



Oakswood College

Empowering Through Education



Oakswood Admissions and Recruitment

Policy Statement

PROMOTING EXCELLENCE • ENSURING COMPLIANCE
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



GOVERNANCE



QUALITY



COMPLIANCE



EXCELLENCE



Admissions and Recruitment Policy Statement 2025-2027

Document Control & Version History

Document Title	Admissions and Recruitment Policy Statement
Document Type	Academic Policy Statement
Policy Owner	Head of Admissions and Registry
Accountable Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Approved By	Academic Board
Approval Date	18 March 2026
Effective From	18 March 2026
Review Cycle	Annual
Next Review Date	18 March 2027
Applies To	Prospective students, applicants, admissions staff, recruitment and marketing teams, Programme Leaders, Student Services, and all staff involved in admissions and recruitment activities
Version	1.0
Supersedes	New Statement
Related Policies	Admissions Appeals & Complaints Policy; Admissions and Recruitment Policy Framework; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy; Information, Marketing and Promotions (CMA) Policy
Related Appendices	Appendix A: Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form Appendix A1: Criminal Record Risk Assessment Form Appendix B: Mapping to UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance Appendix C: Admissions Decision-Making and Applicant Assessment Framework
Document Location	Oakwood College Policy Repository
Regulatory Reference	Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration; Consumer Rights Act 2015; CMA Guidance for HE Providers; Equality Act 2010; UK Quality Code for Higher Education

This policy statement sets out the principles and procedures governing admissions, recruitment, and widening access at **Oakwood College** (trading name of Oakwood Group Ltd). It is designed to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly, consistently, and transparently throughout the admissions process, regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

Oakwood College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Oakwood College seeks to widen participation in higher education by identifying and addressing barriers to access, supporting underrepresented groups, and enabling applicants with the potential to succeed to progress into higher education. The College ensures fair, transparent and inclusive admissions practices. It includes outreach, contextual admissions, and reducing barriers to participation in higher education. Oakwood College operates a managed recruitment approach aligned to institutional capacity, quality assurance, and student outcomes.

The College's Admissions, Recruitment & Widening Access policy aligns with the regulatory requirements and expectations of the Office for Students (OfS), as well as the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It is also informed by sector best practice, including guidance from Universities UK and Guild HE on fair admissions.

Oakwood College is committed to:

- Ensuring admissions decisions are based on merit, potential, and achievement
- Providing clear, accurate, and accessible information to applicants
- Promoting outreach and widening participation activities where appropriate
- Applying contextualised and holistic approaches to admissions where relevant
- Removing unnecessary barriers to access and progression

Through our Admissions Framework, Oakwood College aims to uphold high standards of integrity and fairness while supporting its strategic commitment to inclusive education and student success.

As part of the College's overall Admissions Framework, this Policy statement sits alongside the Oakwood Admissions Policy and informs its principles, approaches and procedures. This Policy Statement sets out overarching principles and does not replace detailed operational admissions procedures.

1. Regulatory and Sector Alignment

Our Admissions framework aligns with Office for Students regulatory expectations and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. It reflects the following sector-recognised principles:

- **Expectations for standards:**
At Oakwood College, programme entry requirements are set by the relevant awarding body. The College reviews these in the course of determining whether to add a programme to its portfolio, to ensure that admitted students are capable of

achieving qualifications that meet sector-recognised standards. This protects the integrity of awards and ensures consistency with academic benchmarks across UK providers.

- **Expectations for quality:**

Students are supported from admission through to completion to succeed and benefit from higher education. Students are provided with consistent, accessible, and responsive support services throughout the student lifecycle from initial application and onboarding, through academic study, to graduation. Support includes academic advising, wellbeing services, financial guidance, and inclusive learning environments, all designed to help students thrive and achieve their goals.

- **Core practices for standards:**

Students have opportunities to achieve academic outcomes that are comparable with those at other UK providers. An institution must design and deliver its courses in line with sector-recognised benchmarks, ensuring consistency in learning outcomes, assessment standards, and qualification levels. Entry requirements, curriculum design, and academic support are all aligned to give students a fair chance to meet or exceed national expectations for their chosen qualification.

- **Core practices for quality:**

Reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system:

Admissions processes are designed to be consistent, transparent, and accessible to all applicants. Reliability means that decisions are made using clear criteria and communicated promptly. Fairness ensures that all applicants are considered equitably, without bias or discrimination. Inclusivity involves actively removing barriers for underrepresented groups through contextual admissions, outreach, and reasonable adjustments ensuring that all individuals have a genuine opportunity to access higher education.

Student engagement:

Student feedback is systematically collected, analysed, and used to inform continuous improvement of academic provision and support services.

Complaints and appeals:

Complaints and appeals relating to admissions decisions are handled under the College's Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy and Procedure in accordance with published procedures and timescales.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) considerations are applied to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. Admissions Process Overview

Admissions at Oakwood College follow a structured and transparent process from enquiry through to enrolment. The key stages include:

- Enquiry and information provision
- Application submission
- Assessment against entry requirements
- Interview or additional selection methods (where applicable)
- Offer decision (conditional or unconditional)
- Offer acceptance
- Confirmation of offer conditions
- Pre-enrolment checks
- Enrolment and registration

The College ensures all applicants are informed of requirements at each stage and are treated consistently in line with published criteria and relevant regulatory frameworks.

2A. Offer Decision and Applicant Outcomes

Following assessment, applicants may receive one of the following outcomes:

- Conditional offer
- Unconditional offer
- Alternative programmes offer
- Rejection of application

Final admissions decisions are made by authorised admissions staff in accordance with approved entry criteria and formally delegated authority levels. All decisions are based on published entry criteria, applicant evidence, and capacity considerations. Applicants are informed in writing of the outcome and any conditions attached to their offer.

Where applicants are unsuccessful, feedback may be requested in line with institutional procedures. Appeals and complaints are handled under the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy.

All outcomes are recorded within the institutional admissions system and subject to internal quality assurance checks.

3. Commitment to Equality of Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion

Oakwood College applies fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory admissions practices in line with the Equality Act 2010 and regulatory expectations.

Oakwood College actively promotes equality of opportunity and seeks to create an environment where all applicants can access higher education based on merit and potential, not background or circumstance.

In delivering this commitment, Oakwood College will:

- Maintain an inclusive institutional culture that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and actively values difference
- Promote fair access to higher education for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups through targeted outreach, contextual consideration, and accessible admissions practices
- Ensure that all applicants are treated equitably regardless of background, identity, or personal circumstances, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010
- Identify and reduce barriers that may disproportionately affect specific groups, including but not limited to care leavers, estranged students, disabled applicants, carers, and those with disrupted educational pathways
- Provide clear and flexible progression routes into higher education that recognise diverse forms of prior learning, experience, and achievement
- Embed inclusive practice across recruitment and admissions processes so that reasonable adjustments and support mechanisms are available at every stage of the applicant journey

Equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations are not treated as standalone principles but are integrated into admissions decision-making, policy development, staff training, and ongoing performance monitoring. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are conducted on the College's Admissions Policy and associated policies (e.g. Admissions Appeals and Complaint Policy and Procedure). A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment can be obtained from the Head of Governance, Quality, Compliance, and Information Systems (Head of GQC&IS).

4. Professional Standards in Recruitment and Admissions Practice

- **Impartiality and Integrity:** Recruitment staff must provide unbiased, accurate, and transparent advice in line with institutional values and any relevant professional codes of practice (e.g. HELOA, BUILA where applicable).
- **Staff Expertise:** Recruitment is delivered by trained professionals from both academic and support services, committed to high standards and informed guidance.
- **Training and Development:** Staff should receive ongoing training to stay current with admissions policy, sector trends, and legislative changes delivered via internal networks and bespoke sessions.
- **Balanced Promotion:** All promotional materials must accurately reflect the student experience and support events that offer free, impartial advice.

- **Conflict of Interest:** Recruitment staff must declare any personal, financial, or familial interest that could be perceived to influence the handling of an enquiry or application. Where a conflict exists, the staff member steps aside from any decision or activity relating to that applicant, and the case is reassigned to an impartial colleague.
- **Personal Relationships Policy:** All staff must declare a personal relationship in accordance with our policy, in order that the College can proactively manage any potential or actual conflicts of interest. This applies to admissions regarding admissions decisions, to remove bias/prejudice/preferential treatment.
- **Data Protection in Recruitment Interactions:** Personal data collected from enquirers and prospective students during recruitment activities is processed lawfully and securely, in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the data protection arrangements set out in this policy.

5. Data Protection and Processing of Personal Information

Oakwood College collects, processes, and retains personal data relating to prospective enquirers, applicants, and former applicants for the purposes of providing information, processing applications, supporting access to higher education, and meeting its legal and regulatory obligations as an education provider. All such processing is carried out in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Oversight of admissions data governance and compliance sits with the Head of Admissions and Registry in coordination with the Head of Governance, Quality, Compliance and Information Systems.

Data collected: The categories of personal data collected during the recruitment and admissions process may include, but are not limited to:

- Identity and contact information, such as name, date of birth, address, telephone number, and email address.
- Academic and educational records, including qualifications, transcripts, references, and personal statements.
- Information relating to fee status, residency, nationality, and immigration status, where required to assess eligibility.
- Information relating to a disability, additional support need, or other characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010, where disclosed by the applicant.
- Criminal conviction information, where required by the programme applied for, in line with institutional safeguarding and admissions procedures.
- Special category data such as information about racial or ethnic origin, where collected for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and based on explicit consent.

Purposes of processing: Personal data is processed for purposes including:

- Responding to enquiries and providing information about the College's programmes.
- Processing, assessing, and reaching decisions on applications.
- Communicating with applicants throughout the admissions process and during the post-offer period.
- Verifying eligibility, fee status, qualifications, and immigration status.
- Monitoring equality, diversity, and admissions fairness in line with UK GDPR and Equality Act 2010 obligations, including anonymised reporting where appropriate.

Lawful bases for processing:

The College processes personal data on one or more of the following lawful bases under UK GDPR:

- the performance of a contract or steps prior to entering a contract with the applicant;
- compliance with a legal obligation;
- legitimate interests and legal obligations associated with the delivery and regulation of higher education provision and,
- where applicable, additional lawful conditions for processing special category data under Article 9 UK GDPR, including explicit consent or substantial public interest.

Sharing with third parties. The College does not share applicant personal data with third parties other than where:

- The sharing is necessary to fulfil the purposes set out in this section, including sharing with UCAS, awarding bodies, the validating university partner, and other bodies involved in the admissions or registration process.
- The sharing is required by law or in response to a lawful request from a regulatory or law-enforcement authority.
- The applicant has given specific consent to the sharing.

Confidentiality of sensitive information:

Information that an applicant has shared in confidence, including disclosures relating to disability, additional support needs, criminal convictions, or special circumstances, is shared only with staff who have a legitimate need to consider the disclosure as part of the admissions process or to plan related support.

Retention:

Application records are retained in accordance with the College's Records Retention Schedule, based on regulatory requirements, audit obligations, and legitimate interest. Retention periods are defined by application outcome and regulatory requirements and are set out in the College's Records Retention Schedule.

All admissions decisions, applicant communications, and supporting records are maintained within approved institutional admissions systems to ensure auditability, consistency, and regulatory compliance.

Appendices to the Oakwood Admissions Policy, allied with this Admissions Policy Statement

- **Appendix A:** Criminal Convictions Disclosure Form
- **Appendix A1:** Criminal Record Risk Assessment Form
- **Appendix B:** Relevant Mapping to UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance
- **Appendix C:** Admissions Decision-Making and Applicant Assessment Framework
- **Appendix D:** Oakwood BNU Admissions Procedure (BNU Partnership Provision)
- **Appendix D1:** Oakwood BNU Admissions - Staff Checklist (BNU Partnership Provision)
- **Appendix D2:** Oakwood BNU Admissions - Applicant Checklist (BNU Partnership Provision)
- **Appendix D3:** Oakwood BNU Admissions - Reference Guidance (BNU Partnership Provision)