



Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA) Admissions Process 2024-25

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Authors: Niki McDade, Head of Student Services
Eileen Delargy, Admissions Process Controller

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Section A: Scope

1.0 Scope

This procedure applies to Higher Level Apprenticeship courses offered by Belfast Met. Higher Level Apprenticeship courses available at Belfast Met can be viewed on the college website at

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/courses/?qualifications=apprenticeships&level=higher-education>

Section B: Background to Higher Level Apprenticeships

2.0 What is a Higher Level Apprenticeship

Higher Level Apprenticeships offer an employed-pathway for learners to gain professionally recognised qualifications at level 4 and level 5, whilst actively working in paid employment with partner employers. Belfast Met proactively works with national, regional and local employers to develop partnerships to provide the level of mentoring and support to offer learners the opportunity to undertake a Higher Level Apprenticeship.

3.0 Who is eligible to apply?

Opportunities are available for new employees or an existing employee in a new job role to gain qualifications from Level 4 upwards. Entry requirements will depend on the apprenticeship pathway.

An Apprentice needs to:

- be employed or be about to be employed as an apprentice with a Northern Ireland based company
- work a minimum of 21 hours per week (which includes time for 'off-the-job' training)
- meet the entry requirements of their chosen occupation
- be the minimum school leaver age in Northern Ireland.

4.0 How long does it take to complete?

The duration of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme. It will take a minimum of 2 years to complete.

5.0 What qualifications do Higher Level Apprenticeships offer?

Higher Level Apprenticeships include qualifications from Level 4 up to Level 5. It is anticipated that Higher Level Apprenticeships will be available in the future at Level 7 and 8 (Post Graduate Awards).

Section C: Course Entry Requirements

6.0 Academic Course Entry Requirements for Higher Level Apprenticeship Courses

Minimum academic entry requirements (and any enhanced academic entry requirements where required) are specified for Higher Level Apprenticeship courses. Academic course entry requirements are defined and approved by the Director of Curriculum in advance of course publication. Academic entry requirements must be met by the course start date.

Academic course entry requirements reflect:

- Government legislation relating to compulsory school leaving age;
- Awarding Organisation requirements (as appropriate);
- Partner Universities (QUB, OU and UU) entry requirements (as appropriate); and
- Other regulatory frameworks, e.g. Apprenticeships
- Professional Body Requirements

Some courses have enhanced academic course entry requirements. These are approved by the Director of Curriculum and the appropriate Curriculum Head of School.

7.0 Access NI

Where appropriate, applicants must satisfy other course entry requirements such as Access NI checks. Course detail pages will inform the applicant where such checks are applicable.

8.0 Competency in English

All courses within Belfast Met are delivered and assessed in English, apart from language specific courses. Entry requirements reflect the level of competency required.

9.0 Minimum Age Requirements

Students must be at least 16 years old by 1 July 2024 to apply to or enrol at Belfast Met. This is set out in the Further Education (NI) Order 1997. Exceptions to this are the arrangements under formal School-College Partnerships – potential students can contact Belfast Met or their own post-primary school to check if this arrangement might be available to them. If potential students have completed Year 12/Form 5 in school but will not be 16 years old by 1 July 2024, they should contact the Education Authority NI for further advice at info@eani.org.uk or tel. 02890 564000.

10.0 Excluded status

Current or past students who are already excluded from attending the College as a result of a disciplinary process are excluded from the admissions and enrolment process. Applicants who disclose criminal convictions will not be processed until a risk assessment is carried out. Applicants who are deemed to be an unmanageable risk to the College will be excluded and their application(s)/enrolment(s) will be cancelled. More information and guidance on conviction disclosure can be found on the Student Criminal Disclosure web page at [Student Criminal Disclosures \(belfastmet.ac.uk\)](http://belfastmet.ac.uk)

11.0 Course information

Course related information including academic and other course entry requirements is available from the following range of sources:

- the Higher Level Apprenticeships page on the College website at <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/apprenticeships/higher-level-apprenticeships/>
- using the [course search facility](#) on the [College website](#) and the course details pages on the College website
- Pre-Entry Advice presentations on each course page;
- digital prospectuses and course booklets downloadable from the [College website](#);
- contact the College using email studentportal@belfastmet.ac.uk and telephone number 028 90265 265

- School Support teams using contact details provided on course details page and other communications
- Belfast Met's Careers & Employability Service;
- NI Careers Service;
- Campus Administration offices located in Titanic Quarter, Millfield and Castlereagh campuses.

Section D: Underpinning Admissions at Belfast Met

12.0 Admissions Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the College is fair and transparent in our student recruitment practices so that all applicants have an opportunity to avail of our courses. We seek to ensure that our recruitment practices do not directly or indirectly, disadvantage any particular group and are accessible to everyone.

It is College policy to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. This means that we will provide equality of access to all, irrespective of gender (including gender reassignment), marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependents, religious belief or political opinion, race (includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, Irish Traveller), disability, sexual orientation, or age.

The Admissions Policy is available to view from the College website's Public Documents page at

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/siteFiles/resources/docs/PolicyandProcedures/AdmissionsPolicy.docx>

13.0 Admissions Process Overview

Curriculum Teams have autonomy to decide on the areas such as mandatory attendance at Pre-entry advice sessions and how offers are allocated. Heads of School approve the process in advance. This information is communicated to applicants via the course details pages, pre-entry advice materials and email communication. A centralised Admissions Process Overview record is maintained by Student Services.

14.0 Change Control Process

A Change Control Process exists to ensure that changes to the Admissions & Enrolment Process are considered, approved where appropriate and the change applied in a fair and transparent manner.

15.0 Accessibility

Belfast Met endeavours to make the admissions and enrolment process accessible for everyone. This includes access to information and our sites.

Admissions and enrolment related information can be provided in different formats on request by contacting Corporate Development at Belfast Metropolitan College Building 1, Room 9, Castlereagh Campus, Montgomery Road, Belfast, BT6 9DJ.

Potential students are encouraged to contact us on email studentportal@belfastmet.ac.uk or telephone 028 90265 265 if they have concerns about visiting our sites in-person, require extra support or discretionary arrangements are required during the application process.

16.0 Communicating with applicants

All applicants must be communicated with in an appropriate and timely manner within the Admissions Process. A variety of methods are used to communicate with applicants – text, letter, email and telephone call.

Communication templates exist for each stage in the admissions cycle. It is essential that all applicants are communicated with using formally approved communication templates. Line Managers must approve changes and/or customisation to templates in advance.

17.0 Right to Study

Belfast Met is required to satisfy [United Kingdom Visa and Immigration \(UKVI\)](#) requirements relating to status and to inform the fees assessment process. Applications are processed in accordance with United Kingdom Visa & Immigration (UKVI), Belfast Met's International Admissions procedures and any special requirements set out by our Partner Universities. Applicants must provide proof of identity, appropriate residency duration and Right to Study in the UK before enrolling onto a course. Current advice to applicants is available [here](#). Where students have to leave a course due to compliance issues, there will be no refund.

18.0 Proof of identity

Applicants must provide proof of identity before enrolling onto a course. Proof of identity is required to satisfy the following:

- a) Verify that the student is who they say they are
- b) Prove that examinations are theirs
- c) Make sure the correct fees are calculated
- d) Satisfy UKVI of identity

19.0 Section 75 Monitoring Information

Monitoring information is required by Belfast Met to facilitate the monitoring and checking of procedures to assure fairness, as required by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It is held in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. Learner information will be held securely, with access limited to those who need to see this for monitoring purposes. It will be held in accordance with data protection legislation. The College Privacy Notice provides further details on how Belfast Met processes applicant and student data. This is available

at: <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/privacy-policy/>

20.0 Equality and Diversity

Belfast Metropolitan College believes that everyone has a right to study in a harmonious welcoming environment. The College is committed to creating and ensuring an atmosphere where learners, customers, staff, governors and other stakeholders celebrate equality and diversity in all activities.

For further information please visit the [Equality and Diversity](#) page on our website.

21.0 Belfast Met Terms and Conditions for Enrolment and Application

The Terms and Conditions for enrolment and application apply to all potential and existing learners. Applicants and students are encouraged to read the **Terms and Conditions** available at

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/siteFiles/resources/docs/public-documents/terms-and-conditions-for-enrolment-and-application-2024-25.docx> before applying for, or enrolling onto, any of the courses.

22.0 Compliments and Complaints

Belfast Met is committed to providing the highest quality of service to all our customers. If a customer is not satisfied with the quality of service provided by the College or college staff, they have the right to complain. Any complaint will be dealt with fairly, effectively and confidentially. Customers are referred to the College 'Complaints and Compliments Policy' available

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/complaints>

23.0 Student Criminal Disclosure

Belfast Met actively promotes equality of opportunity and welcomes applications and enrolments from a wide range of applicants and students, including those with criminal convictions. However, in order for the College to manage any risk that applicants may pose, they must tell us about any unspent criminal convictions you may have.

For certain courses, applicants/students must disclose all criminal convictions not subject to the filtering process. Applicants/students must complete either a [Criminal Offence\(s\) Disclosure Form CDF1](#) or an [Enhanced Criminal Offence\(s\) Disclosure Form CDF2](#).

Both forms are available on the [Student Criminal Disclosures](#) page of our website. The forms can also be obtained by contacting the Safeguarding Administrator on 028 90265184.

The [Criminal Convictions Student Guidance and Information Document](#) on our website explains which form is needed and how to complete and return it to us in confidence.

Once the disclosure information has been received, the College will assess the risk that applicants/students may pose and determine whether it can safely be managed. This confidential process is separate from the admissions process, in keeping with data protection principles.

Applicants/students will be advised of the Safeguarding Risk Assessment Panel decision separately and as quickly as possible. Applicants/students should not discuss their criminal disclosure with the course team or fellow students.

To find out more information about the release of this information and guidance on conviction disclosure, contact NIACRO on 028 90320157.

If applicants/students are convicted of a criminal offence after applying to or enrolled at the College, they must tell us about this conviction and complete one of the Criminal Convictions Disclosure forms as set out above. If applicants/students need help with this process, please contact the Head of Student Support by e-mailing studentsupport@belfastmet.ac.uk

24.0 Validity of Application

Applications and offers are only valid for the stated academic year. Entry requirements must be satisfied before the course start date.

25.0 Payment of Fees

Belfast Met operates within a very strict protocol of financial procedures. The **Belfast Met Fees and Charges Policy 2024-25** available at <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/media/krkg5fn0/feesandchargespolicy2024-2025.docx>

contains relevant information relating to fees, charges and payment of fees.

Applicants with outstanding debt are placed on the **HOLD** progress code.

Applicants with outstanding debt to the College cannot progress until debt is settled in full. For applications, the debt settlement date is the first date of application.

26.0 Student ID Cards

Students enrolling onto a course are provided with a student ID card. The card contains a student photograph and an embedded chip enabling access to the buildings and photocopying facilities. Students are provided with id cards during first week of term. Students who wish to have their photograph in a private area due to cultural reasons can be facilitated.

27.0 Course Closure, Suspension and/or Substantial Change

Course closures are managed through Belfast Met's Course Change/Closure procedure, available at [HE Programme Closure, Suspension and Substantial Change\(s\)](#)

28.0 Right to Cancel

Belfast Met's Admissions and Enrolment Process adheres to relevant consumer protection legislation. This ensures that the student is protected as a 'customer' of the College. When a student enrolls on a course they have the '[Right to Cancel](#)' within 14 days of enrolling. The student contract with the College begins on the day they enrol for a course at Belfast Met.

29.0 Cancellation of Course Before it Starts

The College will make every effort to run the advertised courses and programmes. However, all courses must have a minimum number of students to run and, on occasions, some classes may be combined.

If the minimum number of students on a course is not reached, the College reserves the right to withdraw the course or a specific course element. In other cases, classes may have to be cancelled. The relevant curriculum team, supported by Learner Success teams, will provide personalised support to students to find alternative programmes at Belfast Met to continue their studies or to help with applications to other providers.

Where an 'Apply only' course is cancelled, applicants will be invited to apply for another course and the date of their original application will be attached to the new application. Course closures will be managed through Belfast Met's Course Change/Closure procedure which can be found on the College's **Public Documents** page at <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-information/public-documents/>

30.0 Support Services

Anyone considering applying to the College should visit the Life at the Met available on Belfast Met's website at <https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/life-at-the-met/>

This section provides applicants with some essential information about life at Belfast Met. Applicants can explore the Campuses, check out the Library services, and find out our wide range of Student Support available.

Additional support is available to applicants if they:

- need additional support to attend Pre-Entry Advice Sessions;
- have difficulties attending the College in person;
- cannot attend or participate in any session and would like to make alternative arrangements.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the College as early as possible to facilitate additional support where required.

Section E: Applying to Belfast Met

31.0 Timeline of Belfast Met Admissions

Applications for Higher Level Apprenticeships open from November 2024 onwards for entry from September 2024. Applications opening dates are published on the college website and social media channels.

32.0 Significance of date and time applied

Applications are processed in date and time order. The earlier the applicant applies to the course increases their chance of being enrolled onto their preferred course.

The date and time are recorded as follows:

Application method	Recorded by
Online	Electronic date and time stamp captured by online system
Hard copy in person	Date and time received by member by Belfast Met staff
Hard copy by post	Post received date. A default time of 09:00 is assigned to hard copy application forms submitted via post.

In the case of a date tie, the time is used to rank the applicants in date and time applied.

33.0 Tracking an application

Each stage of the application and enrolment process is recorded using a series of progress codes.

Progress code	Long description
ASSESS	Applicant has been invited to or participated in an assessment, trial or diagnostic
CAREER	Applicant will not nor likely to meet course entry requirements before course start date. Applicant has been referred to Careers & Employability Team.

CNCLA	Application record has cancelled by Belfast Met
COND	Applicant is likely to meet course entry requirements before course start date and holds an offer.
CONDW	Applicant has ben placed on a waliting list and holds no other offers.
CONDWB	Applicant already holds an offer for another course and has been added to waiting list.
OFFERDEC	Applicant has been asked to choose which offer to keep.
DNA/DNP	Applicant was provided with opportunities to attend Pre-entry advice, assessment, trial, diagnostic and/or interview but did not attend.
FIRM	Applicant already meets course entry requirements and holds an offer.
HOLD	Application is on hold due to issue such as outstanding debt.
INTERV	Applicant has been invited to an interview.
MANUAL	An application was submitted using a hard copy application form.
ONLINE	An application was submitted using online application system.
PEA1	Applicant has been provided with first opportunity to attend/participate in Pre-entry Advice & Guidance.
PEA2	Applicant has been provided with second opportunity to attend/participate in Pre-entry Advice & Guidance.
STOP	Applicant has disclosed a Criminal Conviction.
TRANA	Applicant has been transferred to another course as result of pre-entry advice or other measure.

TUTORENROL	Application has been approved for enrolment.
WITHDA	Applicant has withdrawn application

34.0 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Belfast Met welcomes applications from people who do not have formal qualifications and who would like to apply by virtue of experience. For more information, please go to:

- [Accreditation of Prior Learning Guidance Notes for HE applicants](#)

35.0 Pre-entry Advice and Guidance

Pre-entry advice will be provided to all applicants applying for courses with entry requirements commencing in September 2024.

35.1 Purpose of Pre-Entry Advice for Applicants

Applicants are provided with pre-entry advice prior to enrolment to:

- Ensure they have all the information they need for informed decision-making about their course choice.
- Provide an opportunity to find out more about the course.
- Meet teaching staff.
- Connect with the College.

35.2 Format of Pre-Entry Advice

Pre-Entry advice will be provided using one of the following methods:

- An event held on one of the College campuses.
- An online or virtual where applicants join via MS Teams.
- A hybrid option.
 - Applicants are provided with a video/presentation and supplementary information via email. Applicants are asked to complete an accompanying MS Forms. Applicants are asked to:
 - Confirm they have viewed/read and understood the video/information;
 - Choose their next step (progress/withdraw/cancel)

- Submit questions about the course or other related to their application
- Ask for more information to inform their next step.
 - Applicants choosing to continue are progressed to the next stage.
 - Additional 1:1 opportunities are provided at showcasing events held on campus.

35.3 Attendance/participation

In some cases, applicants must attend or participate in order to progress to the next stage of the process.

35.4 Discretionary PEAS

If for some valid reason an applicant requires other arrangements, suitable alternative arrangements will be offered to enable the applicant to carry on to the next stage of the application process.

36.0 Recording Pending and Achieved Qualifications

Applicants are required to record pending and achieved qualifications when applying for a place. Once applicants receive their results in August, they must update pending to the achieved outcome. Curriculum and School staff require this information when converting an application to enrolment.

Applicants waiting on results must update pending status to the achieved outcome no later than 12 am (midnight) on:

- 15th August 2024 for Higher Education (levels 4 and above) applicants.

37.0 Applicants who do not meet entry requirements for a course

Where an applicant does not meet nor is likely to meet course entry requirements before a course before the start date, they are referred to the Careers and Employability Service for further advice. The applicant progress code is set to CAREER and withdraws from the course application process.

38.0 Allocation of Offers

Places are allocated based on the Curriculum Area's application published process contained in the 'What Happens Next?' in the Pre-Entry PowerPoint Presentation.

39.0 More than one Offer

An applicant can only hold one offer. Where applicant are eligible to receive more than one offer, they must choose which one to accept. Applicants are asked to confirm which offer they would like to accept with five working days. If applicants do not respond to the deadline, their original offer is maintained but moved to the waiting list of course they did not respond to.

This does not apply to complementary provision where a full-time student has also applied for a part-time evening course, for example, a full-time Childcare Studies applicant may want to attend a part-time Counselling course in the evening.

40.0 Waiting Lists

The number of offers allocated by course are based on the number of places available. If a place becomes available, applicants will be allocated the place based on stage date applied order. If an applicant on a waiting list does not meet the requirements, the next applicant in stage date order will receive an offer.

Applicants may be placed on more than one waiting list. Sometimes an applicant initially chooses to refuse an offer from a waiting list because it is not their first preference. If an applicant is initially offered a place from the waiting list but does not accept, they will be placed back on the waiting list.

41.0 Tracking applications

Applicants can log into your Belfast Met account <https://ebsontrackprospect.belfastmet.ac.uk/> to track your application(s) or to make amendments to their details. Applicants can also download the Belfast Met 'Engage' app to track their application(s) and receive notifications throughout your application process. The app is available on [Android](#) and [IOS](#).

42.0 Contact details

Applicants must ensure that their contact details are kept up-to-date.

Communication is mainly via email and mobile telephone number.

43.0 Transfer of application

Applicants can only transfer their application to another course using original date applied if:

- they are unlikely to meet the course entry criteria before the course start date. Examples include studying towards to inappropriate level or applicant has applied to a course and does not meet specific criteria e.g. out of education for two years. Applicants will be contacted by the College and advised of options before considering transferring to another course.
- an applicant has attended/participated in a pre-entry advice session and decides that they have applied to the wrong course. The applicant must inform College staff following the pre-entry advice session or up to 24 hours after the event of their intention to transfer.

The application transfer is carried out by College staff.

44.0 Admissions Appeals

Unsuccessful applicants can appeal the outcome of their application using the Belfast Met Compliments and Complaints Policy. More information is available on the [Complaints and Compliments](#) page

<https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/media/eu2jnmgg/complaints-and-compliments-policy.docx> of our website.