a conditional offer, fails to meet the criteria specified by the Partnership for admission within the specified timescale, TEC Partnership shall be under no obligation to admit the student to the original or alternative programme.

4.17 Notwithstanding the statement above, TEC Partnership may, at its discretion:

- i. offer admission to a different programme
- ii. offer admission at a different level, or
- iii. offer admission subject to different conditions (including a deferred offer) which, if accepted, shall be subject to the conditions specified in the new offer.

4.18 The International office and College Admissions team will liaise appropriately in the best interest of international applicants from both within and outside the European Union (EU) to ensure applications are dealt with rigour, probity, fairness and expediency.

4.19 Students who are offered a place on any Higher Education programme within TEC Partnership must receive a copy of HE07B Student Contract with their offer, which is sent to the electronic mail address provided by the student.

5.0 Enrolment of Students

5.1 Upon offering a place on a programme of study, TEC Partnership must explain to applicants accepting offers the arrangements for enrolment, registration, induction and orientation and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students.

5.2 It is the duty of applicants to inform the Partnership promptly of any change of address, change of name, or any other change in circumstances which may affect their application.

5.3 Applicants who have disclosed a disability are advised to contact the Disability Advisors (within TEC Partnership's Inclusion team) before enrolment to establish what support is available and to provide any information TEC Partnership needs to ensure that the agreed support can be arranged. All students are required to undertake an assessment and advanced screening process to identify any learning or study support needs. TEC Partnership will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are advised of the support available. Students with additional support needs will be given the opportunity to discuss ways of providing solutions to problems of access and other issues which present a barrier to learning.

5.4 Upon enrolment, students will be asked about their nationalities, ethnic origin, disabilities and any additional support needs. This information will be used for the purposes of providing support, for monitoring/review purposes, and as a reference when considering necessary modifications to curriculum, timetables, buildings, materials and equipment. Applicants and students do not have to comply with such requests.

5.5 For some programmes, such as those within 'health', there may be a requirement to undergo a medical health check to assess suitability to professional practice. Applicants will be advised during the admissions and enrolment process.

5.6 At the point of enrolment, students are required to sign a declaration confirming their understanding of the terms and conditions contained within HE07B Student Contract, and that all outstanding fees must be paid in the event of withdrawal or transfer from any programme.

Admissions Appeals

6.0 Guiding principles

6.1 This section provides a mechanism for candidates to make an appeal against the unsuccessful outcome of their application as a result of an academic decision.

6.2 In all circumstances TEC Partnership is committed to expediting an applicant's appeal in the most efficient way possible and in a manner that is appropriate to the level of investigation required. All appeals are treated with appropriate seriousness in a fair and understanding manner.

6.3 Applicants can be assured that they will not be discriminated against or victimised in the submission of an appeal against the admissions decision.

6.4 Applicants may make an appeal in situations where any new information that was not previously included in their initial application can be provided. Additionally, applicants may support their appeal request by submitting letters of support from tutors or other persons who can provide relevant information on academic, experiential and personal attributes.

6.5 The process of appeal may only be applied by the applicant themselves and not by someone acting on their behalf. However, a candidate may obtain advice and/or support in the preparation of their appeal or complaint.

6.6 The appeals process is not applicable to issues over which TEC Partnership has no control e.g. the length of time taken by the Student Loan Company to assess a student's financial eligibility.

7.0 Admissions Feedback

7.1 Programme Leaders and the relevant college's admissions team will normally provide verbal feedback to applicants when an admissions application is declined. Whilst verbal feedback may be given over the phone, the relevant college's admissions team must, in every instance, convey this decision formally via letter to the applicant's address as stated on their application form within 7 days of receipt of an admissions decision.

7.2 The feedback to the applicant should include the following:

- A clear explanation of the evidence upon which the decision has been made;
- A clear outcome;
- Should the application be unsuccessful, a clear way forward to approach the relevant career path

If an applicant requires additional feedback (following written feedback), they should contact the relevant college's admissions team.

7.3 The relevant college's admissions team must arrange for additional feedback to be received by the applicant as soon as possible, and normally within 5 working days from the date of request where practicable. This may be verbal or written at the discretion of the Programme Leader.

7.4 The feedback should include the following sentence "Should you not be satisfied with the outcome of your application you have the right to request an early resolution with a manager in the area you were applying for."

8.0 Early Resolution

8.1 Where an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of their application they should seek resolution with the relevant programme team. They should ask the relevant college's admissions team for the contact details of the relevant manager and seek discussion about the decision-making process.

8.2 The relevant manager should check that the decision is fair and that the applicant has been given appropriate feedback. The relevant manager should provide feedback to the applicant about the decision within 14 working days of receiving the request.

8.3 The feedback to the applicant should include the following:

- A clear explanation of the evidence which the relevant manager has viewed;
- A clear outcome from the request for early resolution;
- Ways forward to approach the relevant career path;
- It must include the following sentence "Should you not be satisfied with the outcome of this early resolution you have the right to raise a formal appeal with TEC Partnership. This can be done by the completion of HE07A which should be sent to heqa@tecpartnership.ac.uk for the attention of the Group Academic Registrar".

9.0 Appeals Process

9.1 In every instance an Admissions Appeals HE07A should be completed with any supporting information (where applicable) that may not have been available on the original application. This should be sent to heqa@tecpartnership.ac.uk for the attention of the Group Academic Registrar. The HE Quality Office should formally reply to the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the Admissions Appeal form as soon as possible and normally within 7 days.

9.2 Appeals and complaints must be submitted within 14 days of receiving the outcome of an early resolution or original admissions decision. Thereafter, TEC Partnership may reserve the right not to consider the appeal or complaint unless there are justifiable circumstances.

9.3 Admissions appeals are investigated by the Admissions Investigations Officer nominated by the Group Academic Registrar and selected from the relevant college. The staff member selected should not be known to the appellant.

9.4 Applicants may be invited to an interview with the Admissions Investigation Officer if required. This is not normally required for an appeal to be processed. At all the stages of any feedback meeting, an applicant has a right to be accompanied by a friend, who must not be a lawyer acting in a professional capacity. The friend may not speak on behalf of, or otherwise represent the interests of the individual concerned, unless invited to do so by TEC Partnership.

9.5 Applicants may be asked to provide any further information that TEC Partnership deems appropriate to the nature of the appeal and to assist in the investigation. Failure to provide such information may result in the investigation not being completed.

9.6 The evidence gathered by the investigating officer should be presented to an admissions appeal panel comprising of at least 3 members of HECQS. There should be at least 1 member from the

relevant college and at least 1 with group responsibilities. This panel will make a decision whether an offer needs to be made to the appellant. Example outcomes could be:

- Appellant is offered to repeat part of the application process;
- Appellant is offered a place on the programme;
- The appeal is not upheld, and specific details are provided to explain the reasons for the unsuccessful application.

9.7 Applicants, where practicable, must be informed of the full outcome of their admissions appeal within 28 days of form HE07A being submitted. Notification will be in the form of an email to the email address provided on form HE07A.

9.8 At the point where institutional procedures have been completed, the person appealing should expect to be provided with a clear written statement by the institution, confirming that its internal procedures have reached completion and the outcome that has been reached. This is widely referred to as a 'completion of procedures letter'.

9.9 If, in the view of the applicant, the appeal has not been dealt with in a reasonable manner or appropriately resolved, the applicant may be able to refer to the relevant awarding body complaints procedures. This information is available from heqa@tecpartnership.ac.uk.

10.0 Special Circumstances

10.1 In instances where any person involved in the decision-making, whether application or appeal, is known to the complainant through personal circumstance or through association with matters relating to those outside of the TEC Partnership, the complaint will be referred to another member of staff or equivalent standing within the TEC Partnership who has no prior involvement. This is to ensure fairness to all parties involved in the application or appeal and that those investigating or deciding on application or appeal outcomes act impartially.

11.0 Reporting

11.1 Fair and Inclusive admissions are monitored by the Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS). Application data is tracked and monitored with KPIs set by that committee. In addition, analysis is conducted about applications and progress of students from different groups and with protected characteristics.

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