Postgraduate Taught Programme
Admissions Policy for applications in
2017 Academic Year

This document is available in hard copy and on the College VLE. Please contact the Postgraduate Office (postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk / 01803 847212) if you have any difficulty in obtaining a copy that you can read, or find any aspect of these regulations difficult to understand.
This policy and related admissions procedures will be subject to an annual review meeting. As part of this review we will assess the progress we are making toward achieving our Key Principles and commitments to fairness, accuracy, clear communication and equality.
Key Principles

1. The Schumacher College Postgraduate Taught Programme Admissions Policy Provides prospective students, College staff and our accrediting body, Plymouth University alike with a guide to our approach to the admission of students.

2. Schumacher College adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and are committed to providing equality for all irrespective of:
   
   - Age
   - Disability
   - Ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
   - Gender
   - Gender reassignment
   - Religion or belief
   - Sexual orientation
   - Marriage and civil partnership
   - Pregnancy and Maternity

   All appropriately qualified applicants will be given equal consideration during the selection process, and will not be discriminated against on any grounds referred to above. We welcome and support people with disabilities, including specific learning disabilities, and will make reasonable adjustments and endeavor to meet specific requirements.

3. We clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the admissions process, including who makes the decision on admissions criteria and applications. We are clear about which staff members are involved in the internal annual review, taking into account any change in regulations set by our accrediting body, Plymouth University. We also set out the responsibilities of applicants in the admissions process.

4. To ensure a fair and consistent admissions process, we will ensure that the following principles are adhered to:
   
   - All communication, throughout the Admissions Process, will be honest, comprehensive and inclusive in coverage
   - We will clearly state the entry criteria for all our programmes, including academic qualifications, along with appropriate experience and skills required for entry
   - Entry criteria will be easily accessible through our website, using clear language, and offering alternative formats for prospective students with disabilities or particular needs, without making assumptions about how people get information

   Applicants will be informed in general terms how they can demonstrate their achievements (both academic and experiential) and motivation to study.
We aim to provide clear and accurate information, opportunities for informal discussion with Faculties to ensure that prospective students are able to make informed choices based on a true picture of what their time at Schumacher College will entail in terms of academic and community life, student support, finance and graduate opportunities.

5. Applications to the College are made electronically, or by post directly to us; with supporting documentation received according to our guidelines. An alternative application form format is available. An application passes through clearly defined stages and where possible, we commit to making a decision within 8 weeks of receipt of both application and supporting documentation.

6. Entry criteria are set in accordance with standards required for Level 7 courses. Entry requirements are published on the College website, in programme specifications and in programme quality handbooks. Decisions are recorded by and communicated via our postgraduate administrator.

7. We ensure that students are informed as to their academic, financial and general obligations in taking up our offer of a place. We inform students of the enrolment process in advance and have designed an effective induction programme to ensure the integration of our diverse student body.

8. We are able to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants and have defined grounds and processes for appeals and complaints.

9. We are implementing an annual process for monitoring the effectiveness of the admission cycle, including the review of this policy. Feedback from each new cohort of students on ways to enhance the student admissions experience or information is sought at the beginning of each academic year.

These key principles are explained in more depth in the corresponding numbered sections of the Admissions Policy in the following pages.
1. Principles and Purpose

The policy relates to all postgraduate programmes offered by Schumacher College.

Our priority for admissions is to match prospective students with the course of study that best meets their academic needs, abilities and individual circumstances, while ensuring that our operational objectives are met.

As places are limited we will select candidates who we consider will make optimal use of the learning experience afforded by the programme and are willing to live and work in the Schumacher College community. Further information on our approach to learning can be found here: https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/postgraduate-courses/our-approach-to-postgraduate-learning.

The College is committed to ensuring that no student with potential to meet our entry requirements is deterred from applying. All applications are considered and evaluated on the basis of individual potential.

In achieving this, we make a commitment that our approach to the admission of students is:

- Transparent
- Fair
- Honest
- Consistent
- Accessible
- Personalised
- Timely

This policy is consistent with good admissions practice in higher education, as defined in the Quality Assurance Agency’s UK Quality Code of Practice for Higher Education* and those identified by S.P.A (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions)

* UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education
2. Equality and Diversity
Schumacher College follows the Equality and Diversity Policy set, but not limited by, the University of Plymouth. A Copy of this Policy can be found online at: https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/2/2333/Equality_and_Diversity_Policy-2.pdf
To request the Equality and Diversity Policy in an alternative format please contact Plymouth University Equality and Diversity Unit on 01752 582060 or email: equality@plymouth.ac.uk.

Admissions Accessibility
Schumacher College receives applications electronically or by post. To support all applicants, the application is available to download as a editable PDF file. (https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/postgraduate-courses/making-an-application)
Alternative print copies of this application can be provided on request by e-mailing: postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk.

Website Accessibility
The Schumacher College website can be viewed on a range of different screen sizes and the size of text can be changed to suit different people. We have also included a search facility, to help people find information more easily.

We adhere to the spirit of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/) and recognise these guidelines as the International benchmark for building accessible websites.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines explain how to make websites more accessible for people with disabilities. Conformity to these guidelines also makes websites more user friendly for all users.

Further information on our website accessibility can be found at: https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/accessibility

Interview process
Reasonable adjustments may be considered for all applicants. Interviews are arranged at mutually convenient times, either in person, via Skype or Telephone. Where an applicant has further support needs these will be addressed with the support of Plymouth University Disability Assist.
Tuition Fees Bursary
Schumacher College offers a bursary to assist applicants with potential, but in financial need to participate in our Masters Programme. The bursary is only available to Full-Time Masters students and is applied as a reduction in the tuition fees due on or before Registration.

Further information about the bursary process can be found at: https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/postgraduate-courses/schumacher-college-postgraduate-bursary-fund

Bursary students who withdraw from their studies will be liable to pay back all or some of their bursary commensurate for the duration of study undertaken, in accordance with Schumacher College Tuition Fee Policy for Withdrawn and Interrupted Post Graduate Taught Students.

Important: Financial Considerations

Schumacher College does not have provision for student hardship funding, such as support for living costs.

All applicants should ensure they have sufficient funds to cover tuition fees, food fees, and living costs for the full duration of their course. Given the intensive and immersive nature of the programme UK/EU students are unlikely to be able to fit in employment for the duration of studies.

Tier 4 visa students are not permitted to work. This is because The Dartington Hall Trust, who sponsor Schumacher College students’ Tier 4 visas, is not a UK higher education institution, as defined by UK Visas and Immigration.

In addition, Tier 4 applicants should pay special attention to the financial requirements and duties imposed by the Tier 4 visa application process.

3. Roles and Responsibilities
The College is committed to providing a professional admissions operation in order to provide the best service to applicants.

The Head of College has overarching responsibility for operational decisions; including responsibility for setting the minimum and maximum number of students registered on each programme. The maximum number of students is clearly communicated on the Schumacher College website and within student offer letters.

Faculty Coordinators within the academic departments are individually involved in the admissions process; they are responsible alongside our accrediting body,
Plymouth University for agreeing the entry criteria and selection processes for their programme. Approved entry criteria and selection processes can be found within the Programme Specification in individual Programme Quality Handbooks available on our website.

**MA Ecological Design Thinking Quality Handbook**

**MSc Holistic Science Quality Handbook**

**MA Economics for Transition Quality Handbook**

Copies can also be requested by e-mailing: postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk

The Postgraduate Admissions team handles all admissions enquiries; signposting applicants to relevant information or putting prospective students in touch with Faculties to discuss individual programmes in further detail. The team is also responsible for ensuring both applications and enquiries are handled in a timely manner.

The Postgraduate Quality Coordinator is responsible for coordinating postgraduate admissions training for both Faculty and Administrative staff. At point of employment all new staff members will receive a copy of this policy, admissions processes, related policies and material within an Induction pack. Training will be provided on arrival at the College by the Faculty Coordinator for the programme concerned. Any amendments to this policy or process will be clearly communicated to all and updated training organised where necessary.

Individual faculties will normally consider individual applications for postgraduate taught programmes once the full application and supporting documentation have been received by the Postgraduate Admissions team. Faculties will review all information on your application, alongside the personal statement, reference and other relevant information.

**Responsibility of Applicants in the Admissions Process**

It is the responsibility of applicants to provide full and accurate information in an application and to notify the College of any changes or corrections to the original application.

By accepting an offer of admission, the applicant agrees to abide by the regulations of our accrediting body, Plymouth University. ([https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/academic-regulations](https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/academic-regulations)). Terms and Conditions will be communicated within the offer of admission letter.

If someone is found to have provided fraudulent documentation or inaccurate/incorrect information (including failing to provide information which may have affected a decision) in support of your College application or UK visa application any offer from the College will be invalid. The College employ the
services of UK NARIC who provide checks in relation to overseas Transcripts and Certificates. In order to verify authenticity of documentation, the College may make direct contact with the Awarding Body from which it was generated. Financial checks and immigration support for Tier 4 (general) student visa applications are conducted by Pennington’s Manches.

In light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. The College also reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have been satisfied will only be withdrawn with the applicant’s consent.

The College reserves the right to exclude any applicant who is found to have been aggressive or abusive to College staff, representatives or fellow students during the application process.

4. Communication of Information and Support to Prospective Students

All information concerning the postgraduate programmes including admissions criteria and the admissions process is published on Schumacher College website, along with a copy of this policy.

Applicants who have any support requirements are encouraged to disclose to the College in order that they may be supported through both through the admissions process, acceptance of a place on the programme (if offered), together with access to ongoing support. If applicants have any concerns about disclosure they are encouraged to contact DisabilityASSIST at Plymouth University or to speak with the Postgraduate Admissions team at Schumacher College. All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence and no record made of an initial call.

Information published on our website includes:

- The current Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook.
- The current Postgraduate Quality Handbook (which includes the Programme Specification and Definitive Module Records.)
- The Student College and University Handbook (which includes links to Plymouth University regulations)
- A selection of student profiles.
- Resources (including audio, video archive talks and sample dissertations)
- Staff profiles
- International (including Tier 4) student support.
- Support services (including information about disability support provision).
- Accommodation
5. The Admissions Process

Please note: Entry to Schumacher College is competitive and due to the nature of small group learning offered by the College not every applicant will receive an offer of a place. Where candidates are unsuccessful, feedback is available on request. Please see Feedback, Complaints and Appeals for further information.

There are a maximum of 17 places on each programme. Applications to the full Masters Programme are given priority over those applying for the PG Certificate; in order to maintain the cohort and learning community.

**Upon receipt of supporting documentation:**

Once we have received an application the Postgraduate Administrator e-mails the applicant to confirm safe arrival, to explain next procedures and discuss any supporting documentation still required.

**Once the full application and supporting documentation is received**

- The application will be passed forward to relevant faculty staff for review; *where possible* 2 members of Faculty are involved in the process at each level.

- All applications are reviewed using a points based Application Assessment Form. Applications are assessed on previous academic experience, or equivalent experience; and include an assessment of your understanding of the programme to which you are applying; including the Schumacher College approach to learning; a review of your references and strength of your supporting statement.

Each element of the application is scored out of 10, using standard assessment criteria. The maximum score available is 60 points.

- **If the applicant scores 40 points or above, with no less than 8 for each element relating to a) Previous Academic attainment or b) Academic or professional background, the applicant will be offered an interview by faculty staff. The faculty staff member will make contact with the applicant directly to organise a mutually convenient time for interview; either in person, or by Skype. Interviews will be conducted by 2 staff members *where possible.***
If the applicant scores *less than* 40 points they will not be invited to interview. In this case applicants will receive the result within **5 working days** of the Faculty decision. All letters will be sent via e-mail as PDF attachments. If you require a hard copy of the letter, please e-mail: postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk. Information about how to appeal the decision will be provided.

- The applicant will receive a decision regarding the progress of their application within 3 weeks of the Postgraduate Administrators confirmed receipt of their full application. They will either be offered an interview, or will be informed that the faculty does not wish to take their application further. Information will be provided about how to appeal the decision.

**Interview**

Students invited to interview will be contacted directly by the Programme Coordinator or a member of the Faculty to which the application has been made. You may be asked to come to the College for an interview, or to attend a telephone or Skype interview if you are not geographically well placed to come to the College. Staff will suggest a time and date; however this is not fixed and a further time and date *may* be negotiated to support your attendance.

Where possible, interviews are conducted by 2 members of Faculty. The interview format is that of a two way conversation; in which staff will ask a standard set of questions and a conversation develop around these. Staff will be open to answering any of your queries.

Interviews will involve questions around your understanding of your academic strengths and weaknesses, subjects you enjoy/or not. The experience you bring to the programme, learning styles - you do or don’t enjoy, why you have chosen the College, your main reasons for wanting to take the programme, and how you hope to apply your learning. Staff may also wish to discuss aspects of your application form.

**Following Interview**

A formal decision will be communicated directly to the applicant by the Postgraduate Admissions Administrator via e-mail; unless an alternative format has been requested. Where a candidate has applied for one programme and is not successful, the application may be considered by an alternative programme at the College.

The Postgraduate Administrator will send one of the following letters depending on the decision of faculty staff 1) A Letter of Support. 2) A Conditional Offer Letter 3) An Unconditional Offer Letter 4) A Rejection Letter.

1) **A Letter of Support** – For those applicants to whom Faculty would like to offer a place but who do not hold the funds to take up an offer.
This letter confirms that Schumacher College would like to make an offer to the applicant and encourages potential funders/funding bodies to support the student. These letters can be tailored to meet the requirements of specific funding bodies if necessary. Letters of Support are also used by applicants applying to the Chevening scholarship programme. The College will keep in regular contact with those in receipt of these letters to provide support whilst funding is sought and secured, and to keep applicants updated on course places available.

Once applicants have secured the bulk of the funds necessary, they may be invited to apply to the College Tuition Fees Bursary fund. Once full funds are secure and if places remain available on the course we will provide your offer of a place (conditional or unconditional) and request you pay your deposit.

Please note: Letters of Support provided in the 2016-17 academic year and will remain valid until 1st September 2017. A further letter of support can be provided for 1 more academic year but must be requested by e-mailing: postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk. A further letter of support is not guaranteed and you may be asked to make a renewed application for a later academic year.

2) **A Conditional Offer letter** (Specific to Tier 4 or Home/EU applicants)
   A Conditional Offer letter will clearly outline the conditions in full.

3) **An Unconditional Offer letter** (Specific to Tier 4 or Home/EU applicants)
4) **A Rejection letter** (which includes information about how and when to appeal)
   Applicants will receive the result within 5 working days of the Faculty decision.

Where a programme is full, this will be communicated to all applicants on the Postgraduate pages of the Schumacher College website

Once a programme is full, Faculty may offer a place on a Reserve List for entry in September 2017. A place on the Reserve list will be offered in place of a conditional or unconditional offer; any conditions necessary to take up a place will be noted in a confirmation of Reserve List place letter. The Reserve List will remain open until September 1st 2017. Applicants may withdraw from this Reserve List at any time. Where a place becomes available on the programme, the admissions team will e-mail a student on the Reserve List to see if a place is still of interest; prior to sending out an offer letter.

All letters will be sent via e-mail as PDF attachments. If you require a hard copy of the letter, please e-mail: postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk.
Where applicants need a Tier 4 Visa to study at the College, the appropriate offer letter will be sent out to them, containing details on how to obtain their **Confirmation of Acceptance for Study** (CAS) number from the College and what academic documents they will need to apply for their visa.

Where International Applicants have accepted a place on a Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert), they may be required to obtain a Short Term Study Visa. The Postgraduate Administrator will advise the applicant to check UKVI requirements on the UK Government website for short term study in the UK here: [https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa](https://www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa). Where a short term study visa is necessary, the Postgraduate Administrator will provide successful applicants with a hard copy letter detailing the College Tier 4 sponsorship information, confirming course dates and fee payments received from the applicant. The hard copy of this letter needs to be carried, along with other documentary evidence required so that it may be viewed by the Immigration staff upon arrival and entry into the United Kingdom.

**Sending an Offer Letter:**

An offer letter, whether conditional or unconditional, will be made in good faith taking into account information as supplied by the applicant and/or referee at the time of the application. In some circumstances, an offer may be conditional upon non-academic requirements e.g. police checks which are deemed satisfactory.

**a. Accepting An Offer**

**To accept and secure a place**

Applicants offered a place on a **taught postgraduate programme** will be asked to pay a non-refundable deposit to secure a place on the programme. We ask that applicants **do not pay a deposit** until they are sure they can afford the full tuition fees, food fees and all costs associated with their chosen course.

The Postgraduate Administrator will calculate the date for payment of a £1500.00 non-refundable deposit.

The deadline for payment of the deposit will normally be 4 weeks from the date of the offer letter. An earlier deadline for payment of the deposit may be given in cases where your application is being handled after the closing date. The date chosen will be relative to the time left prior to the course start, and will depend on whether the student needs sponsorship to enter the UK.

The Deposit (£1500) will be off-set against the remaining tuition fees due for your programme of study.
If you change your mind within 14 calendar days of the money leaving your account, you may request a full refund. After the 14 calendar day period (on day 15) of the money leaving your account, the deposit will not be refunded, but you will not be liable for further tuition fees.

After the 14 calendar days of the deposit leaving your account (where the deposit will not be refunded) any further tuition or residential fees paid by you prior to Registration on the course will be refunded in full in the event you withdraw from the programme prior to Registration.

In the unlikely event that the programme does not recruit sufficient numbers to run in the 2017 Academic year, the college will notify students via e-mail by 3rd June 2017. If this situation were to occur we would offer you an alternative course, where appropriate, or support you in making alternative arrangements. In the event your programme was suspended or closed and you chose to withdraw your place at the College, the deposit and any further tuition fees, or residential fees paid prior to the 3rd June would be refunded in full.

**DEPOSIT**

This deposit must be paid by the applicant in order to secure their place on the course.

The following documents will be sent out with any offer letter:

- Postgraduate Agreement for Full-Time or Part-Time Study for the appropriate year of application
- Food and Accommodation Policy for Postgraduate Students (for appropriate programme); or Food Only Policy for Non Residential students.
- Copy of document ‘How to Make Payments to Schumacher College’

A place on the course will be secured once the deposit has been received and the signed Postgraduate Agreement has been returned in time to meet the deadline. The Postgraduate Administrator will e-mail to confirm safe receipt.

Where a Letter of Support has been sent, the Postgraduate Administrator will continue communication with the applicant regarding funding position. Once the applicant is able to confirm that they have funding in place a Conditional/Unconditional Offer letter will be provided. Proof of funding may be sought if necessary.
Following receipt of the postgraduate agreement & deposit

The Postgraduate Administrator will:

- Continue to communicate with the applicant and where they require a Tier 4 visa, to send further details regarding responsibilities and processes.
- Send out a Disability Disclosure Form with further information to encourage early disclosure to the College.
- Organise access to the College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) allowing students to make contact with each other prior to the start of the course.
- Send out pre-course reading lists
- Send out further information concerning Registration and Induction week.
- Send out course Handbooks (usually early August)

Deferred places

If a conditional or unconditional offer is made and the student chooses to defer their place it is the responsibility of the student to make contact with the College during the next admissions cycle (between September 2016 and 31st March 2017) to confirm an intention to take up the offer of a place in September 2017.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they make themselves aware of any Programme changes or developments. These will be communicated on the Schumacher College website under the individual programme pages. Students who defer and confirm that they wish to return will be asked to attend a meeting (via Skype, or in person, as appropriate) to ensure that any changes are clearly communicated and discussed.

Bursary Applications

All bursary applications are dealt with separately from the main programme applications.

The Postgraduate Administrator (PGA) carries out the following tasks following receipt of a bursary application

- Confirm receipt with applicant
- At agreed dates, arrange Bursary Panel Meeting with Head of College (where possible) Faculty representatives and members of the Postgraduate Department (ensuring that there are at least 3 people present at the panel)

The Bursary panel will consider each individual application in relation to the published criteria of Applicant Potential and Financial Need. Some applicants may be moved on to a reserve list to be considered at a second meeting.
The PGA will take minutes throughout the meeting to record discussions and decisions.

Following the meeting, the PGA will carry out the following tasks:

- Confirm all panel decisions with each applicant via email and request each applicant to send written confirmation of their acceptance, together with confirmation that they have the remaining tuition fees in place.
- Upon receipt of this written confirmation from the applicant, the PGA will send out a Formal Bursary Acceptance form detailing final tuition fees due less the College Tuition Fees Bursary Award amount.

A second or third bursary panel meeting may be held where necessary to assign any remaining bursary money following later applications

**Please note**: Bursary students who withdraw from their studies will be liable to pay back all or some of their bursary commensurate for the duration of study undertaken in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy for Withdrawn and Interrupted Post Graduate Taught Students.

**NOTES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CONCERNING ADMISSION**

To meet our responsibilities as a sponsor of Tier 4 students, Schumacher College undertakes academic checks on submitted documents and consults with a third party organisation (NARIC) in order to verify degree certificates and transcripts.

Where there are queries or concerns about any aspect of a Tier 4 related admissions documents, details or procedure, we may share your information with our appointed Immigration lawyers. (Currently: Penningtons Manches, 125 Wood Street, London, EC2V 7AW)

**APPLICATIONS AND DEADLINES**

If there are spaces available applications can be made up to the start of the programme. After the closing date, updated information on spaces available will be communicated on the postgraduate pages of the Schumacher College website and students advised to check with postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk. In deciding when to submit an application applicants should take into account factors such as securing accommodation and, if appropriate, applying for funding.
Conditional/Unconditional Offer deadlines

UK/EU passport holders

For programmes that have the standard entry date in September all conditions of offers must be met in full by 1st August to guarantee a place for entry in the year of application.

If conditions are met after this point we will review the cohort numbers and either offer you a place for the current academic year or may be able to confirm a deferred place.

Tier 4 visa students

For programmes that have the standard entry date in September all conditions of offers must be met in full by 1st June to guarantee a place for entry in the year of application. This is an earlier deadline than UK/EU passport holders as the progressing of Tier 4 student Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies commences on 5th June 2017.

If conditions are met after this point we will review the status of your Tier 4 documentation, financial evidence necessary for a Tier 4 visa, and discuss with you the possibility of gaining a visa application in time to commence the programme. Also taken in to consideration will be the overall cohort numbers. We will either offer you a place for the current academic year or may be able to confirm a deferred place for entry in September 2018.

It is particularly important for applicants who require a visa to study to allow sufficient time for both the application and visa process. To help you in your considerations, a typical length of time from receipt of your application (and all supporting documentation), to notification of a decision if progressed to interview, is 5-6 weeks. Visa processing times and services vary from country to country; with some countries offering Priority services to expedite the visa process, at an increased cost. For approximate visa processing times the home office tool located at https://visaprocessingtimes.homeoffice.gov.uk/ could be helpful.

Further information including advisory deadlines can be found on the relevant Faculty Postgraduate Admissions page.

Acceptance of Accredited Prior Learning (APL)

Accredited Prior Learning (APL), Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning (APCL) are not accepted by the College toward, or in place of any modules.

APL is the generic term for the accreditation of prior learning, whether the result of a formal course or learning through experience. APCL is APL based on certified (or certificated) learning - a formal course at another university or in another context.
APEL is APL based on experiential learning - learning achieved through experience, rather than on a formal course.

6. **Assessment of Prospective Students**

The setting and maintenance of Academic Standards is shared between Schumacher College (the Provider) and the University of Plymouth (The Awarding Body).

**a. Setting and Monitoring Admission Criteria**

Both Plymouth University and the Faculty Programme Coordinator at Schumacher College hold responsibility for setting the admission criteria for any Taught Masters Programme run by Schumacher College and accredited by Plymouth University.

Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policies are formalised within the Programme Development, Design and Approval processes and are considered under Programme approval.

The Monitoring of admissions is the joint responsibility of the Head of College, the Postgraduate Quality Coordinator and the Programme Coordinator. The criteria noted within this policy will be reviewed annually at a Postgraduate Quality Committee meeting.

An interim review may be held in light of changing legislation, statutory duties, or changes to best practice.

**b. The Entry Criteria**

**General academic entry requirements**

Whilst we will normally consider a wide range of subjects as appropriate for entry to our programmes, applicants are advised to check individual programme requirements for further information. These are available on the individual programme pages on the Schumacher College website.

- **MA Ecological Design Thinking**
- **MSc Holistic Science**
- **MA Economics for Transition**

International qualifications will be considered and evaluated by referring to independently published guides recognised within the United Kingdom higher education sector. We currently review all International Qualifications using UK NARIC; we check whether your University is recognised by NARIC and review the equivalence of qualification levels against those in the UK.
Other criteria

In addition to academic qualifications, when selecting candidates we will also consider whether an applicant is suitably academically motivated to complete their chosen programme of study, and whether the provision will challenge and benefit the individual.

Schumacher College has a community-based approach to learning drawing on 90 years of progressive education at Dartington where the emphasis is on ‘whole person learning’, ‘peer to peer learning’, and ‘learning by doing’. Applicants to the programme should be willing to actively engage with community living and working; whether living on campus or off-site. Information about the Schumacher College approach to Learning can be found the Schumacher College website: https://www.schumachercollege.org.uk/courses/postgraduate-courses/our-approach-to-postgraduate-learning.

In our holistic assessment of an application, we will take into account information provided within the personal statement and reference, and will consider academic ability, motivation, experience and self-discipline. We will also consider relevant interests outside of studies such as work or voluntary experience.

Schumacher College will take into account compliancy requirements in regard to external legislation (such as the UKVI policy) when reviewing your application.

Schumacher College reserves the right not to consider an applicant for entry if the entrant is or has previously been in debt with the Dartington Hall Trust and/or Schumacher College, has previously been withdrawn from the College on Academic grounds, has submitted fraudulent documentation or inaccurate/incorrect information to the College previously.

Whilst we do not routinely use contextual information to inform our decision making, there may be occasions where the applicant and/or their referee asks us to take account of certain contextual factors which may have affected performance, and to consider this in making an offer.

Evidence of contextual factors will not necessarily mean that preference will be given to candidates, as each case will be considered on its individual merits. However, in cases where there is clear evidence that contextual factors have affected performance and achievement, and where the applicant is able to demonstrate motivation and potential to achieve, the College will consider this as part of its holistic assessment of the application.
**Competence in English Language**

Students must be able to converse in English to a proficient level. All applicants who do not hold a GCSE (Grade C or above) in English Language, must provide evidence of their English language ability.

**The College entry standards for English language are as follows:**
IELTS Academic (B2 level) achieving 6.5 overall with minimum 5.5 for each component: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

* Tier 4 students must take the UKVI IELTS academic test (further information below).

**EU Applicants**

EU applicants may provide an alternative test taken within the last 2 years; Pearson PTE Academic is currently accepted. In exceptional circumstances where an EU applicant can easily demonstrate a good command of both spoken and written English Language, academic discretion may be applied. The College may require further written or other evidence to support their final decision.

**International Applicants**

**Tier 4 (General)** must submit a certificate to prove they have met the standard required by UK Visas and Immigration. This is currently set at Level B2 (CEFR) and the only accepted proof is a UKVI IELTS Academic taken at an UKVI approved provider. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-applying-for-uk-visa-approved-english-language-tests)

To be exempt from this SELT requirement, Tier 4 applicants would need to have obtained a qualification equivalent to a UK degree in a majority English-speaking country as recognised by the UK. Further information can be found here: [https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english](https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english)

c. **Record keeping duties**

Schumacher College will keep admissions documentation for all students who enrol/register at the College for the duration of their studies and for six years following completion.

Documentation relating to unsuccessful applicants will be retained for a minimum of six months. Within six-to-twelve months of receiving an unsuccessful decision all documentation in relation to your application will be confidentially destroyed / deleted.

Documentation relating to applicants offered a place who then decline, withdraw or fail to enroll, will be held for a minimum of six months. All documentation will be confidentially destroyed/deleted within twelve months of an applicant declining, withdrawing or in the event of non-enrolment.
Where a successful applicant confirms they wish to defer the offer of a place and this is agreed by the Faculty Coordinator for the programme concerned, files will be held securely until registration the following year. If the applicant withdraws or fails to enroll, all documentation will be held for a minimum of six months. All documentation will be confidentially destroyed/deleted within twelve months of an applicant declining, withdrawing or in the event of non-enrolment.

7. Enrolment at Schumacher College

a. International Students who require a Tier 4 Visa to study at the College

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)

A CAS is a unique reference number which is assigned and used by the UK Visas and Immigration service. CAS numbers will link to electronic information about the individual student and their course of study as provided by the College. Every student will have a unique CAS number which is linked directly to their information.

Schumacher College generates the CAS via the UK Visas and Immigration Sponsor Management System.

A CAS number will be assigned once:

- All admissions criteria have been met and the applicant has received an unconditional offer.
- A non-refundable deposit of £1,500 has been received and 14 calendar days have elapsed.
- We are satisfied that the applicant has met UK Visa and Immigration requirements with respect to evidence of funding/finance **
- We have received UKVI IELTS Academic scores that the applicant has met the minimum standard of English language proficiency set by UK Visas and Immigration.

** It is college policy to forward all financial information to an Immigration Lawyer for checking prior to the College assigning a CAS.

A visa application can only be made in the 3 months prior to a students planned start date.

For programmes commencing in September, students will be contacted to provide financial evidence from June 1st and invited to join a secure website (Huddle) on which to share the documentation to be reviewed by the Immigration team.
For programmes commencing in January, students will be contacted to provide financial evidence from October 1st and are invited to join a secure website (Huddle) on which to share the documentation to be reviewed by the Immigration team.

All financial information shared on Huddle will be deleted by Schumacher College upon evidence of a successful visa application and **within 4 weeks of Registration at the College**.

Where a Tier 4 applicant withdraws from the Tier 4 process at the point financial evidence has been submitted to Huddle, it will be **deleted as soon as possible** and no later than 4 weeks of a notice to withdraw.

In order to apply for a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa applicants should hold original certificates and transcripts, along with other documents necessary for visa application appointments. It is important that applicants request the return of any original documentation sent to the College as part of the admission process; including certified and notarised translations that meet UKVI requirements. **All requests should be made at point of application or as soon as possible thereafter.**

b. **Enrolment Information**

All students due to enrol at the College will normally receive an invitation to join the Schumacher College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) upon payment of a non-refundable deposit to secure their place. Enrolment information is uploaded to this site.

Students will be encouraged to disclose any support needs again at this point so that support can be put in place as soon as possible and preferably before the start of term.

Additionally enrolment forms and further information about arrival is sent 2 months prior to registration; unless the application has been received after the deadline, in which case they will be forwarded as soon as possible. Digital copies of course handbooks for the new academic year are e-mailed and available on the Schumacher College website and VLE prior to Registration; when a hard copy will be provided.

Tier 4 students receive additional enrolment information relating to visa requirements on entry to the UK; including details of where to collect Biometrics cards and/or register with the Police. Biometrics cards must be produced as soon possible after arrival to Schumacher College as they are necessary to complete formal Registration. A visa to remain in the UK will expire unless the Biometrics card is collected and in this instance Schumacher College would stop sponsoring the student and the visa would be curtailed.
All students enrolling at Schumacher College will be asked to bring their passport and any documentation that we have requested in advance in order to complete their registration successfully.

Passports, Biometrics cards and any outstanding documentation will be copied upon Registration or as soon as possible thereafter and whether or not they have been requested before.

c. Effective Induction and Integration

Once students have access to the VLE, the site allows students to upload a profile and begin interacting with other students and accessing pre-course information.

Induction timetables are sent out to students at least 1 month prior to arrival. The first Induction week includes an introduction to College operations; including, but not limited to work groups, use of the library, student areas, college grounds, the wider Dartington estate, and facilities. It also includes a welcome supper, morning meetings and celebrations where students are formally welcomed by the wider College community.

A second Academic Induction week is run independently by each Faculty but will include an introduction to the College by the Postgraduate Quality Coordinator (PQC) covering aspects such as Plymouth University responsibilities, academic regulations and College policies, the course handbooks and the QAA. The PQC will outline responsibilities of student representatives; asking each cohort to choose one or two representatives for each course prior to the first Postgraduate Programmes Group meeting of the year.

A later induction is organised by the programme Link Tutor(s) at Plymouth University where students are introduced to the Plymouth campus and available facilities.

An introduction to the English Language support tutor is arranged for students who request support in this area.

8. Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

Entry to Schumacher College is competitive and due to the nature of small group learning offered by the College not every applicant will receive an offer of a place. Where candidates are unsuccessful, feedback is available on request. For feedback please e-mail: postgraduateadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk
Feedback policy

We are happy to provide feedback on an individual basis in response to receiving a formal request (written or emailed) from the applicant within six weeks of the decision being made. For identification purposes we ask that you provide the following information in your request:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Programme name applied for

Feedback will only be given in written format (not over the telephone or in person) within eight weeks of receipt of the request.

In line with our Data Protection policy we will not be able to provide feedback to anyone other than the applicant unless the applicant has given specific written permission for us to do so. (See policy: communication, data protection and your application). The feedback will be sent to the email address the applicant has provided on their application form. Therefore please be sure to inform the Admissions Office of any changes.

ADMISSIONS APPEALS

We do not accept appeals on academic judgements however, if following feedback an applicant wishes to make an appeal on procedural grounds they should e-mail: postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk.

The applicant should submit a formal request clearly outlining the procedural grounds on which they wish to appeal (written or emailed); this must be received within four weeks of the receipt of feedback. The College will respond to all appeals within eight weeks of receipt.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact us at:

Postgraduate Admissions
Schumacher College
The Old Postern
Dartington
Devon
TQ9 6EA
Tel: 01803 847212 (UK callers)
+44(0) 1803 847212 (From outside the UK).

Postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk
9. Implementation, Dissemination, Monitoring & Review
Responsibility for oversight of and changes to our Postgraduate Admissions Policy rests with the Postgraduate Quality Committee. It is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Quality Coordinator to disseminate any updated policies, training or information to the Programme Coordinator of each faculty for implementation. It is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Quality Coordinator to organise an Annual Review of the documentation and to bring together relevant data, student feedback and monitoring reports as part of that review process.
It is the responsibility of the Programme Coordinators to alert the Head of College to new staff within their team who will require admissions training.
It is the responsibility of the Head of College to build this training into staff Induction training plans.

10. Related Policies
The Postgraduate Admissions Policy is underpinned by a number of other policy statements offering specific guidance on aspects of the process or for specific kinds of applicant:

- Communication, data protection and your application
- Plymouth University Data Protection
- Dartington Trust Data Protection
- Equality and Diversity
- Interview policy
- Applicants Declaring a Criminal Conviction
- Religious observance

Changes to your Programme or this document.
The College is continuously developing, refining and improving its services and programmes, and introducing new options, programmes or courses, for the benefit of its students. This may be to reflect student feedback or matters of academic judgement or expertise, to accommodate changes or developments in learning theory or practice or teaching practices or facilities, or to keep programmes, practices and areas of study up-to-date. This may lead to changes in the terms, content or delivery of the College programmes from those set out in the programme handbooks or website.
If you are offered a place and the College decides to make a significant change to your programme of study, it will consult you in advance on the change, except where the change is required for regulatory or legal reasons, or on account of events beyond the College’s control, in which case the College will notify you of this as soon as possible and try to minimise any adverse impact on you.
The College may change this document from time to time to comply with any legal or regulatory requirements. If the College is required to make significant changes to this document or process, the College will notify you of this as soon as possible.
In the unlikely event that the programme does not recruit sufficient numbers to run in the 2017-18 Academic year students will be notified by Friday 2nd June 2017. If this situation were to occur students could:

1) withdraw from the College without any liability for fees, and have their deposit refunded or

2) transfer to another programme offered by the College, subject to suitable qualifications, availability of places and the Programme Coordinator's approval. Another interview will be required in this instance.

If in these circumstances the student wishes to withdraw from the College and to enroll on a programme at a different institution, the College shall use its reasonable endeavors to assist the student.

**Communication, data protection and your application**

In accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998 we must protect the information you disclose on any aspect of your application. In line with this legislation we are unable to discuss any aspect of your application with a third party unless we receive confirmation from you in writing stating your programme applied for, date of birth, details of the person(s) you wish to allow this privilege and a satisfactory reason why this is required. Where we receive this request we will provide you with a number to share with the Third Party concerned; this number must be quoted in all communication with the College in order to access agreed information. This does not mean that we will refuse to accept information from a third party with reference to your application but we will not disclose information without your permission.

Once we have received confirmation from the applicant confirming the third party we will be able to discuss their application with them and give information on the following:

- Application offer
- Application decision
- Reason for unsuccessful decision
- Confirmation of letters/emails sent

**Change of applicant's personal details by a third party**

Schumacher College will not share applicants’ personal details with third parties. Details could include the applicants’ address or telephone number, date of birth or institution of study. If the third party believes these details are wrong, the College will not accept changes from anyone other than the applicant in writing.

**Third party definition**

A third party could be any of the following people:
• Tutor/Lecturer
• Careers adviser
• Parent/Guardian
• Friend
• Family member
• Agent assisting with your application

All third parties must provide the reference number given to the student by the Postgraduate Admissions Team. If they cannot provide the number we will not be able to discuss the application at that time.

Receipt of an application from a contracted Agent is deemed as confirmation of authorisation.

Criminal Convictions

All applicants to our programmes are asked to declare whether or not they have a relevant criminal conviction that is not 'spent'.

Please note that the declaration of a criminal conviction does not mean an applicant is automatically ineligible for a programme.

Please read the guidance notes in full below. If you have any queries these should be addressed to the Postgraduate Administration Staff postgradadmin@schumachercollege.org.uk.

Guidance Notes – Criminal Convictions

It is important that you read these in conjunction with your application form. Please read the following carefully.

The College’s main concerns when considering applicants with criminal convictions are to:

• minimise risk to the safety and well-being of staff, students, visitors, volunteers and others using our services or facilities
• protect Dartington Trust [Schumacher College’s] property
• protect Dartington Trust [Schumacher College’s] reputation

To help reduce the risk of harm or injury to our students and staff caused by the criminal behaviour of other students, we must know about any relevant\(^1\) unspent criminal convictions that an applicant has.

\(^1\) At this stage of the application process ‘relevant’ criminal offences include convictions, cautions, admonitions, reprimands, final warnings, bind over orders or similar involving one or more of those listed below:

• Any kind of violence including (but not limited to) threatening behaviour, offences concerning the intention to harm, or offences which resulted in actual
bodily harm.

- Offences listed in the Sex Offences Act 2003.
- The unlawful supply of controlled drugs or substances where the convictions concern commercial drug dealing or trafficking.
- Offences involving firearms.
- Offences involving arson.
- Warnings, penalty notices for disorder (PNDs), anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) or violent offender orders (VOOs) are not classed as convictions for the purpose of this section, unless you have contested a PND or breached the terms of an ASBO or VOO and this has resulted in a criminal conviction.

If you tick the box on our application form declaring that you have a criminal conviction you will not be automatically excluded from the application process.

Applicants with unspent convictions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**What is a spent conviction?**

A spent conviction is a conviction which, under the terms of Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, can be effectively ignored after a specified amount of time. The amount of time for rehabilitation depends on the sentence imposed, not on the offence. The more serious the conviction, the longer the period of rehabilitation. For example, if you have received a prison sentence of more than four years, the conviction will never become spent, but cautions become spent immediately (apart from conditional cautions which will become spent after three months).

The Act aims to rehabilitate offenders by not making their past mistakes affect the rest of their lives if they have been on the right side of the law for some time.

For details of the length of time before a conviction becomes spent, the following website provides further information:
https://www.nacro.org.uk/resettlement-advice-service/support-for-individuals/jobs-and-volunteering/discharging-criminal-records-to-employers/

Unless applying for particular types of work, a person who has spent convictions and cautions does not have to disclose them to prospective employers, and employers cannot refuse to employ someone on the basis of spent convictions.

**A conviction that is not spent.**

It is against the law not to share a conviction that is not spent. You will not be automatically excluded from the application process.

Any admissions decision relating to the disclosure of criminal convictions will be taken in the light of a risk assessment against these criteria.1

In addition, Schumacher College will comply with current and future legislation and aims to promote good practice in all aspects of College practice.
Supporting Professionalism in Admissions provide further background and guidance via [http://www.spa.ac.uk/good-practice/criminal-convictions.html](http://www.spa.ac.uk/good-practice/criminal-convictions.html)

This assessment is separate to and will not influence the decision as to whether an applicant is academically suitable for a programme.

**Process**

Applicants for places on a postgraduate programme will be asked to declare any relevant criminal convictions on the Schumacher College application form.

Convictions that are spent (as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) are not considered to be relevant and should not be revealed.

Where an applicant chooses to voluntarily bring additional information about convictions or ongoing investigations to our notice, the College reserves the right to consider whether admission carries any risks relating to the criteria set out above.

If an offer of a place is recommended, we will then ask the applicant to provide further details of the nature of the offence(s) in order to assess whether an offer can be made (e.g., a pre-sentencing report and/or references). Failure to provide this information by the requested deadlines may mean we do not make an offer of a place.

The College reserves the right to invite applicants with a declared criminal conviction to interview, particularly if further information relating to the offence(s) is not forthcoming.

**Third Parties**

We may also need to contact third parties (for example, probation officers) regarding the offence(s). We will only contact third parties when we have gained the applicant’s written consent to do so. However, if we do not gain consent it may mean we are unable to make an offer of a place. If information is received from a third party (anonymous or otherwise) indicating that an applicant has an undeclared criminal conviction, the College will seek verification as appropriate. This may involve contacting the referees provided by the applicant and/or statutory bodies as appropriate. The applicant will also be notified that an allegation has been made against them, although we will protect the identity of the third party if known. If the information is proved to be correct and relevant, standard procedures for dealing with the cited offence(s) will be followed.

**Failure to Disclose**

Failure to answer questions on application forms or questions subsequently asked by the College accurately could lead to the withdrawal of any subsequent offer of a place, or to the termination of any subsequent registration.

**Ongoing Disclosure**

An applicant is also required to disclose details if he/she is convicted of an offence after an application has been submitted, but prior to registration with the College.
an applicant is convicted of an offence after registration with the College he/she should immediately notify the Head of Schumacher College.

Confidentiality
Any information relating to criminal convictions will only be seen by those who need to consider it as part of our admissions process or other Dartington Trust/College staff concerned with the initial and ongoing risk assessment in line with the criteria listed above. We will preserve the anonymity of applicants during these processes wherever possible, and will comply with Data Protection legislation at all times.

Decision Making
Decisions as to whether to offer a place following the declaration of a relevant Criminal conviction will be overseen directly by the Head of Schumacher College and Chief Operating Officer (C.O.O) of Dartington Trust.

The Head of College or C.O.O may nominate Admissions Staff to deal with straightforward cases.

Anonymised records of decisions made will be kept to act as case studies and facilitate consistent decision making.

1 Supporting Professionalism in Admissions provide further background and guidance via http://www.spa.ac.uk/good-practice/criminal-convictions.html

Schumacher College is part of The Dartington Hall Trust, a registered charity.
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