



**wwetb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Phort Láirge agus Loch Garman  
Waterford and Wexford  
Education and Training Board



## **POLICY FOR ADMISSION TO PLC COURSES AT WATERFORD COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION 2021/2022**

A decision on an application for admission will be based on the implementation of this Policy, the information set out in the annual Admission Notice of Waterford College of Further Education and the information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission, once received before the closing date set out in the annual Admission Notice. The principal of Waterford College of Further Education is responsible for the implementation of this Admission Policy.

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## 1 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**'Applicant'** means the person who has made the application for admission to Waterford College of Further Education on behalf of the Learner, which may include the Learner.

**'Learner'** means a person in respect of whom the application is being made. All uses of the word throughout this Policy therefore imply 'prospective' as part of the interpretation. The definition also captures the legal definition of 'Student' within the meaning of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018.

**'Gender'**, in line with the definition of "*the gender ground*" in the Equal Status Act 2000, is such that "*one is male and the other is female*" This does not prejudice any learner who is Intersex or identifies as Androgynous/Androgyne, Bigender, Demi gender, Gender Fluid, Genderqueer, Multigender, Neutrois, Non-binary, Transgender, Transsexual or otherwise.

**'Parent'** has the same meaning as in the Education Act 1998 and includes a foster parent and a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997.

**'Intake Group'** means the most junior year group of any course, including Learners enrolled in courses which are only one year in duration and Learners who may have already completed a course (or more than one) and who are applying to do a different course.

## **2 ADMISSION STATEMENT**

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Waterford College of Further Education is a centre of learning committed to providing education and training of the highest quality. As part of Waterford and Wexford Education Training Board (WWETB), we continue to strive to excel in responding to the educational needs of the community. The programmes we offer are learner-centred and provided in a friendly, inclusive, and supportive environment.

Waterford College of Further Education is committed to being an inclusive college. Fundamental to the implementation of the College's PLC Admissions Policy is the principle of equality. In placing the learner at the centre of the learning process, Waterford College of Further Education is committed to creating an appropriate learning environment in which individual differences are accepted and embraced.

Accordingly, Waterford College of Further Education shall not discriminate in its admission of a Learner based on the following grounds:

- 2.1. Gender of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.2. Civil status of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.3. Family status of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.4. Sexual orientation of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.5. Religion of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.6. Disability of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.7. Race of the Learner or Applicant.
- 2.8. The Learner's or Applicant's membership of the Traveller community.
- 2.9. Special educational needs of the Learner or Applicant.

For post-leaving certificate courses and further-education or training courses, costs may be payable.

## **3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

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WWETB was established under the Education and Training Board Act 2013 which sets out the functions of all ETBs, including to establish and maintain recognised schools, centres for education and education and training facilities in each ETB's functional area.

The Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 place a duty on all recognised schools to prepare and publish an Admission Policy.

The Board of Management of Waterford College of Further Education, a recognised school, is a committee established under section 44 of the Education and Training Board Act 2013 and also constitutes a board of management within the meaning of the Education Act 1998.

In addition, Colleges of Further Education are regarded as 'providers' under the Quality and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Acts 2012 (as amended). As required thereunder, providers of further education and training courses must establish procedures for access, transfer, and progression of Learners in accordance with the policies and criteria for access, transfer and progression published by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

The Education Act 1998 provides for an appeal process in the event of a refusal to admit a Learner.

## 4 GENERAL ADMISSION PROVISIONS

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A decision on an application for admission shall be based on:

- the implementation of this Admission Policy,
- the annual Admission Notice of the Waterford College of Further Education and the
- Information provided by the Applicant in the application for admission.

In processing an application, Waterford College of Further Education shall not consider:

- 4.1 The occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a Learner's Parent(s);
- 4.2 A Learner's connection to the College due to a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the college;
- 4.3 The date and time on which an application for admission was received by the College as long as it is received during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual Admission Notice for the relevant academic year.

Admission to a particular course is governed by the following principle that will be assessed through the application form, and possibly an interview and/or assessment where required for particular courses:

- 4.4 That, in the professional judgement of the College the Learner's academic ability, skills or aptitude are deemed suitable for the course to which application was made on his/her behalf. Such academic ability, skills or aptitude shall include the requirements set out at Appendix 1 of this Admission Policy.

Waterford College of Further Education will consider the offer of a place to every Learner seeking admission, who meets the entry requirements for the course in the College to which s/he has applied, as outlined in 4.4 above, unless one or more of the following applies:

- 4.5 The Learner fails to confirm in writing that s/he accepts the PLC Code of Behaviour and s/he shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such Code.
- 4.6 Information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect.

Subject to 4.5 and 4.6, where Waterford College of Further Education considers an application, each application which meets the entry requirements of the course, shall be met with an offer of a place, unless the course is oversubscribed, in which case, selection criteria will be applied to each application. This is without prejudice to the requirement for all courses to have a minimum enrolment number in order to proceed.

Section 5 of this Policy addresses the selection criteria and other matters related to specific admission provisions.

## **5 APPLICATIONS FOR PLC**

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### **5.1 Admission Provisions**

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## 5.1 ADMISSION PROVISIONS

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Subject to 4.5 and 4.6, where Waterford College of Further Education is not oversubscribed, all applications which meet the published entry requirements for the selected course will be offered a place therein. Such entry requirements are used for the purpose of assessing the Learner's academic ability, skills or aptitude, in line with the authority vested in the College by section 62(e) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018. Information relating to the courses on offer, and any course specific entry requirements is available to Applicants/Learners in the prospectus of the College and on its website at [www.wcfe.ie](http://www.wcfe.ie).

In assisting the College in determining whether a Learner meets the entry requirements for a given course, it may request that the Learner attend for interview, be referred for an educational assessment, be the subject of a Vetting application to the National Vetting Bureau in line with the requirements under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012, or provide a referral from a specified independent third-party.

In line with section 62(7)(o) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018, admission to a course may also depend on the Learner meeting certain eligibility criteria laid down by the funding body for the course, including age.

### 5.1.1 Oversubscription

When the number of applications exceeds the number of places available, the published selection criteria as set out at section 5.1.2 below will apply and a waiting list shall be compiled, which shall remain valid only for the academic year in respect of which the applications are made. Where the College is in a position to offer further places that become available on a particular course during that academic year, places will be offered in accordance with the order of priority in which Learners' applications have been placed on the waiting list.

For the avoidance of doubt, if an Applicant does not receive a place in the College for a given academic year, but s/he wishes to be considered for admission in the following academic year, a new application must be made during the dates specified by the College as being the period when it will accept applications.

### 5.1.2 Selection criteria

Waterford College of Further Education will apply the following criteria in the order in which they are listed for admission to the Intake Group:

- 5.1.2.1 The Learner has deferred his/her place on the course in the previous academic year;
- 5.1.2.2 The Learner's marking at interview;
- 5.1.2.3 The Learner's marking of any assessment conducted at interview or otherwise;

### 5.1.3 Selection process

Waterford College of Further Education will apply the following process to the selection criteria in order to determine admission ranking to the Intake Group:

Applications are considered against the published selection criteria. Places will be offered in the first instance to those who meet the first criterion. Subsequently, where the College still has places available, the remaining Applicants are considered in light of the second criterion and those Applicants who meet this criterion will be offered a place within the College. This process is continuously carried out until all available places have been offered and accepted.

Where two or more applications are tied in the foregoing selection process, Waterford College of Further Education will apply a random lottery to assign any available places in the college, or on the waiting list, to those applications.

### 5.1.4 Late applications

An application received by Waterford College of Further Education after the closing date published by the College and set out in the Admission Notice, is considered a late application for the purposes of this Admission Policy.

Where Waterford College of Further Education is oversubscribed and receives a late application for admission, that application will receive a place on the waiting list beneath Applicants whose applications were received by the College before the closing date for applications. Such late applications will be placed on the waiting list in accordance with the date and time they were received by the College, subject to section(s) 4.5 and 4.6.

#### **5.1.5 Second/third-round offers of a place**

Where an Applicant is in receipt of an offer of a place on a course within Waterford College of Further Education but does not accept the offer, or the College withdraws the offer in line with the relevant provisions of this Policy, the place will be offered to the next Applicant on the waiting list in a second-round of offers. This process will continue throughout third and fourth rounds etc. until all places on the relevant course have been filled.

#### **5.1.6 Acceptance of a place**

If a Learner in respect of whom the application is made is offered a place, the Applicant will be issued with an Acceptance Form by the College. Having received an offer of a place on the course for which s/he applied, the Applicant shall:

- 5.1.6.1** Indicate acceptance of an offer by fully completing and returning the Acceptance Form by the date set out in the College's Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the College if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer. This includes indicating whether or not the Learner has applied for, been offered, has accepted an offer of, or is on a waiting list for, a place on a course in another college or centre for education;
- 5.1.6.2** Completing the PLSS Data Gathering Form online at [www.wcfe.ie](http://www.wcfe.ie);
- 5.1.6.3** Arranging for the completion of any specified payment required for the particular course to which the application was made.

Failure to fully complete the foregoing by the date set out in the Admission Notice, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the College if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer, may result in withdrawal of an offer, in line with the grounds for withdrawal of an offer, as set out below.

#### **5.1.7 Refusal**

Where a Learner in respect of whom an application has been made has not been offered a place on the particular course in Waterford College of Further Education, the Applicant will be provided in writing with:

- 5.1.7.1. The reasons that the Learner was not offered a place in Waterford College of Further Education
- 5.1.7.2. Details of the Learner's place on the waiting list, if applicable; and
- 5.1.7.3. Details of the right to appeal the decision.

As set out in 4.6, an offer of admission may not be made where:

- 5.1.7.4. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect.

#### **5.1.8 Withdrawal of an offer**

An offer of admission may be withdrawn where:

- 5.1.8.1. The information contained in the application is false or misleading in a material respect, or

- 5.1.8.2. The Applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission and completes the Acceptance Criteria in 5.1.6 above, on or before the date set out in the Annual Admission Notice of the College for the academic year for which s/he is applying, or within 2 weeks of issuing by the College if it is a late application or if it is a second/third-round offer;

If an offer of a place is withdrawn by the College, the Learner on whose behalf the application was made shall lose her/his place on the admission list or waiting list for that academic year and any subsequent applications for the same academic year on behalf of that Applicant shall be treated as a late application in line with section 5.1.4 above.

In the event of a cancellation of a course (due to insufficient enrolment numbers, resources difficulties *etc.*) any Applicant(s) in receipt of an offer will be notified of the cancellation. In such circumstances, Applicants may be offered a place on a different course subject to a place being available therein. Where an Applicant declines a place on such an alternative course, any fee already paid for the course will be refunded to the Applicant.

#### **5.1.9 Appeals**

For information relating to an Applicant's right to appeal a decision of Waterford College of Further Education regarding admission to the College, see section 5.3.

#### **5.1.10 Deferrals**

Applicants who have been offered and have accepted a place on a course may elect to defer their place on the course for one year. However, such deferring does not guarantee a place in the course the following year where the course may not run the following year or may be oversubscribed, in which case the application in respect of the Learner who deferred will rank top of the selection criteria for the following year, so is likely to be offered a place, but such cannot be guaranteed.

Applicants seeking to defer should submit a written request to defer to the Admissions Office as soon as possible, but no later than the date of course commencement, except in exceptional circumstances, as will be determined by the principal. Applicants who defer will be refunded any fees paid save for the PLC Government Levy, which is not transferrable and non-refundable.

## 5.2 APPEALS

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### 5.2.1. Appeal where refusal was due to oversubscription:

An Applicant who was refused admission because the course is oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision must submit her/his appeal in writing, by completing a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the College's office. The appeal application will be reviewed by the Board of Management of Waterford College of Further Education, at Parnell Street, Waterford, X91 VKT9, email: [info@wcfе.ie](mailto:info@wcfе.ie). Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the Waterford College of Further Education's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the Waterford College of Further Education's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this Policy, same shall apply instead.

If an Applicant is not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Management, or the Board of Management is not in a position to review the decision to refuse admission, the Applicant may apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### 5.2.2. Appeal where refusal was for a reason other than oversubscription:

An Applicant who was refused admission to Waterford College of Further Education, for a reason other than the College being oversubscribed and who wishes to appeal this decision may choose to put her/his appeal in writing, and must complete a Section 29 Appeal Application Form, available from the College's office. The appeal application will be reviewed by the Board of Management of Waterford College of Further Education. Such an appeal must be brought within fourteen calendar days of receipt by the Applicant of the college's decision to refuse to admit. However, if a different time period for the bringing of such an appeal is specified by the Minister for Education and Skills after the publication of this policy, same shall apply instead.

Alternatively, s/he may choose to apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

If an Applicant who chooses to appeal to the Board of Management is not satisfied with the decision of the Board of Management, the Applicant may also apply to bring an appeal to an appeals committee established by the Minister for Education and Skills under section 29A of the Education Act 1998.

### 5.2.3. Basis for appeal:

As required by section 29C (2) of the Education Act 1998, an application to appeal must be based on the implementation of this Admission Policy, the content of the College's Admission Notice and also set out the grounds of the request to appeal the decision.

## Appendix 1: English language requirements on entry

The table below sets out the **recommended minimum requirements** for English language for admission to courses leading to full or part awards in Further Education and Training in WWETB. It should be noted that the levels listed represent the minimum standard needed in general, and in some field areas, higher levels may be required. FET applicants for whom English is second language will be required to provide evidence of English language proficiency through **one** of the following mechanisms:

1. A valid certificate in English language from one of the institutions listed in the table below.
2. English language proficiency assessment conducted by WWETB during the enrolment process, in line with the requirements set out in Appendix 2 of this Policy.
3. Recognition of prior learning, which may be applied to Learners who have, in the previous 12 months, successfully achieved a full award in a cognate discipline at an appropriate level on the National Framework of Qualifications, *e.g.* at NFQ Level 4 if applying for a course at NFQ Level 5.

	Minimum English Level	International Examinations	Minimum Grade
<b>Courses at Level 3*</b>	Minimum B1 in all skills on entry (reading, writing, speaking, and listening)	Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET)	Pass
<b>Courses at Level 4</b>	Minimum B2.1 in all skills on entry	Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET)	Distinction
		Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE)	Grade C
		IELTS	5.5
<b>Courses at Level 5</b>	Minimum B2.2 in all skills on entry	Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE)	Grade B or higher
		IELTS	6
<b>Courses at Level 6</b>	Minimum B2.2 in all skills on entry	Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE)	Grade B or higher
		Cambridge Advanced (CAE)	Borderline Fail Min 170points
		Cambridge Proficiency (CPE)	Unsuccessful With min. 170 points

Please note: IELTS certificates are only valid for 2 years from the date of assessment. It is recommended that WWETB applies the same validity duration to all other examinations.

\*Exceptions apply for FET applicants to single module courses in the Adult Education Service, *e.g.* English as a Second Language, ESOL, or any ESOL course offered by a College of Further Education.

English language assessment tools will be devised centrally and administered locally by designated staff in WWETB.

In order to ensure fair and consistent assessment of English language proficiency across and within centres, the following measures will be compulsory:

1. A number of staff from each centre will be trained to conduct and mark assessments to ensure a common understanding of language levels and consistency of marking across centres.
2. Centres will be required to ensure that assessments are only conducted by designated assessors. To allow for the possibility of scheduling late registration during holiday periods, centres could request support from the Adult Education Service in administering and marking assessments.