

Admissions Policy

CONTENTS

- A. RATIONALE
- B. RELATION TO MISSION
- C. AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY
- D. POLICY CONTENT
- E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- F. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

76514K

A. RATIONALE

It is the policy of Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training to promote equality for individuals, groups and communities through a consistent commitment to fairness, respect and inclusion. Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training welcomes applications and accepts learners from a variety of backgrounds and learning experiences.

B. Relation to Mission

This policy is directly related to the Institute's mission to inspire success for our learning community, as detailed in our mission statement, and further underpinned by its shared values of professionalism, respect, innovation and creativity, and inclusivity.

Our Mission

We will inspire success for our learning community by:

- Delivering a first-class, high-quality education and training experience
- Supporting access, personal development, education, skills acquisition, and progression
- Serving a uniquely diverse cohort of students to achieve and providing a welcoming, inclusive, supportive, and responsive learning environment
- Adding value of our students, our staff and to our communities
- Enabling individuals and communities to achieve their developmental, personal, social, career and employment aspirations
- Improving the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and enterprises
- Promoting innovation and collaboration to enhance the social, economic, and cultural development of our region
- Supporting progression to employment, Further Education and Higher Education
- Fostering creative, collegial, and positive partnerships amongst staff

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training supports applicants to access the Institute through the provision of clear and transparent information, and admissions processes. Places to study at Carlow Institute are offered where, in the opinion of the Institute, the course meets the needs, aptitude and aspirations of the applicant. We endeavour to guide applicants to provision that meets their needs and is in their best interests. Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training reserves the right to refuse admission when it deems that this decision is in the best interest of the applicant or the circumstances of the Institution. The Institute provides an appeals process that recognises the right of applicants to appeal a decision made in relation to admissions.

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training reviews its admissions policy and procedures periodically, and this policy is subject to change in accordance with policies and requirements of the Institute's funding agencies (the Department of Education and Skills, and SOLAS), and those of its patron, Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board.

C. AIMS & SCOPE

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training will ensure that it operates a fair and consistent admissions policy for all applicants.

This Policy aims to:

- Ensure fair and consistent admissions of students by describing a clear and well-ordered assessment policy and related procedures
- Describe Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training's admissions policy
- Describe the procedures that are applied to operate the admissions policy
- Describes the Quality Assurance processes that apply to the Institute's admissions procedures

The scope of this policy includes **all activity relating to the admission of students** to course places for the purposes of study. It relates to other Institute policies, including the Student Code of Conduct, Assessment policy amongst others. It responds to the wider institutional Quality Assurance requirements of Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board, but encompasses all admissions activity at Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training. This policy is read in conjunction with the policies and processes of the relevant Awarding Body that underpins each course and awards the associated qualification.

Where a course is part of a jointly-managed Tertiary programme, any specific admissions arrangements associated with that programme, which may sit outside this policy, will be clearly indicated.

D. POLICY CONTENT

This is a comprehensive policy for admissions – this section addresses specific topics relating to admissions. These are as follow:

- D1 Admissions
- D2 Appeals

D1 Admissions – Full-time study

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training offers course places to individuals who have applied for a given programme of study. The Institute publishes an annual prospectus outlining the range of full-time courses that it intends to offer for a given academic year.

Applications

The Institute accepts applications for places on courses for a time-limited period in advance of the commencement of the courses. Full-time courses commence in the Autumn term of each academic year, and the application period is typically for the six months prior to the commencement of term i.e. from the Spring term of the year of entry.

Courses are advertised through the Institute’s prospectus, its website and through established third-party means (including Qualifax and Fetchcourses.ie etc.). The Institute holds open days and other information events to support potential applicants to explore the courses offered.

Making an application

Individuals are invited to apply for courses via the Institute’s online enrolment system (linked from the Institute’s website), or by paper application. The Institute aims to offer support, subject to available resources, to applicants that have special needs which make completing an application difficult.

Applications must be submitted with any advertised application fee. **The application fee is non-refundable**, and applications cannot be processed if this payment isn’t made.

Applicants must have a valid email address for the application to be processed.

Closing dates for applications

Closing dates for applications are published in the Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training prospectus, on the Institute website, and on Fetch Courses via the Institute’s NCC listings. The

Institute reserves the right to amend the published closing date, to close applications for any course or to extend the application period. Closing dates may vary from course to course, and it is the applicant's responsibility to make a timely application, and to attend any call for interview, registration or induction process.

Eligibility and Entry requirements

Standard Academic Entry requirements

Unless otherwise stated, the basic entry requirement to all full-time **Level 5** courses is as follows

- Over 18 years of age and/or successful completion of the Leaving Certificate (or equivalent international qualification).
- Over 18 years of age and/or successful completion of a Level 4 major award (or equivalent international qualification).

For **Level 6** course

- The basic entry requirement to all full-time **Level 6** programmes is the successful completion of a **Level 5** major award (or equivalent international qualification).

Mature applicants

Mature applicants (over 23 years old) are welcome to apply for courses at Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training. Mature applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirements, but who have acquired skills or experience, are welcome to apply. The general suitability for attendance on the course is assessed at an interview. All other requirements of this admissions policy, including the application and interview process apply to mature students.

English Language requirement

Applicants whose first language is not English will need to demonstrate proficiency in communication through English to Literacy Grade B standard or higher for Level 5 courses, or higher. Applicants who are unable to demonstrate adequate proficiency will be referred to Kilkenny and Carlow Education Training and Board Literacy Services to develop these skills to support later progression to Carlow Institute.

Processing applications

All applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants will be invited to attend an interview and will be emailed details of their interview time and date, which will vary by course.

Applicants are expected to attend for their scheduled interview appointment and the Institute reserves the right to cancel an application if the applicant fails to attend the interview.

Interviews

All applicants are required to complete an interview. Interviews take place from March through to late August following the Leaving Certificate results. The interview is administered to help the Institute assess the level and interest of the student for the course they have applied for. The interview will not be used as a basis to exclude any student. All intending applicants will be notified of the date and time of their interview.

Institute staff will assess if the course is the right option for the applicant at an interview. This assessment is made through a structured interview process, and the applicant's responses will determine an assessment of their suitability for the course.

The applicant will be guided through questions to ensure that they are likely to succeed on the course. Applicants will be able to ask about the course and opportunities available. **Only the applicant may attend for the interview itself** – family/friends are not permitted to participate in the interview process.

Interview Assessments

Interviews are conducted by Institute Teaching staff, and an established framework is used for all applicants.

Subject to the requirements of relevant education legislation, the following criteria are used to offer place on Institute courses

- The applicant's interest and aspirations in the chosen subject area
- The applicant's awareness of this area
- The academic and practical/occupational potential of the applicant to achieve on the programme
- Previous academic outcomes and exam results
- Prior and relevant experience of the chosen area

The Institute's ability to offer places on courses is also determined by

- Permission and funding from Department of Education and Skills/SOLAS or relevant funding agency to run the course
- Availability of places on individual courses and numbers recruited
- Adequate enrolment to run the course

Interview Decisions

If, in the opinion of the Institute, the course is the right choice for the applicant, the applicant is offered a place, where the applicant is considered likely to benefit from attendance at the course/activity.

If, in the opinion of the Institute, the applicant is not ready to undertake a course, unlikely to succeed, or needs more time to develop skills, the applicant will not be offered a place. Instead, the applicant will be guided to step-up options, by referral to Kilkenny & Carlow Education and Training Board's Adult Guidance Service.

The outcome of the interview is communicated to the applicant via the Institute's online enrolment system. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check the status of their application on the system.

Offers of a place on a course are conditional, which may include grade outcomes in pending examinations, and are subject to general suitability for the course as determined at the interview.

The number of places available on each course is limited, and waiting lists may apply for courses. All courses are subject to minimum enrolment, and if a course is not available, applicants will be advised of alternative choices on offer. The programme content shown in any prospectus (print or online) is indicative, and is **subject to change** according to Awarding Body requirements as well as enrolment and resources.

Course place offers

Where applicants are offered a place, they are invited to confirm their intention to enrol, and will be given a time-frame in which to respond. Decisions regarding enrolment will be notified to students via their on-line account on the Institute's online enrolment system.

Applicants are required to accept the Institute's offer of a place on a course via the Institute's online enrolment system. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check the status of their application on the system, and to accept or decline any offer within the advised time-frame. To secure a place,

applicants must complete their online enrolment form (learner details form), and attend all required registration and induction processes, to the deadline dates set by the Institute. Applicants who only part complete these processes will be liable to forfeit their places to those who do. An applicant's place is only secured on full completion of the online enrolment form and attendance at registration and induction.

Applicants must immediately notify the Institute of any change in their personal registration details. The Institute cannot accept responsibility for any consequences (e.g. failure to receive information), due to failure on the part of the applicant to make such notifications directly to the Institute administration.

Registration

When an applicant has accepted an offer of a course place, they are invited to attend registration and induction for the course. Applicants will be advised of a registration date and time by email. It is the applicants' responsibility to attend registration at the stated time. Applicants will be required to have their Photo ID and PPSN verified at registration – this is a mandatory part of the process, and registration is dependent on it. Applicants are responsible for bringing appropriate and valid proof of these documents for registration.

The Institute will inform applicants of all registration requirements via the Institute's online enrolment system. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check their email, and to check the status of their application on the system, and to attend registration with proof of documentation as required. **Pre-registration of the online enrolment form is completed online in advance of the registration and induction period, but the applicant must attend in person to complete this process and verify their identity.**

Induction

Applicants who have completed registration are registered students and will be invited to attend an Induction programme. Students will meet with the course teaching team, their classmates, receive the timetable and be informed of important policy and procedures for students at the Induction programme. All students are expected to attend induction. Classes will commence following induction.

Registered students wishing to attend Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training must sign a declaration stating that they have read the Institute Code of Conduct as part of their Induction. In

signing they accept that the code is fair and reasonable, and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance by the applicant with such code.

Students must attend Induction to complete their registration at the Institute.

Collection of other required information

Statistical monitoring

From time to time, the Institute is required by state funding agencies to collect statistical information from its registered students. This information is subject to data collection regulations, and students are informed in advance of the requirements to collect such information. The Institute is required to collect this information, but does not use this information itself.

Fees

Since 2023, only an application fee is charged – all other fees have been removed.

Garda Vetting (Clearance)

Garda Vetting (police/criminal records clearance) is a requirement on courses where registered students have access to children or vulnerable adults. Registered students must be vetted for clearance by the Gardaí prior to attending work experience. It is the student's responsibility to obtain Garda Vetting Clearance/criminal records clearance.

Applicants who have lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland/Northern Ireland, and for whom Garda vetting/clearance is unavailable, are required to provide verifiable evidence of criminal records clearance from the relevant police authorities.

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training will provide registered students with information about making an application for clearance, but it is the student's sole responsibility to complete any necessary application and to obtain clearance.

Applicants with Additional Needs

Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and access for applicants who have a disability, specific learning difficulty or medical condition. The Institute endeavours, wherever possible, to make it easier for such applicants to access courses and to participate in student life at the Institute. Applicants are encouraged to ask for assistance from the Institute at the point of application.

Access to additional support is dependent on the applicant/student applying for it. Applicants with a disability or support need, are asked to provide the Institute with information when making a general application. The Institute's ability to support a student with additional needs is dependent on available support resources from the Higher Education Agency.

If further resources are required, the Higher Education Authority require the institute to submit a profile of the applicant, and will decide if it (the HEA) will provide the necessary resources to support the applicant. Where adequate resources are not forthcoming, the Institute may be forced to postpone admission until the required resources are put in place.

Transfers from other Further Education and Training Centres

The Institute does not normally accept student transfers from other Further Education and Training Centres in Ireland or within the EU.

Reserved right not to enrol

Carlow Institute of further Education and Training reserves the right not to enrol an applicant where:

- It is the considered opinion of the Institute that the applicant is not suitably equipped in academic or competency terms for the course
- The Institute cannot access the resources to meet the specific needs of the applicant
- It is the view of the Institute, and its Board of Management, that the applicant poses an unacceptable risk to other applicants, to Institute staff or Institute property
- The student has falsified documents and/or identification

D2 Appeal

Right of Appeal

It is recognised that the implementation of this policy document in Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training must be in accordance with the requirements of Kilkenny & Carlow Education and Training Board, the Department of Education and Skills, and relevant legislation.

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, applicants have the right to appeal a refusal by Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training to enrol them. Appeals against a refusal to admit an applicant should be made in writing and submitted to the Board of Management of Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training, and addressed to Principal.

The decision of the Institute's Board of Management can subsequently be appealed to the Chief Executive Officer of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board.

E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Board of Management will approve the policy and ensure its development and evaluation.
2. The Principal and Deputy Principals will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy.
3. The Institute's Admissions Policy will form part of the induction programme for new teaching staff and shall be included in the staff handbook.
4. It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to read this policy carefully.
5. It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to regularly evaluate their own approaches to teaching and learning and to carefully consider any new approaches or methodologies that they feel may enhance their student's experiences.

F. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Deputy Principals. The policy will be reviewed annually or as needs dictate during the academic year.