



**north west**  
**regional college**  
Derry/Londonderry • Limavady • Strabane

# APPLICATIONS AND ENROLMENTS POLICY

**JANUARY 2010**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

The Northern Ireland Colleges were incorporated through the Further Education (NI) Order 1997 and became incorporated bodies from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998, thus severing the relationship with the Education and Library Boards. Management responsibility rests with the 16 Governing Bodies of the Colleges. Colleges now own their property and assets, employ their own staff and relate directly to the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), which provides the major source of funding for the sector.

Therefore colleges, as independent employers, make decisions corporate and/or otherwise with regard to their policies, with the exception of those circulars from either the Department for Employment and Learning or the College Employers' Forum<sup>1</sup>. Policy decisions from other 'lead' bodies may also have implications on policy decisions made by individual colleges.

The College will produce this report in alternative formats on request e.g. Braille, Large Print, Computer Disk and Audio Cassette etc, where possible.

The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This report should be interpreted in a manner consistent with the aforementioned legislation.

### **1.2 THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL COLLEGE**

The North West Regional College is an incorporated Institute of Further and Higher Education, which is governed by a Board of Governors, appointed to serve a term of 4 years. The Governors are drawn from business, industry and/or any profession, co-opted members, Western Education and Library Board representatives as well as from among staff and students of the College. There are a number of specialist sub-committees of the Board of Governors to deal with specific areas such as Staffing and Audit.

The Director of the College as the Accounting Officer and Chairperson is responsible for the operational management of the College and is responsible for providing strategic advice to the Board of Governors and its sub-committees.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Employers' Forum represents the interests of colleges in membership of ANIC, together with colleges associated with ANIC for negotiating purposes. The Forum is the recognised body which puts in place the machinery for negotiating and agreeing the terms and conditions of employment, including salary arrangements for all staff in all colleges. It works closely with the Labour Relations Agency which provides the Chairperson for each negotiating committee. The membership of the Forum consists of three Chairs of Governors, three Directors/Principals, the Chairman of ANIC and other selected non-voting members.*

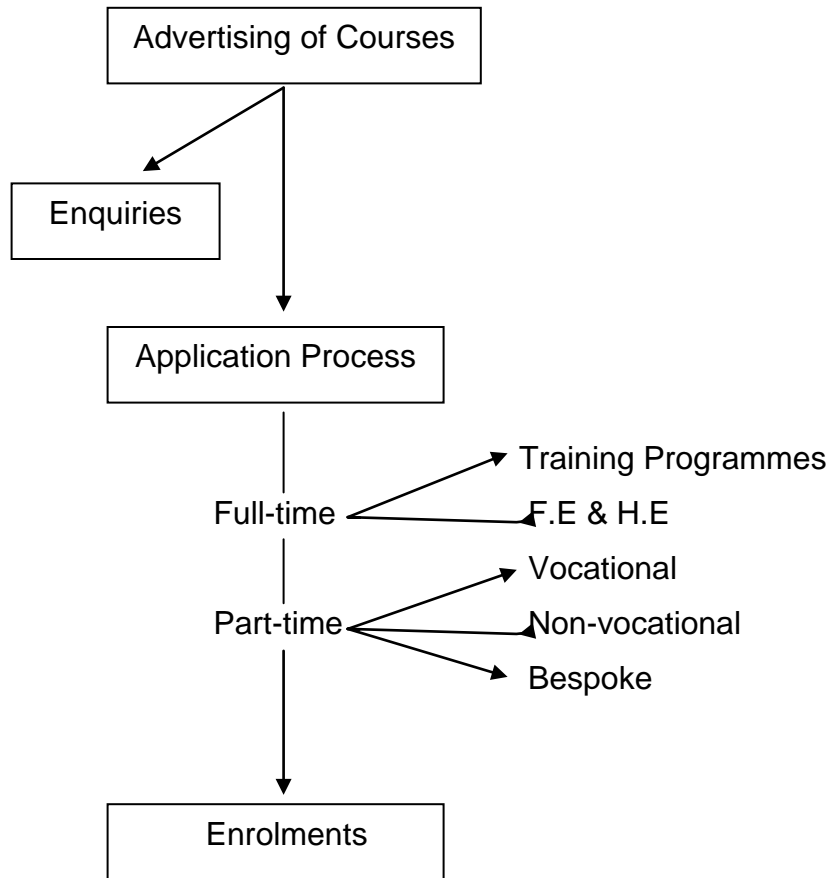
The North West Regional College has currently twelve Academic Schools and a Staff and Student Services Department, supported by a number of business support departments within the organisation. The five Assistant Directors oversee the academic and support functions of the College's work. The staffing compliment is approximately 750 full and part-time staff members.

The College currently has over 20,000 students undertaking study in a range of full and part-time programmes. The College has three main sites at Strand Road, Londonderry, Limavady, Strabane and five other sites across the North West.

## **2.0 BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

The policy deals with the selection process through which all potential students and trainees have the opportunity to enrol on a programme as offered by the College. For the purpose of this policy the programmes of study to be considered are as shown on Page 5. This policy will not include elements of the applications and enrolments procedures already scheduled under existing Section 75 policy reviews, e.g. Access, Curriculum, Community Education and Fees. While the applications and enrolments policy begins with the advertising and marketing of courses, this will not be included in this policy area but will be looked at through the Communications Policy.

## Applications and Enrolments Process



Full-time Programmes*	Part-time Programmes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further Education (F.E)</li> <li>2. Higher Education (H.E)</li> <li>3. Training</li> <li>4. Bespoke</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Vocational (F.E and H.E)</li> <li>6. Bespoke</li> <li>7. Non-vocational</li> </ol>

\* Full-time programmes are also offered on a part-time basis.

### Full-time programmes:

1. **F.E:** Up to level 3 programmes (with a few exceptions) & including professional qualifications
2. **H.E:** Level 4+ programmes and including professional qualifications.

3. **Training:** Government Training Programmes other than those included under 1, i.e. Jobskills, New Deal

4. **Bespoke:** Courses tailored to client needs, where course applications, content and delivery are negotiated with the client.

**Part-time programmes:**

5. **Vocational:** See 1-4 Full-time programmes, but where a separate application process is usual. (e.g. forms, interview)

6. **Non-vocational:** All other programmes offered on a part-time basis.

7. **Bespoke:** See Full-time (4).

### **3.0 POLICY AIM**

Operating within the context of the College's development plan and its strategic objectives, the policy aims to recruit and select students and trainees using fair and equitable procedures, ensuring that suitable applicants are matched with appropriate programmes. The College operates its applications and enrolments procedure as broadly defined by DEL Circulars.

**Applications and enrolments will be considered as two separate sections.**

#### **APPLICATIONS**

The student makes an application to the College on the appropriate application/enrolment form. Application forms will be made available in a range of alternative formats e.g. Braille, Large Print, Computer Disk and Audio Cassette etc. Alternatively support will be provided on request to potential students with disabilities to complete and understand the relevant documents. The application/enrolment form is forwarded to the Admissions Office and recorded. The form includes details of course applied for but no decision on admission is taken at this time. Interview dates with relevant schools are then arranged and the applicant is informed of these arrangements. The applicant is asked to provide details of any particular requirements that must be accommodated during the admissions process. In exceptional circumstances and where the student has met predefined entry requirements, then an admissions interview may not be required.

Other candidates are then interviewed by the relevant school(s) to determine their suitability for courses/programmes. The decision on suitability rests with the relevant school and the decision is conveyed to candidates either verbally at that time and/or via letter.

An appeals procedure may operate where a potential student feels that the decision is unfair. This appeal would be addressed via the complaints procedure.

For full-time students, if an offer is to be made, the offer will be either conditional, on gaining appropriate qualifications, or an unconditional offer. A final letter of acceptance will be issued once conditions have been met.

For those candidates who present themselves at a later stage in the application process then, at the College's discretion, emergency/fast-track procedures may apply.

For part-time students see enrolment procedure below. In certain circumstances part-time students may be required to work through the admissions procedure, particularly where there are defined entry requirements.

## **ENROLMENTS**

The enrolment procedures for full-time and part-time students vary.

### **Full-time Students**

During designated dates at the start of the academic year, students are required to attend enrolment sessions for each chosen course or programme.

### **Part-time Students**

The College organises a series of enrolment days at appropriate times and locations, including evenings, where potential students may meet with staff to discuss their needs and interests and to register with courses/programmes. Fees are also collected at this time.

Outside of these events part-time students may also register by postal enrolment, telephone enrolment or by calling in person to the College Reception as soon as the College's part-time prospectus is available listing all of the courses on offer each year.

## **4.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

In the operation of this policy the following legislation should be referred to:

- The Commissioner for Complaints (Northern Ireland Act) 1969
- The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Orders 1976 and 1988
- The Equal Pay (Northern Ireland) Act 1970, as amended in 1984
- The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
- The Access to Children (Northern Ireland) act 1988
- The Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Act 1995
- The Race Relations (Northern Ireland) order 1997
- Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998
- Legislation Pertaining to the Rehabilitation of Offenders
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003
- The Special Educational Needs Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005

Incoming legislation will provide protection for employees and potential employees against discrimination on the grounds of Age (Under the European Directive on Equal Treatment).

### **SEND0**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order places duties on the College not to discriminate against disabled students and prospective

students in the provision of education and associated services in further and higher education and in respect of admissions, suspensions and expulsions.

The College will ensure compliance with the SENDO legislation. A SENDO committee has been established to:

- Establish, implement and review College procedures to deal with issues that arise in relation to SENDO;
- Review existing guidelines, policies, decisions and practices in relation to implementing and ongoing compliance with legislation i.e. SENDO;
- Consider recommendations from academic schools in respect of adjustments to accommodate students with a disability and make decisions about what is reasonable;
- Identify good practices in respect of SENDO implementation;
- Ensure compliance in the spirit of the SENDO legislation;
- Maintain records of reasonable adjustments made and report annually to the Senior Management Team and Governing Body.

Procedures and guidelines have been developed for staff to deal with issues relating to disability at pre-enrolment stage and for each stage thereafter. These procedures incorporate the legal obligation of SENDO and within the spirit of the legislation seek to promote equality of opportunity. The SLDD coordinators have a specific role to maintain compliance at department level and report to the SENDO committee regularly.

To ensure potential students with a disability are not adversely affected by this policy the College will monitor both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

The Code of Practice provides guidance for colleges as to how the applications and enrolment procedures should accommodate those with special needs and disabilities. For further information you are advised to contact the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, telephone: 028 90 500 600; website: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

## 5.0 SECTION 75

Section 75 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires that the College shall “in carrying out its function relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity” between the following nine Section 75 categories:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Men and women generally;
- Persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Persons with dependents and persons without.

In addition, and without prejudice to these obligations, the College is also committed, when carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The College’s Equality Scheme was approved by the Equality Commission on 26 November 2002. The Scheme sets out the College’s Governing Body’s arrangements as to how it proposes to fulfil the obligatory duties as determined by Section 75 legislation and its implementation. The Equality Scheme acknowledges the College’s commitment to carry out equality impact assessments and policy reviews on existing policies and to develop new policies as required.

Between November 2001 and February 2002, the College screened all its policies to assess which may impact on equality of opportunity and/ or good relations obligations. Each policy was considered using the following criteria during the initial screening process:

- (a) Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake of different groups?
- (b) Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy?
- (c) Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems, which are specific to them?
- (d) Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or better community relations by altering the policy or working with others in Government Departments, education or in the larger community?

The Applications and Enrolments Policy was identified for Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and work commenced in September 2005.

As an initial stage of data gathering, at this time, the College wishes to engage with key stakeholders in order to identify any issues which should be considered through the course of the EQIA. While this pre-consultation is not prescriptive, we would be interested in your views and comments on how the EQIA should be conducted, what are the significant issues and what data should be reflected upon?