

Westminster Tutors



Admissions Policy

2023-2024

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1. Introduction & Process

The intent of the policy is to set out the college's policy towards admissions. It should be read in conjunction with the other college policies, specifically the *Curriculum Policy* and *SEND Policy*.

2. Aims of the Policy

1. To set out the college's admissions criteria, including academic and financial requirements
2. To detail our policy regarding the admission of those with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities and its compliance with the Equality Act 2010
3. To summarise the provision offered to different age groups and how that provision affects admissions
4. To provide details on the college's policy towards remote education
5. To set out the current policy regarding scholarships and bursaries
6. To clarify the process for complaints regarding the admissions policy

3. Equality Act & Admissions Criteria

As an independent school, Westminster Tutors can exercise greater discretion with respect to our admission arrangements than maintained schools and academies. Independent schools, for example, can offer places based on academic ability. Section 4 sets out those criteria at Westminster Tutors. However, it is important to note that the Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination by schools against pupils or potential pupils in relation to admissions based on 'protected characteristics,' and this applies to all schools, including independent schools. Section 5 sets out the college admissions policy regarding SEND students.

4. Admissions Process

Admissions at Westminster Tutors reflect the college's highly individualised and bespoke approach and are subject to amendment dependent on student circumstance. Nevertheless, this is the standard process for admissions:

- Enquiry to the college, at which point the potential student and their parents or carers will receive all the key information about the college (i.e., the college prospectus)
- Visit and interview with the Principal. The Principal conducts all interviews. The Principal will need to meet both the parents/carers and the fee-payer prior to an official offer of a place
- A formal offer of a place sent by email to parents/fee-payers, together with the financial and academic criteria required to enrol. Additional information is sent, including a registration form and references annexe for students over 18.

- Upon completion of the registration form (and annexe as applicable) and payment of registration fees, the college will begin its due diligence checks. This includes academic and safeguarding references, EAA paperwork, passports, and other documentation relating to identity. All the key information is added to an Admissions Register.
- Once this process is complete, including the receipt of references from the previous school, the Principal sends a formal confirmation of place email and other information such as timetables. Parents are also sent consent documents to complete, e.g., on data.
- The student will be given a college email address; all student-college correspondence occurs via this email.
- The student is sent the *Student Handbook*, and arrangement is made for a student induction, potentially with other students enrolling.
- At induction the student is taken through all the essential college information, including its Behaviour, Online Safety and Health & Safety policies. The student completes an induction form placed on the student file.
- The date of the student's first lesson is recorded alongside the induction date. The student is now an enrolled student.

5. Selection Criteria

i. Academic Criteria

Westminster Tutors is non-selective. This means that we can enrol students of any academic ability, including those yet to attain GCSEs. While the college adopts a flexible approach, and individual circumstances will always be considered, the following criteria are applied except in exceptional circumstances:

1. All students applying to enter the sixth form to study A-Levels should have a minimum of five GCSEs at a good pass grade (5 or above), including Maths and English.
2. Students who do not have a grade 5 in GCSE Maths or English may be able to begin their A-Level studies while completing these GCSEs. Workload and academic ability will both be factors in assessing this decision, which will be made by the Principal (see process).
3. The following GCSE minimum requirements are applied for the subjects listed. Minimum requirements for other subjects are available on request. Please see section six for exceptional circumstances.

A-Level Subject	GCSE Minimum Requirements
Maths	Grade 6 in Maths (Grade 7 advised)
Biology	Grade 6 in English, Grade 6 Biology/Combined Science (Grade 7 advised)
Chemistry	Grade 6 in Maths, Grade 6 in Chemistry/Combined Science (Grade 7 advised)
Physics	Grade 6 in Maths and Physics/Combined Science (Grades 7 advised)
English (Literature, Language or Lit & Lang)	Grade 6 in English Literature and English Language
History	Grade 6 in English Language and in History
Politics	Grade 6 in English Language
Geography	Grade 6 in Maths or English Language, and Grade 6 in Geography
Economics	Grade 6 in Maths
Business	Grade 6 in Maths
Psychology	Grade 5 in Maths and in English Language
Sociology	Grade 5 in Maths and in English Language
Philosophy, Religious Studies	Grade 6 in English Language
Modern Foreign Languages	Grade 7 in GCSE
Latin, Greek	Grade 6 in GCSE
Art	Grade 5 in Art

Students who do not achieve these grades will either be asked to retake the core subjects in November (English and Maths) or transfer to an alternative A-Level subject.

ii) Financial Criteria

It is a requirement that the Principal meets with the prospective fee-payer(s) at the initial interview.

The conditions of enrolment, including the need for a deposit or advance payment, are set out formally in the offer email

6. Exceptional Circumstances

The above list of minimum grades is based on a typical student who had received the usual access to reasonable quality schooling. Westminster Tutors prides itself on its ability to support students who have had issues with their prior education, and individual circumstances are always considered. Exceptional circumstances may be due to a variety of reasons, especially linked to those with SEND and/or mental health issues. Likewise, students returning to education may have reasons for omissions or lower previous performance. Examples of exceptional circumstances would be:

- A student with mental health issues who underperformed in exams due to stress, e.g. predicted an 8 and achieved a 5.
- A student who is returning to education after a break and only has 4 GCSEs, all at grades A and B (on the old scale) or 7+ on the new scale.
- A student with Specific Learning Difficulties that particularly affect their mathematical abilities, who achieved a 4 in Maths but wished to study Psychology at A-Level.

Individual circumstances will be discussed with the Principal at the interview stage.

Parents and students must manage their expectations regarding final A-Level grades when discussing admissions. The minimum grade criteria set out above are intended to reflect the increased challenges A-Levels pose. The college's approach is based on a duty of care not to enrol a student on an unsuitable course. While the college does not use statistical analysis to predict A-Level grades, applicants should know the statistical correlation between GCSE and A-Level grades. The following research is helpful as guidance on likely attainment and may be referred to by the Principal when giving advice on courses.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610077/Progression from GCSE to A level - Comparative Progression Analysis as a new approach to investigating inter-subject comparability.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/610077/Progression_from_GCSE_to_A_level_-_Comparative_Progression_Analysis_as_a_new_approach_to_investigating_inter-subject_comparability.pdf)

More specifically, as part of the admissions process, applicants will discuss with the Principal the implication of lower GCSE grades on careers and higher education aspiration, for instance university applications, and the minimum requirements some may have. Further guidance will be available from the college UCAS and Careers Advisor, Virginia Maguire, both before and after enrolment.

7. SEND Students

See *SEND Policy*

As per the college's SEND policy, the college does not discriminate against students with SEND, for instance, students with disabilities as described in the Equality Act 2010, and many students are admitted with SEND.

It is a fundamental requirement of the admissions process that parents and students disclose any diagnosed neurological or learning difference and mental or physical health condition. As the registration makes clear, this is 1) so that the college can assess if it can meet the need and 2) to assess how best to support the student.

This policy requires students with diagnosed SEND conditions to receive paid study skills and pastoral mentoring. Study skills sessions ensure that the college can meet individual needs and provide the necessary support.

More broadly, the college assesses the needs of all students at the admissions stage, and individually designed programmes are put into place for all students.

8. Remote Learning

See *Curriculum Policy*

The college policy is that all tuition should occur in person on-site. However, as outlined in the *SEND* and *Curriculum* policies, remote provision can be provided in exceptional circumstances, such as due to SEND. A fully remote provision would not typically be agreed upon as the sole provision for a student unless they could evidence that online tuition would meet their needs and requirements.

9. Scholarships & Bursaries

Bursaries may be awarded at the discretion of the Principal, on the basis of either academic excellence or a combination of academic potential and financial need.

10. Complaints

All admissions complaints should be written in writing and addressed to the college Principal, Sean Doherty and emailed to complaints@westminstertutors.co.uk.

These complains will be processed according to the college *Complaints Policy*.

11. End of Enrolment

When students leave Westminster Tutors, the end date of their enrolment and their subsequent destination will be added to the Admissions Register. This data will be stored in line with the college's Data Protection Policy.

12. International Students

At present, Westminster Tutors cannot accept non-UK/EU students who require a student visa to be issued by the college.

If the student is not a UK national, please consider the following crucial questions:

- Is the student from the EU permitted to study in the UK from January 2021?
- If the student is not from the EU, does s/he have a valid visa to reside and study in the UK, and are the conditions of that visa being met?
- Are parents/carers available in the UK to assume responsibility for under-18s? If not, an educational guardian is required to complete the registration form. It is a best practice that educational guardians are responsible adults over 25.
- What is the exact relationship between the guardian and the student? What checks can be made to verify the identity and relationship of the guardian?
- Who will be responsible for the payment of fees?
- Assess the student's educational background and ensure that s/he has a sufficient foundation to commence either GCSE or A-Level studies.
- Has the student taken an English Language GCSE/ IELTS test/ other certified assessment of linguistic competency? Assess linguistic competency for the chosen course of study.