

# **ORMONDE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION**

## **Admissions Policy and Procedures**

**February 2009**

## **Admission Policy**

**Ormonde College of Further Education operates a policy of selection and admission of students to full time courses that is, at all stages and in all ways, equitable, transparent and accountable and respects the rights and dignity of applicants.**

## **Applications Arrangements**

The process for gaining access to full-time courses at Ormonde College of Further Education (OCFE) consists of four sequential stages.

- Application
- Interview
- Selection and Notification
- Registration

## **Application**

OCFE produces an annual prospectus that contains details of closing dates for receipt of application and a detachable application form. Interviews will only be allocated on the basis of the receipt of a completed application form.

The application form requires the applicant to supply information that is required for the following reasons.

- To aid in the selection process
- To alert the college to any special requirements the applicant may have in order to complete the interview and/or participate in the course.
- To provide personal details required by the Department of Education and Science.

## **Entry Requirements**

With some exceptions, the minimum entry requirements for all courses are:

- A minimum of five grade 'D3's' in ordinary level subjects in the Leaving Certificate examination.
- Successful completion of an interview.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme link modules at the minimum pass grade (50 – 64%) are considered as equivalent to a D3 grade in a subject taken at Ordinary level in the Leaving Certificate. Applicants who have completed the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme should hold at least a minimum pass level (60 – 69%).

## **Exceptions**

The exception to the above are as follows:

- Prior work or academic experience that has provided competence and knowledge, either directly or in a related vocational field will be considered in the case of students who are over the age of eighteen (18) and who do not hold formal qualifications at Leaving Certificate level.
- Mature students (>23 years) may apply to all courses without formal qualifications. These applications will be evaluated on previous experience, references and/or testimonials as well as performance at the interview.
- Applicants to all of the Art programmes offered by OCFE are required to present a portfolio of their work at interview.
- Where applicants present with references or testimonials to support their application for a specific course.
- Applicants to the Beauty Therapy course are required to have a minimum of a grade D3 at ordinary level in Biology or Home Economics (Social and Scientific) at Leaving Certificate level.

## **Applicants with a country of origin other than Ireland**

Certificates of school completion and qualifications from other countries cannot be directly verified by the college. Students who present with qualifications from countries other than Ireland must have the authenticity, compatibility and level of their qualifications verified by the National Qualifications Authority. Offers of places may be made by the college contingent on the applicant being able to provide evidence of equivalency of their qualifications.

The language of instruction is English. Therefore an applicant may be required to demonstrate proficiency in the language as a condition of admission.

Students who do not speak English as their first language may be required to take an English test to determine whether they can benefit from the course.

## **Interviews**

Interviews for places on full-time courses are held in March, May and September of each academic year. Applicants are called for interview using a standard letter sent from the central administration office. The letter states the date, time and venue of the interview and outlines where applicable, what documentation applicants are required to bring.

Interview boards for all courses meet at the same time. To minimise disruption this is scheduled, where possible, when normal classes are not in progress. Interview boards receive a 'pack' giving details of the venue for the interview and a list of applicants from the central administration office a minimum of two days in advance of the interview day. This pack will include the completed application forms of the applicants, ordered according to the schedule of applicants and a supply of blank **Interview Evaluation Forms**.

Interview boards for each course are composed of two staff members, one of whom must be a member of the teaching staff associated with that course. As far as possible, the composition of the interview boards is kept consistent for all applicants in a particular academic year.

On the day of interview, clear signage directs applicants to the interview venue. Staff members are available to assist with queries and directions.

Applicants are interviewed according to interview criteria and the associated guidelines. Under this system, marks are allocated based on a number of pre-determined criteria.

These may include the following:

- Punctuality
- Presentation
- Documentation
- Entry requirements
- Knowledge of the course
- Career Plan

- Work Experience
- Personal achievements
- Leisure/Hobbies
- Attitude
- Communication skills

In order to allow specific course requirements to be considered, criteria may be added at the prior discretion of the interview board/course coordinator.

Interviewers are supplied with a sheet of sample questions to act as a guide to structuring the interview.

Each interview is normally approximately fifteen (15) minutes in duration. This may vary depending on whether applicants are required to present work or make a presentation.

Training for staff in conducting interviews will be considered under future professional training and development endeavours.

### **The Interview Evaluation Form (IEF)**

Prior to the interview, the interviewers (or the relevant course coordinator) agree a weighting to be applied to each of the criteria on the form. These weightings are written in the column marked 'weighting' opposite the relevant criterion. In order to allow the maximum percentage mark, the final total of all the numbers assigned to the weighting column should be 25. Weightings ranging from zero (0) to four (4) are advised. For example if an interview board considers a particular criterion to be of the utmost importance, they assign a weighting of 4.

Guidelines for assigning marks to each criterion have been developed.

At the end of each interview the interviewers complete the interview evaluation form in consultation. The name of the interviewee, names of interviewers, date, time and duration of the interview are recorded on the IEF.

The performance of the interviewee is evaluated by awarding marks based on a range of criteria. Marks are allocated for each of the criteria by ticking the relevant box on the IEF. (Some interviewers may prefer to write the actual number in the box). These allow marks ranging from a minimum of zero (0) to a maximum of four (4) to be awarded. A mark for the criterion is determined by multiplying the awarded mark by the weighting assigned prior to the interview. A total percentage mark is determined by adding all of the marks in the **SCORE** column. This represents the applicant's final score for the interview.

The completed Interview Evaluation Form is attached to the application form for each candidate.

### **Selection and Notification**

When all of the interviews have been completed, the interviewers rank-order the applicants according to their achieved percentage score for the interview. This is recorded on an **Interview Rank Order Form**. The final list, rank-ordered with the highest scoring candidate placed first, is returned to the central administration office at the end of each day of interviewing. All application forms and the attached IEF are returned to the office.

Applicants are notified in writing of the decision of the interview boards within two weeks of the interview. Applicants are notified of having being (a) **successful** (subject to fulfilling outstanding criteria such as successful completion of the leaving certificate), notified of having been (b) **unsuccessful** or (c) where deemed to be the case, the candidate may be requested to meet with the Guidance Counsellor or the Deputy Principal with a view to **referral** to a more suitable course offered by the college.

On notification of acceptance onto a course, students are also notified of a deadline for accepting the offer of a place and registering with the College.

A successful candidate is one who has achieved the required minimum entry requirements as previously published and has scored sufficiently high to allow them to be rank ordered on the list of accepted candidates for that course. This means that their score on the IEF has exceeded a previously agreed 'Refusal Cut Off Point'.

Applicants are offered places subject to the successful completion of examinations in the case where the interview is held prior to the publishing of examination results. The onus is on the applicant to supply the college with evidence of their examination results.

If an applicant is deemed to be successful but the achieved mark places them on the list outside of the maximum permitted places on the course, they will be retained on a waiting list. Places vacated by non-acceptance or attrition from the course will be filled by candidates on the waiting list according to the order in which they are placed on the list.

An unsuccessful candidate is one who does not fulfil the published basic entry requirements or one who scores less than a previously agreed 'Refusal Cut Off Point' on the IEF.

A **referral** is made to the Guidance Counsellor or the Deputy Principal where interviewers believe that the applicant fulfils basic entry requirements but where they have adjudged that the applicant may be better served by some other course available within the College.

### **Appeals**

Applicants who have been adjudged to have been unsuccessful in their application or who declines an offer of a course alternative to that for which they have originally applied, may appeal the decision of the interview panel. This procedure is initiated with a letter to the Deputy Principal. The letter should state the grounds on which the applicant wishes

to contest the decision of the panel. On receipt of the letter of appeal, it is the duty of the Deputy Principal to ascertain that all procedures for the interviewing of applicants were adhered to, to attain a copy of the relevant completed Interview Evaluation Form and to consult with both members of the original interview panel. The Deputy Principal may seek the assistance of the Principal in the matter at this stage. The Principal or Deputy Principal may seek a meeting with the appellant. The final decision in the matter will rest with the Principal and Deputy Principal.

## **Registration**

Successful applicants are required to formally register with the college. This process takes place at least a week in advance of the commencement of the course where possible.

OCFE pursues an ethos of mutual respect between individuals and strives to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning.

Registration requires the successful candidate to formally sign on as a student of the college. Successful applicants will be supplied with a copy of the *College Code of Good Practice*. Signing presumes an acceptance of the code of conduct expected of students of the college.

A timetable, commencement schedule and other relevant course information will be supplied to the student at this time. Students are expected to pay the Student Registration Fee in full on registration.

## **Grievance Procedure**

A student may appeal to the Board of Management against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of the college. Grievances relating to the students' college shall be

heard and appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

### **Data Protection**

Ormonde College of Further Education shall seek authorisation from applicants to allow the management and staff of Ormonde College to use the information provided on the application form for all bona fide college purposes. In return, the college undertakes that personal information on a student will not be disclosed to anyone other than relevant college staff or staff in County Kilkenny VEC or the Department of Education and Science or its agencies without first consulting with the student.

### **Equality Statement**

Ormonde College of Further education welcomes all eligible students who apply for admission, including those with special educational needs. The college is aware of the principles and requirements of a democratic society and will both respect and promote respect for diversity in society as regards values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life. In particular the college is aware of its obligations under relevant equality legislation and in relation to the relevant discriminatory grounds as set out in Section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

### **Applicants with disabilities**

Ormonde College of Further Education welcomes all eligible students who apply for admission, including those with special educational needs. In this respect, the college deems it appropriate to inform itself of special needs that an applicant may have in order to plan the provision of appropriate facilities to enable the applicant to participate in their course safely and effectively. The Deputy Principal and the Coordinator of the course for which the individual has applied, shall be available, at the time of application, to meet with the individual and/or their advocate for the purposes of planning these special needs. All data supplied by the individual with respect to special educational needs shall be subject to the same data protection procedures as outlined above.