

1. Aim

This document is to inform students declaring a criminal conviction throughout their application and enrolment with Shrewsbury Colleges Group that their declaration will be used to assess their suitability for their chosen course of study and their application/enrolment with the College.

This process will be followed in addition to any requirement for potential students to undertake DBS enhanced disclosure where the nature of the course applied for requires it (Detailed in the Student DBS Policy).

Shrewsbury Colleges Group actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the capacity to benefit from vocational or academic study and we welcome all such potential students and trainees including those with criminal records. However, the College has a duty of care towards its staff, students and visitors, some of which may be considered 'vulnerable' as a result of their age, physical or mental condition. As such it is necessary for the College to consider the suitability of all potential students with criminal convictions.

Any convictions "Spent" or "Unspent" (as defined under the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act, 1974) that are declared by students whilst in their enrolment will be dealt with under this policy.

2. Declaration

All potential students and trainees are asked to complete an application and enrolment form prior to the start of their chosen course of study. This form asks the applicant to declare any criminal convictions (excluding minor motoring offences) but does not ask for details.

Where an applicant indicates on their application/enrolment form or later in their enrolment with the College that they have a criminal conviction or a declaration is made at another time, a self-declaration form will be sent to their residential address or a student may be asked to provide such a declaration in person.

The student may not be allowed to commence or continue their chosen course of study unless they complete, sign and return the declaration form.

3. Assessment

All returned self-declaration forms will be treated with the strictest confidence and will only be seen by those College staff directly involved in the assessment of potential risk.

The risk of accepting a student with criminal convictions will be assessed against the following statements:

- With consideration for the nature and seriousness of the offence, does the applicant's attendance at the college represent a potential risk to the well-being of staff or other students, particularly in consideration of the presence of students under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults

STUDENT CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- Does the course applied for involve contact with children or other vulnerable individuals
- Does the course involve any responsibility for finance or items of value
- Will the nature of the course present opportunities for the student to re-offend in the place of study
- Is the nature of the course such that it requires public trust or confidence
- How long ago the offence was committed
- Any information provided on the declaration form about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed
- Was the offence an isolated incident or part of a pattern of offending
- The degree of remorse or otherwise, expressed by the applicant on their declaration form and their motivation to change
- Any other factors deemed relevant by the college in the assessment of possible risk

Any potential student whose criminal record would indicate that they were considered a material risk to the well-being of fellow students, staff or property would not be permitted to commence a course of study at the College.

In those circumstances where a student with a criminal conviction is allowed to attend the College, the teaching staff will only be informed if it is considered necessary by the College.

4. Outcome

Following a risk assessment and receipt of additional information if necessary, the student will be informed in writing after receipt of their completed form of the decision of the College regarding their suitability to study.

Suitability will be assessed by Group Vice Principal: Curriculum Support and Business Development in the first instance but where an individual's circumstances warrant further consideration, the case will be referred to the Principal and CEO, Group Vice Principals or Senior Leadership Team member.

Where the offer of a place on a course of study has been made, the College may choose to withdraw that offer or terminate the enrolment of a student who is subsequently discovered to have omitted or falsified information concerning criminal convictions or fails to disclose any subsequent convictions incurred during their course.

5. Appeals

Any applicant who has been refused enrolment onto their chosen course of study as a result of their criminal convictions and who wishes to appeal should do so in writing within 7 days of the communication directly to:

The Principal and CEO
Shrewsbury Colleges Group
London Road
Shrewsbury
SY2 6PR

6. Storage of information

All self-declaration forms and risk assessments are stored securely in a confidential file with Admissions for the period of the course length at the College, after which time they will be destroyed.