

IBCM Admissions Policy

1.0 Purpose

International Business College is an Independent Higher Education Provider situated in Manchester City Centre. Our overall ambition is to be recognised the best business school in the North of England by our students and overseas partners through a commitment to providing high quality teaching, learning and customer care.

The college is committed to attracting and supporting students from all backgrounds in their achievement of foundation and higher education qualifications at the College. We are dedicated to ensuring a fair and consistent admissions process that safeguards the interest of applicants. This policy exists to protect the interests of applicants and to enable staff to effectively manage all college admissions and to ensure the fair, equal and appropriate recruitment of learners onto qualifications and programmes administered by IBCM.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all applicants for further and higher education programmes, plus professional courses at IBCM. It covers all programmes including those delivered by face to face delivery or blended/distance learning. It covers all applicants including those from both the UK and overseas.

3.0 Responsibilities

- **Administrative staff:** Answering initial enquiries, processing information including sending out all required documentation; conducting initial assessment with potential students and dealing with the initial investigation of any admissions appeals
- **Programme Leaders:** Keeping up to date with awarding body requirements and providing accurate information for publicity material/IBCM website; Assessing applications and obtaining/providing further information as needed; completing initial assessment; ensuring registration, enrolment and induction procedures are followed and recorded.
- **Academic and Quality Manager:** liaising with Programme Leaders and with Principal to ensure all regulatory and Awarding Body requirements are embedded into the admissions process and followed at each stage. Liaising with potential students as appropriate and assisting with enrolment and induction and with any admissions appeals.
- **Principal:** Overall monitoring of the admissions process and of ensuring all members of team implement the requirements outlined in this document. The Principal will assess applications as relevant and liaise with Programme

Leaders/Academic and Quality manager to ensure all students are placed onto the relevant programme. The Principal will deal with all further investigations and responses to any admissions appeals.

- The Principal and Academic & Quality manager will report to the Managing Director and to the Board of Governors.

4.0 Access, Participation and Equality of Opportunity

4.1 IBCM welcomes students from all backgrounds, nations and cultures. We appreciate that each student is an individual with different academic potential and personal circumstances. We firmly believe these should not be obstacles to successful completion of qualifications.

4.2 We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all those who study and work at the college and will ensure that, to the best of our ability, no applicant or student is discriminated against (directly or indirectly) in any way, or face harassment or victimisation (see IBCM Equal Opportunities Policy). We will treat all applicants and students with respect and dignity and will make reasonable adjustments to our premises to ensure access for people with disabilities.

5.0 Student Recruitment

5.1 Information in respect of programmes offered at IBCM is advertised through a variety of ways, including the IBCM website, marketing materials and brochures and through agents operating in different locations throughout the world.

5.2 IBCM will review the materials and website to ensure that potential students have the opportunity to find out as much information about the college and its programmes as possible and that all information is accurate and up to date and complies with all external and regulatory requirements.

5.3 IBCM will ensure that potential students are provided at the time of application, with relevant documentation including the IBCM Terms and Conditions and relevant policy and procedure documents, to enable students to make an informed decision as to whether they wish to apply to IBCM to study.

5.4 IBCM will ensure that potential students have access to Information, Advice and Guidance at all stages of the recruitment and admissions process.

5.5 We will ensure that students are recruited onto the programme in a timely manner and in line with all awarding body stipulations and requirements (and all relevant legislation and external regulations)

5.6 We will ensure that students are recruited onto the programmes which are the most suitable for meeting their needs and aspirations. As well as specific entry requirements set by the Awarding Body, IBCM will look at experience, qualifications, motivation and interest in the course.

- 5.7 We will ensure that the qualification/programme is at the right level for the learner – not too high so as to restrict the ability to achieve, or too low so as to prevent the learner from achieving in line with their potential.
- 5.8 We will ensure that, where the language of the assessment/examination is not the learners first language, that the learner has the language skills to meet the required level for the assessment/exam (taking into account also any specific requirements of the relevant Awarding Body)
- 5.9 We will make justifiable and professional judgements about each learners potential to successfully complete their assessments/examinations and achieve their qualifications.
- 5.10 Regular reviews and Internal Quality Assurance activities will be implemented to ensure effective monitoring of the student recruitment and admissions process.
- 5.11 For students on **Student Route** visas, IBCM will ensure that all students satisfy the requirements of the UK Government for studying in the UK as well as meeting the entry requirements of the College in terms of qualifications and/or experience

6.0 The Admissions Process

- 6.1 Detailed breakdown of each stage of the Admissions Process is detailed in the Enquiry Process Flowchart accompanying this policy document.
- 6.2 Admissions/Administrative team will deal with enquiries received and provide initial information, advice and guidance (seeking additional help from other staff members as needed). Potential applicants will also be signposted to the IBCM website where they can access full programme information along with relevant policy and procedure documents that will assist them in choosing whether to proceed with an application for an IBCM programme of study. Applicants will be able to see entry requirements for their chosen programme and identify if they are eligible to undertake the desired course.
- 6.3 Applicants may discuss programmes with Admissions or the Principal/Academic Manager if they require further information, advice and guidance, or if they are unsure about a programme, the awarding body requirements for entry, or whether their level of work experience, qualifications or English are appropriate. Applicants can then make an informed choice about the course to apply for.
- 6.4 The Admissions team will send out an application form along with IBCM Terms and Conditions (incorporating the Student Protection Plan) and a copy of this Admissions Policy.
- 6.5 Upon receipt of the application form, the admissions team will examine the form, along with relevant documentation sent by applicant (including passport, qualification record etc) and will start the initial assessment record. Confirmation of identity/authenticity will take place (via Skype, zoom call etc) and Admissions staff will liaise with the relevant Programme Lead, or the Academic Manager/Principal as required.

- 6.6 The relevant Programme Leader (or Academic Manager) will conduct an interview with the applicant to discuss their reasons for wanting to study at IBCM/the course chosen. Applicants will also be asked to write a personal statement to confirm these reasons. This enables staff to confirm the learners ability to write in English and at the right level.
- 6.7 Should any concerns arise at this stage about the applicant's suitability for the course, the PL or Academic Manager (or Principal) will discuss this with the applicant and the options available will be considered. This might include introductory programmes, alternative courses (either prior to the desired course or instead of) or IBCM being satisfied that with an appropriate amount of support, the applicant will be able to achieve their desired outcomes. Any specific needs or requirements will be discussed at this time.
- 6.8 Depending on the entry requirements for the programme and the applicants level of qualifications, the Programme Leader may organise Maths and English online assessment tests to confirm that the applicant does have an appropriate level in both subjects to be able to proceed with an offer for a place on their chosen course.
- 6.9 The Programme Leader will complete the Initial Assessment Form at this stage and arrange for the applicant to be sent an offer letter. The offer letter will be accompanied by an invoice for the agreed fees, plus relevant policies and documentation that the applicant should read and understand prior to accepting their place on the programme. These include (but are not limited to) the Student Charter, the student protection plan, Feedback and Complaints Policy, Learning and Teaching Strategy and this Admissions Policy.
- 6.10 Along with the offer letter and policy documents, applicants will receive a Cancellation Form informing them of their right to cancel within 14 days of making payment and an "Acceptance of Offer" letter to sign and return to IBCM confirming that they wish to take up the place on the programme. The terms and conditions will be re-issued to the student at this time, with attention drawn to any important and surprising terms.
- 6.11 The above procedures will ensure that all applicants for IBCM programmes are provided with all necessary information to make a fully informed decision about proceeding to accept a place on their chosen course.
- 6.12 Once the Acceptance of Offer has been received, together with payment, the applicant will be informed of their induction arrangements and start date (*see below for student route students*)
- 6.13 All applicants are welcome to contact any member of the IBCM team to discuss any areas of concern about their programme of study, along with any specific support requirements that they may have.

7.0 Student route students

- 7.1 All international students must satisfy the requirements of the UK Government for studying in the UK as well as meeting the entry requirements specified for their course in terms of qualifications and experience.
- 7.2 For students applying for a student route visa, the process will be as above until sponsorship confirmed/ payment received at which time potential students will be issued with a visa letter (CAS) so that they may apply for a visa.
- 7.3 Once the student notifies IBCM in respect of their visa the College will confirm the start data as above.
- 7.4 Should the student not be granted a visa to study in the UK, IBCM will discuss options with the student including undertaking or commencing the programme via distance learning.

8.0 Barriers to Admission

8.1 Conditional Entry

Applicants who have a history of disrupted education, exclusion or behavioural problems may be offered a place subject to probationary conditions which will be outlined to the applicant at the time of the offer. A decision to admit an applicant under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Principal/Managing Director.

8.2 Admission of previously excluded students

Students who have previously been excluded from the College must have evidence that they have addressed the issues leading to their exclusion and may be admitted subject to probationary conditions which will be outlined to the applicant at the time of the offer. A decision to admit an applicant under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the Principal/Managing Director.

8.3 Admission of previously enrolled students who did not complete

The college reserves the right not to admit an applicant who previously attended IBCM but failed to make sufficient effort towards successfully completing their studies

9.0 Criminal Convictions

- 9.1 IBCM has a duty to ensure the safety of its students, staff and all other members of the institutions community. All applicants must therefore disclose relevant unspent criminal convictions.
- 9.2 Applicants are not required to disclose criminal convictions at the application stage. The requirement is to declare any unspent criminal convictions at the point of an accepting an offer, although earlier disclosure is encouraged wherever possible (ie between the offer and acceptance) to allow the risk assessment process to be completed without unnecessary delay

9.3 A “relevant” conviction is one which involves one or more of:

- any kind of violence including threatening behaviour, offences concerning the intention to harm or offences which resulted in actual bodily harm
- offences listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003
- offences involving firearms
- offences involving arson
- offences listed in the Terrorism Act 2006

9.4 A conviction becomes spent after a certain period of time has passed as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. If this period of time has not yet passed then the conviction is “unspent”.

9.5 When IBCM makes an offer to an applicant this will detail advance notice of the requirement to declare any relevant unspent convictions at the point of acceptance of the offer. This will be detailed on the acceptance letter to be returned to IBCM.

9.6 Should a student already be on programme when their circumstances change regarding a relevant unspent conviction, the student is advised to declare it immediately to the Principal. Upon declaration of a relevant unspent conviction, the Principal will send a request for further information including the date and nature of the conviction. This will enable a risk assessment to be carried out and will be required within 10 days. Procedures are detailed in the IBCM Disciplinary Policy.

9.7 Where IBCM makes an offer to an applicant who is resident overseas and who declares an unspent criminal conviction on receipt of the offer (or at point of acceptance), the applicant will additionally be required to produce a Certificate of Good Character from the country that they have been resident in. This should be provided within 10 working days of the request. Further advice on this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminalrecords-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

9.8 Risk assessments will be made in all cases of unspent criminal convictions and on the basis of the level of risk, a decision will be made on whether it is appropriate for the applicant to study on the course. The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to the applicant in writing and could include:

- The level of risk is determined to be acceptable and so the applicant may continue
- The level of risk can be managed by imposing specified conditions
- The level of risk is determined to be unacceptable and so the applicant is not permitted to be admitted.

9.9 If an applicant does not disclose a relevant unspent criminal conviction the application will be regarded as fraudulent and can be withdrawn.

9.10 All information regarding criminal convictions and all communication will be dealt with on a strictly confidential basis and in line with data protection legislation. This means that only those members who need to be aware of the conviction will be informed.

10 Admissions Appeals

10.1 Definition

An admissions appeal is defined as the request for the reconsideration of an admission decision on an application or the wording/terms and conditions of an offer. The outcome of a successful request to appeal would be to reconsider the candidate's application with a view to changing or upholding the original decision. An appeal may relate to:

- The decision to interview
- The decision to make an offer
- The content of the offer (including terms and conditions)

10.2 Grounds for Appeal

The Admissions appeals procedure may only be used where there are adequate grounds for doing so and may not simply be used because a student has been unsuccessful with his or her application at any of the stages listed above. Appeals against admissions decisions may be made on one of the following grounds:

- There is evidence that IBCM has not followed required procedures (for example in information provided, rights to cancel etc)
- There is new evidence which has come to light
- There is evidence that IBCM has demonstrated bias or prejudice in the treatment of the application

10.3 The procedure

The first stage in any admissions appeal would be to discuss the concerns informally with a member of the administrative or academic team. It is hoped that most cases would be resolved through this means.

- Applicants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal discussion may submit an appeal in writing giving details of their name and address, the programme applied for and the information they have already received.
- The appeal will be acknowledged in writing and a decision made within the academic/admissions team regarding the grounds on which the appeal is made. If it is found that there are no grounds for appeal the appeal will not be progressed and the applicant will be informed of this in writing.
- If the grounds are assessed as valid, a formal response will be issued by letter. This will indicate that the decision under appeal will be reviewed and that either the same or a different decision will be arrived at.
- Should the applicant still be dissatisfied with the response they may put their concerns in writing to the Principal and the Managing Director who will make a decision as to whether the appeal was successful or not.

- Should the applicant still feel that IBCM has in any way acted unfairly, inappropriately or illegally they have the right to take the matter further for example by contacting the Office for Students or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

10.4 Complaints regarding the admissions process

A complaint may be made about any stage of the admissions process, where there are adequate grounds for doing so. They may not be used simply because an applicant has been unsuccessful with his or her application at any of the stages. Complaints will only be considered valid if they relate to the actions or conduct of a member of staff, or the services offered by IBCM. For all complaints, the IBCM Feedback and Complaints Policy and associated procedures should be followed.

11.0 Reference Points

The following policy and procedure documents support the information in this policy:

- IBCM Equal Opportunities Policy
- IBCM Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- IBCM Terms and Conditions/Student Protection Plan
- IBCM Feedback and Complaints Policy
- IBCM Student charter and the Student Handbook

12.0 Version Control

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