

HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS POLICY

Version	4.0
Effective date	September 2024
Date for review	August 2025
Policy owner	Head of Quality
Reference points	
Audience/handling notes	Student Services, Applicants, External, Public
Dissemination and implementation plan	This is a public student recruitment & admissions policy published on NHAM's website. Academy staff receive training on this policy. The Chief Executive is responsible for the dissemination and implementation of this plan as part of institutional-wide policy to ensure fair, robust and transparent admissions processes that promote widening participation, equity diversity & inclusion.
Linked Policies, Procedures and Forms	Data Protection (Policy), Student Privacy Statement, Application Form, Equity Diversity & Inclusion (Policy), Applicant Criminal Convictions (Policy)
Date approved	September 2024

1 Introduction

To ensure that the Notting Hill Academy of Music attracts, recruits, selects and enrolls students for undergraduate studies in a clear, fair, inclusive, transparent and consistent manner, this policy, process and guidance has been created to support students to succeed and achieve their potential by ensuring they are offered a place on an appropriate programme which best meets their learning needs and aspirations, widening participation, achievement and progression.

Notting Hill Academy of Music is committed to creating an inclusive and diverse community of students and promoting equality of opportunity for all students from all backgrounds, providing progression routes for as wide a range of students as possible, particularly those from under-represented groups within HE and students who otherwise may be unlikely to participate in higher-level studies.

NHAM also aims to ensure that applicants who are capable of successfully completing a higher education programme are recruited to undergraduate level programmes, including those without formal qualifications who are able to demonstrate their potential for the programme through other means.

The Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Procedure may be used in conjunction with this policy on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the Admissions Team.

This policy applies only to Higher Education programmes delivered by NHAM, where the awarding body has delegated admissions procedures to the Academy.

2 Equity, diversity and inclusion

The Academy is committed to meeting its Equality duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and



victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups of people. NHAM's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy demonstrates the Academy's vision of culture and society where human difference is anticipated and diversity celebrated routinely.

The Academy's application process allows all prospective students to make an application and receive a fair outcome, regardless of background. The Academy will reduce or remove any barriers not necessary to the appropriate selection and assessment of applicants.

The Academy proactively seeks to attract students from under-represented groups through its widening participation work. The Academy will work to remove barriers for people accessing Higher Education programmes.

3 Programme information and promotion

Policies and procedures for selection and admission to higher education programmes are readily accessible by prospective students and their supporters, and clearly articulate how the application and selection process operates.

Promotional Materials provide clear guidance on the application process, including expected timescales and key milestones, what communications will be sent and through which channels, any actions required and by when. They provide information about progression and employment opportunities for graduates, are inclusive and encourage all members of the community to participate and are reviewed and revised annually to ensure accuracy, continued relevance and representation of all groups served by the Academy.

Programme specifications accurately describe the learning outcomes and skills developed by following the programme and give a clear understanding of the unique features of the programme described. Programme specifications for all Higher Education programmes are reviewed annually and are available through the Academy website and through links from the UCAS website (where applicable).

All Programme Leaders maintain and update the information held on the UCAS website, working with the Admissions Team. The Governance Team ensures consistency of approach.

Recruitment activities such as Experience Days and events designed to promote higher education will provide potential applicants with information on the programmes offered, academic demands made by the programmes, progression and employment opportunities, fees, additional support and financial support available.

All Academy staff engaged in the delivery of admissions, recruitment and widening access are appropriately trained and resourced. Training will be reviewed, evaluated and refreshed regularly to ensure that practice and policy are fully aligned and reflect the current landscape.

4 Entry requirements

Conditional and unconditional offers will be in line with programme entry requirements published on the programme pages of the Academy's website, though individual offers may vary. The Academy's 'typical offer' to determine applicant suitability is successful completion of any level 3 programme but entry requirements for specific programmes may vary and the Academy has a commitment to widening participation which means that it considers applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences who may not have level 3 qualifications.

The Academy will consider a wide range of UK and international qualifications on application, and is committed to giving full and fair consideration to all entry qualifications.

Interview, portfolio or audition requirements are outlined on each programme page of the website and are required in addition to qualifications.

Applicants whose first language is not English and who do not have GCSE in English will be asked to take an IELTS assessment or equivalent as part of their offer conditions. They will need to achieve an overall score of 6.0, with 6.0



in the writing element and 5.5 in all other sub elements. Students who have English as a second language but have been schooled here are required to achieve at least a grade D/3 in GCSE English

5 Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning (APL/RPL)

Accreditation or Recognition of Prior Learning is a process by which Higher Education providers may award credit for learning that has taken place prior to enrolling on a programme of study.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) - RPEL is the recognition of informal learning gained from experience outside of formal education or training, such as employment, voluntary work or community activities and focuses on the learning gained from those experiences. The applicant must be able to evidence the learning, it must be substantial and at a level that can be mapped to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). All applications for RPEL will be assessed by the Programme Leader in consultation with the Governance Committee.

Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RCPL) – RCPL is recognition of learning certificated by another recognised academic institution that is accredited to a NHAM qualification.

Please refer to NHAM's Accreditation and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for further information.

6 Applications

Applicants will need to apply through UCAS or clearing if they wish to apply for more than one institution. This excludes all programmes for which application is made direct to the Academy. If an applicant wants to apply only to NHAM, then they are able to apply via a direct application. Internal applicants who are only applying to NHAM may also apply through the direct route.

- Internal application deadline dates will mirror the UCAS timeline.
- Applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgement of receipt of their application.
- The Admissions Team check the application for completeness and entry criteria. Where the application is appropriate it will be passed to the Programme Leader of the chosen programme. Where the application is inappropriate, it will be rejected and the applicant will receive a rejection email either from UCAS or directly from the Academy. The Admissions Team will log the reason for rejection. The appeals against admissions decisions process will come into operation – see below.

At any point throughout the application process, applicants are entitled to receive information and advice from the HE Admissions Team, Student Financial Support and Additional Learning Support.

7 Interview and selection process

The selection process will use the learning outcomes for the programme as the basis for selection. The purpose of the process will be to use a standard set of questions and assessments in addition to subject specific questions and assessments, for each applicant to ensure a fair outcome. To minimise barriers to applicants, assessments and tasks used in the selection process will only be used where they are relevant to the programme for which they are applying.

All applicants will be invited to an interview, either face to face, by telephone, or online. In addition, an applicant's suitability may be determined by means of previous qualifications, audition, academic assessment, portfolio and/or accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). Invitation to interview will be via email. The invitation will include the date, time, duration and location of the interview, what to prepare and if a portfolio is required.

The interviewer should

- highlight the key learning outcomes for the programme;
- ask a standard set of questions to test whether the applicant meets the recommended entry criteria, skills and knowledge as set out in the Programme Specification;



- deliver a selection assessment activity to demonstrate the applicant's readiness to take the programme or apprenticeship (for example, an audition piece, a skills or knowledge test or portfolio). The activity should be capable of adaptation to meet the needs of applicants with specific needs.
- establish whether the applicant needs any adaptation to the programme, apprenticeship, programme delivery or physical resources in order to be able to succeed on the programme. (Disability Disclosure form should be completed at interview if needed.)
- discuss career aspirations and/or reasons for studying the programme;
- complete and sign the interview record paperwork for the selection process ensuring that all fields are completed and return it to the admissions adviser within 2 working days of interview;
- advise the applicant of the appeals process.

8 Offers

The decision from the interview will be communicated to the applicant online via UCAS or by email.

If an application is successful, the interviewing tutor will make one of two types of offer: unconditional or conditional. Where appropriate, conditions may be placed on an offer if an applicant is currently studying towards academic qualifications. This is to give the applicant the time they may need to meet the entry requirements. If an applicant has already achieved the entry requirements an unconditional offer may be made.

9 Responding to an offer

A student who receives an offer from the Academy must respond by the deadline set by UCAS. Applicants can choose to accept one offer as their firm (first) choice and one as their insurance (second) choice.

Offers made to internal HE applicants must be accepted by the deadline stipulated by the Academy Manager.

10 Confirmation of conditional offers

If an applicant has received a conditional offer, the final stage of the application process takes place after the publication of examination results. If an applicant achieves the entry requirements as stated in the conditional offer, the place will be confirmed via UCAS (or by the Academy if non-UCAS). Should an applicant not meet the conditions of their offer, a final decision will be made on the basis of their interview/audition, examination results, number of places remaining and any other relevant information.

All conditions must be met by the deadline given by UCAS (usually the end of August) this also applies to applicants who have chosen to defer their entry

Successful applicants will be given joining instructions either during the selection process or during the July-August period before the programme starts, taking account of any embargo period. Successful applicants will receive a joining pack providing information on programme start dates, Induction Day, additional support services and careers information. New students will be invited to join induction.

11 Deferred Entry

The Academy does accept applications for a deferred entry (for one year only) without the requirement for the applicant to be interviewed again. Applicants should include a brief outline in the personal statement of the reason(s) for their deferral. Applicants will be interviewed/auditioned as described in this Policy.

12 Transferring mid-year and/or end of year

NHAM facilitates transfers between HE providers; students will need to apply through UCAS and provide official transcripts detailing the modules completed and their credit value. This will be assessed by the tutor to decide whether a transfer is possible. The NHAM Recognition of Prior Learning policy will apply – see appendix 1.

13 Making an appeal against an admissions decision

NHAM is committed to ensure that all decisions concerning admissions are clear, transparent, and consistent. Applicants are entitled to feedback on their selection process and we understand there may be reasons applicants may wish to challenge a decision.

Applicants requesting feedback can receive written feedback from an interviewer within ten working days by making a request to Student Services.

If an applicant wishes to appeal an admissions decision should email student services, stating the basis of their appeal and including any additional information (such as further qualifications or references) that were not submitted originally.

Providing that no additional evidence is required, Student Services will aim to review and respond to admissions appeals within ten working days.

The Academy Manager will assess your application based on the additional evidence provided. If eligible an offer will be made.

If an offer cannot be made, then the appeal is considered by the relevant Programme Leader who will make the final recommendation.

Please note that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) cannot consider complaints about admissions.

14 Changes to the programme

The Academy reserves the right to make changes to or withdraw a programme where under- recruitment affects the financial viability of a programme or where national, regional or strategic objectives require. Any changes to the programme made after the selection process will be communicated to all applicants by Student Services after approval from the Chief Executive. Notifications to all selected applicants will be by email and will provide telephone and email contact details so that any questions can be put to the programme team. Questions will be answered within five working days. Changes to programme must be confirmed by all applicants, in line with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines.

15 Criminal Convictions

The Academy recognises the contribution that people with criminal records can make and welcomes applications from them. A person's criminal record will not, in itself, prevent that person from being offered a place on the chosen programme. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Suitable applicants will not be refused a place on a programme because of offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them at or make them a risk in, the programme for which they are applying.

For applications to programmes covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Academy requires applicants to disclose any 'unspent' convictions and 'unspent' conditional cautions. The Academy is also required to know if the applicant is currently subject to a criminal investigation, facing a pending prosecution and also if an applicant is currently being supervised by the youth offending team or probation. Further information will be sought from applicants who make a disclosure and risk assessments will be undertaken.

If applicants are unsure about how to provide the information requested, support can be provided by



contacting NACRO's Criminal Record Advice Line on 0300 123 1999 or helpline@nacro.org.uk. All enquiries to this service are confidential and applicants will not be asked for any personal details (unless information or advice is requested to be sent).

For further information on how long it takes for convictions and conditional cautions to be spent, please refer to NACRO's guide on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act by visiting <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/support-for-individuals/disclosing-criminal-records/rehabilitation-offenders-act>.

NHAM reserves the right to withdraw an offer of a place in circumstances where students receive an offer before the process for scrutinising disclosures of criminal convictions / cautions / investigations / prosecutions has been completed.

16 Registering students with collaborative partners (validating institutions)

NHAM will submit student name and contact details to the partner institution solely for the purpose of recording details and progression information. By registering for a programme leading to a partner validated award the student agrees to the sharing of their information with the partner institution for this purpose. The partner institution will not make any contact with students unless there is a specific need in relation to their studies towards a partner validated award. It is the student's responsibility to keep their personal information up to date with their institution and to notify them of any changes or errors.

NHAM will abide by all data protection, GDPR and data processing guidelines. More information can be found on NHAM's Privacy statement and in the Data Protection policy.

17 Other Information

Applications submitted via UCAS are subject to the anti-fraud procedures and checks carried out by UCAS. All personal statements submitted via UCAS are subject to the UCAS similarity detection procedure. Where a personal statement contains significant similarities to another previously submitted to UCAS the Academy is notified of this and of the extent of the similarity.

All applications highlighted by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service are sent to the Admissions Team for consideration. If the Admissions Team wishes to make a conditional or unconditional offer, the applicant may be invited to submit a revised personal statement by a specific date, normally within two weeks of the request. On receipt of the revised personal statement the application will be reviewed by the Admissions Team and a selection decision will be made in accordance with standard procedures

18 Monitoring, Enforcement and Review

The operation of this policy will be kept under review by the Governance Committee and the Head of Quality with the Academy Manager will review these guidelines annually in line with any changes to legislation, guidance from the QAA or Office for Students and in line with processes and policies from its collaborative partner (validating institution).

