



## South Quay College Admissions Policy 2020/21

### 1. Background

South Quay College (SQC) is a publicly funded, co-educational, education provision for 14-19 year olds. Our mission is to provide a broad and high-quality educational experience that enables students to develop the skills, knowledge and qualities required to transition successfully to adult life and paid, sustained employment in the future.

Responsibility for the admission of students rests with SQC Governing Body. All referrals and applications for places at SQC will be considered in accordance with the arrangements set out below.

The guiding principles for the College's approach to admissions are:

- To provide accurate and timely information, advice and guidance to new applicants to enable them to make the right choices for their future
- To build a college community which celebrates inclusivity, diversity and the contributions of a wide range of students
- To operate open, transparent and consistent admissions procedures
- The operation of procedures guided by a sense of 'fairness' and the aim of placing applicants on programmes that meet their aspirations, needs and interests

### 2. Aims

2.1 This policy applies to all applicants who are seeking admission onto a College programme, including those who are already at the College and wish to progress from one programme to another. It refers to both Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 applicants, as well as applicants for programmes involving off-site / work-based learning elements.

2.2 The College will ensure that applicants receive information and advice from qualified staff in order to help them decide on the course of study to best suit their needs.

2.3 The College will work with other agencies such as Schools, Colleges, Universities, employers and specialist support services to develop appropriate information sharing and referral processes and ensure that the information and advice provided to potential students is accurate, and compliant with Statutory requirements (such as GDPR, Careers Guidance etc.).

2.4 The College will offer applicants the opportunity to view the College and its facilities prior to the commencement of a course by holding open days, taster events or by arranged visits.

2.5 Applicants with additional support needs can access appropriate support from the College's Inclusion team and will be given the opportunity to disclose their support needs during the application and admissions process, so that their needs can be considered from the earliest stages in the Student Journey.

### **3. Scope**

This policy outlines the following:

- Admissions procedures at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds), which are in line with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets FAP Protocol
- Admissions procedures at Key Stage 5, (16-19 year olds), applicable to all applicants from within the European Union (EU).

### **4. Equality and Diversity**

The College's Equality & Diversity Policy demonstrates the College's vision of culture and society where human difference is anticipated and diversity celebrated routinely. The College meets its Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups of people.

### **5. Key Stage 4 Admissions**

5.1 South Quay College Key Stage 4 has 90 places each year for students in Years 10 and 11, and can admit students both at the start of the academic year, and at points during the year, where the young person meets criteria for admission and spaces are available. In the summer term, we are able to offer 'early admission' to Year 9 students to facilitate a 'key stage transition' period, with a view to the student completing KS4 at SQC.

5.2 SQC Key Stage 4 is an alternative form of education for students who are not thriving in mainstream schooling and who meet the threshold to be considered for an alternative educational provision. For this reason it is not possible for parents and carers to make a direct application to SQC. Places can be commissioned by a local authority or by a school in the following ways:

- By London Borough of Tower Hamlets Fair Access Protocol (FAP) Panel, for a young person from a school belonging to the Tower Hamlets Secondary Partnership, where the place will be funded by LBTH Pupil Services
- By LBTH SEN Team, for a young person who has an EHCP, where the place (and any additional SEN funding) will be funded by LBTH Pupil Services

- By a school that does not belong to the Tower Hamlets Secondary Partnership, for a young person who does not have an EHCP, where the school (or its local authority) will directly fund the place
- By a school that does not belong to the Tower Hamlets Secondary Partnership, for a young person who has an EHCP, where the place must be approved by the relevant local authority SEN Team and all relevant basic and SEN funding must be agreed by the SEN Team and the referring school

5.3 South Quay's main commissioning local authority is the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, therefore our KS4 admissions policy is in line with the borough's Fair Access Protocol, as agreed by Tower Hamlets Secondary Partnership.

Details of Tower Hamlets FAP can be found by contacting Tower Hamlets Pupil Services.

Any referrals that are not from Tower Hamlets will still be processed and assessed in line with LBTH FAP. An SLA outlining roles, responsibilities and financial commitments will need to be signed before places can be confirmed for these referrals. In these cases the student may be designated either as 'dual registered', or may transfer to SQC's roll, as outlined in the SLA. This will be agreed by the school and SQC on a case by case basis and all such decisions will comply with the requirements of section 434 of the Education Act 1996.

5.4 Where an initial discussion has taken place with a referring organisation and there has been no further contact from the referrer regarding the Student taking up the place, the parent or referrer has 10 working days from the date of the initial discussion to inform SQC as to their decision. After 10 working days with no contact, SQC will assume that the place is no longer required for that student and may seek to offer that place to another student.

5.5 As far as is reasonably practicable, in agreeing contractual arrangements with Commissioners, SQC will request appropriate information on the needs, risks and prior attainment of students being referred for alternative provision. Such information will include, but not be limited to, prior grades and attainment, additional support required and exclusions information as a minimum. SQC will provide regular feedback to a Commissioner (and in any event when requested by the Commissioner to do so) on progress made by the student, the student's needs and attainment.

5.6 If there are more requests for referrals than there are places at any particular time, and after the admission of students with an EHCP where South Quay is named on the EHCP, places will be allocated as follows:

- Children in public care (children looked after by a local authority under section 22 of the Children Act 1989). As per the standard admissions process prior to oversubscription, the Referrer and SQC will agree the best pathway for the student. This will then be discussed with the guardian and student at an admissions meeting before the referral is complete.
- Referrals from Tower Hamlets Secondary Partnership, as approved by the FAP Panel.
- All other referrals that meet the threshold for consideration, as outlined by Tower Hamlets Secondary Partnership FAP Protocol

Given the nature of our referrers, a waiting list is not appropriate at Key Stage 4.

## **6. Key Stage 5 Admissions**

6.1 South Quay College has places for:

17 high needs students aged 16-24 on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018, who have EHCPs and meet our admissions criteria

6.2 For students who have an EHCP a referral would need to be approved by the relevant local authority SEN Team in a formal consultation process.

The admissions process for FE students is overseen by the Director of Student Services who work closely with Curriculum and Pastoral Teams to ensure that each applicant is supported in a timely manner to meet their individual requirements and provide them with experience that supports their admission into the College.

6.3 Over subscription criteria for Key Stage 5

Where the number of applications exceeds the number of Post-16 places available, the following order of priority will be used to allocate the remaining places:

- a) Children in public care (children looked after by a local authority under section 22 of the Children Act 1989)
- b) A detailed review of each request will be made by the Senior Leadership Team at SQC looking at a number of factors to determine the best fit. This review will be documented and submitted to the Chair of the Board of Governors with a recommendation.

6.4 Waiting list

For KS5, in addition to the right to appeal, unsuccessful applicants will be offered an opportunity to be placed on the Waiting List. The order of the Waiting List will be determined in accordance with the over-subscription criteria in Paragraph 6.3 above.

## **7. Entry Criteria**

7.1 The College publishes academic entry criteria for all full time KS5 courses in prospectus and on the website. The criteria is guided by a commitment to ensure progression through levels of learning and to ensure that applicants have the academic ability to achieve and succeed on their chosen course.

7.2 Exceptions to the stated criteria may be made for applicants who are identified as being home schooled or Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). In these instances assessment of core competencies displayed at the Admissions Interview will be used.

7.3 Adjustments to the stated criteria may be made for applicants who are assessed as having a disability or learning difficulty.

7.4 Existing SQC students applying to undertake a further programme of study or progress onto a work-based learning programme are required to fulfil the relevant entry criteria and follow the admissions procedure for internal applicants.

7.5 Applicants for whom English is a second language may be asked to complete an assessment of their reading, writing and comprehension as a condition of entry onto non- ESOL courses.

## **8. Work based learning/Supported Internship Admissions**

All applications relating to college attendance day release are facilitated through the High Needs SEND Team and CEIAG Team, who will undertake initial screening interviews, skills matching, workplace checks, and assist with securing suitable employment opportunities. The principals outlined in this policy apply to Work Based Learning. However, admissions processes are designed around the needs of trainees/interns and employers and so engagement will take place within each workplace on a flexible all year round basis and be led by the High Needs SEND Team and CEIAG Team.

## **9. Recruitment, Promotional and Marketing Materials**

9.1 The College is committed to ensuring that applicants and potential applicants have access to high quality information, access to view facilities and speak to curriculum teams through scheduled appointments or planned events.

9.2 The College is committed to working in partnership with local schools to ensure that young people understand the wide range of options available to them at Key Stage 5.

9.3 The College works to ensure it meets the requirements of statutory Careers Guidance through meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks and is committed to providing impartial information, advice and guidance.

9.4 The College is committed to ensuring that Course Prospectuses, the College website, and other publicity materials contain accurate, reliable, current and comprehensive information that are designed in a market-appropriate and accessible way.

## **10. Admissions Interviews**

10.1 Admissions Interviews are a two-way process to ensure that applicants can find out more about the specifics of the courses.

10.2 All eligible applicants will be invited to book an Admissions Interview to discuss their application and ensure that the course content, assessment, and attendance requirements fit with applicants' expectations.

10.3 Applicants will have the opportunity to feedback on their experiences during the Admissions Interview and request further information should this be required.

10.4 Applicants who do not attend their Admissions Interview and who do not contact the College, will be given one further opportunity. If the applicant fails to attend on the second date or does not contact the College, SQC reserves the right to withdraw their application. The College will endeavour to take opportunities to contact the individual either directly or via their school to ascertain the reasons for withdrawing their application.

## **11. Initial Assessment**

Applicants (except internal progressing applicants) may be asked to complete an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy prior to the start of their course. The information from this assessment will be used to indicate potential student support needs.

## **12. Supporting Applicants with Additional Support Needs**

12.1 The College welcomes applications from people with disabilities and learning disabilities, people with literacy, numeracy and language difficulties.

12.2 Where an applicant is identified as declaring a disability or a difficulty which may impact on her/his learning this will be followed up by the College's Inclusion team. With the applicant's consent we will ask the previous school or other relevant agencies to provide further details of the support or reasonable adjustments which may be needed to be made.

12.3 The Inclusion team will provide:

- Guidance and training for tutors and assessors on the disclosure of disabilities or learning difficulties at an Admissions Interview.
- Support for applicants at Admissions Interviews as required by the applicant.
- Information for tutors on the differentiation required for learning.
- Support to ensure that applicants are able to access College Support Services.
- Any applicant with a disability who is not offered a place on a course will have this decision reviewed by a panel led by the Assistant Principal for Inclusion to ensure that the appropriate consideration has been given to the application.
- Offers of places to disabled applicants (or to applicants who may need learning support) will also be reviewed by the Assistant Principal for Inclusion to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made to college services.
- Due regard will be given the SEND Code of Conduct 2014 to ensure that best endeavours have been made to provide for applicants with SEND.

## **13. Risk Assessment & Safeguarding Duty**

13.1 The College has a duty to ensure all students, apprentices and staff feel safe and protected whilst at the College and will work with statutory and other local agencies to ensure the safety of its students, volunteers and staff.

12.2 The College will undertake risk assessments on applicants or students who disclose potential risks.

12.3 Where there is an identified risk, the College reserves the right to share information regarding the risk with statutory and other agencies in order to ensure the safety of its students and staff.

12.4 The College reserves the right to refuse entry to the College, if following the risk assessment process and Admissions Panel assessment, the College feels the risks attached to an applicant is too high.

12.5 Students have the right to appeal and complain against a decision

#### **14. DBS Checks**

The College requires applicants who apply for specific courses to undertake DBS checks prior to starting the course. This will normally be completed as part of the Admissions or Course Review process. This process relates to courses where there is a work placement which requires the DBS check. All offers for courses where there is a DBS check requirement will be conditional to the successful DBS clearance.

#### **15. Fees Assessment**

If an applicant declares a non-EEA nationality on their application form, or that their normal country of residence is outside the UK, or that they have not been living in the EEA for the last 3 years they will need to attend a Fees Assessment. The Fees Assessment will determine the fees a student should pay.

#### **16. Criminal Convictions**

Applicants are asked to disclose 'relevant' and 'unspent' criminal convictions or court proceedings for on their application form. Further information will be sought from applicants who disclose and risk assessments will be undertaken. For further guidance on this please contact the college's admissions team. A panel to review the application will be held if the risk rating within the risk assessment exceeds the appropriate thresholds.

#### **17. Course Offers**

17.1 Course offers may have conditions in addition to the standard academic entry criteria.

17.2 Course offers will be made in writing via the Admissions team normally within 10 working days of the Admissions Interview, subject to relevant support information and references being received.

17.3 If a course is not thought to be suitable, or the applicant does not meet the required course entry criteria, they will be invited in to see a member of the Student Services Team for support in looking at alternative courses.

17.4 Reasons not to offer an applicant a place would normally include:

- Code of Conduct as a condition of entry if a reference causes concerns about an Applicant not having the (predicted) academic requirements to meet the published entry criteria.
- Applicant being supplied with a poor reference from their previous school or college. In some instances a referee may be asked to complete an assessment of an applicant's behaviour. Alternative provision or support may well be recommended.
- Applicants not displaying the core competencies expected for a programme of learning at the College at the Admissions interview.
- Concern that the applicant could not meet the specific work placement requirements of the course, where work placement is a key component of the course.

## **18. Course Closure**

Where a course is under-subscribed or there is a significant change to how a course is funded, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course. In such cases, applicants will be offered advice on the availability of alternative courses, both at the College and with other local education providers. However, the offer of a place cannot be guaranteed.

## **19. Course Acceptance**

Applicants must accept or decline their place at College in writing (post or email) or by telephoning the Admissions team within the stated timescale as stated on the offer letter, otherwise their place may be at risk.

## **20. The College reserves the right to:**

- Request references and/or school reports for applicants.
- Require DBS checks prior to entry on courses that lead to careers where this is a requirement or where work experience providers have this as a requirement. Certain convictions may lead to a refused course offer.
- Review and refuse admission to applicant who has previously been excluded from this or any other educational institution. This will be subject to an Admissions Interview with the relevant Senior Manager to assess suitability to study in a college environment and duty of care to other students and staff.
- Conduct risk assessments, review and refuse admission for applicants where there is evidence that they could be a threat or danger to themselves or others. This relates to the college's duty of care to students and staff.
- Review and refuse admission to an applicant/student who has any outstanding debt to the College.

- Require that students are funded by a government body, themselves or another body in order that the College receives payment for the cost of studying.

## **21. Appeal Procedures**

### 21.1 Key Stage 4

If a parent, carer, commissioning school or commissioning body is not satisfied with the decision on whether to admit a student to SQC, they should write to the Chair of Governors setting out the reasons why they are not satisfied within 21 days of the decision being made. The Chair of Governors will review the matter and respond in writing within 21 days from receipt of the letter. Should the party still not be satisfied, SQC will make provision for an Independent Appeal Panel to be established to hear the appeal. Should the matter still not be resolved, the parent, carer, commissioning school or commission body may object to the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

### 21.2 Key Stage 5

Applicants or Parents / Carers of applicants whose applications for KS5 places are unsuccessful (including internal applicants) will be given an opportunity to appeal against the decision to an Independent Appeal Panel. The Independent Appeal Panel will be independent of SQC. The determination of the appeal panel is binding on all parties. SQC shall prepare guidance for parents and students about how the appeals process will work and provide parents and students with a named contact who can answer any enquiries about the process. SQC may, if it chooses, enter into an agreement with the Local Authority or any other organisation for it to recruit, train and appoint Appeal Panel members and to arrange for the process to be independently administered and clerked.

Applicants may wish to refer to other college policies for further guidance:

- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Equality & Diversity Report
- Safeguarding Policy

## **22. Joining the college**

Every effort will be made to ensure that joining the college is a positive experience for applicants. All applicants starting a course will be sent information about joining the college and be invited to an Enrolment / Induction Day. Information regarding financial support, services available for students and any other relevant information about life at the college will be provided.

## **23. Objections to this policy**

23.1 Any objections to this Admissions Policy should be submitted to the Education & Skills Funding Agency or any successor to it.

23.2 A determination of an objection, by the ESFA or any successor to it on behalf of the Secretary of State, or by the Secretary of State, will be binding upon the alternative provision.

**This policy is signed-off by:** Martin Nirsimloo, Principal  
Policy Owner: Keziah Man, Director of Student Services  
Review due: June 2020