

Admissions Policy

Admissions Policy 2026/27			
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Version Control – Updates to Policy		
Date	Version	Description
July 2024	1.6	1.3 Addition of ‘academic’ year to clarify expectations for January candidates. 2.2.4 Specifies which courses may admit students as part of a January intake. 2.2.5 Information regarding timing of interviews has been modified in light of changed arrangements for January and September intakes, and moved to a new clause. 3.6 Addition of entry requirements given for Foundation Award, change of entry requirements for Certificate of Higher Education in Christian Ministry and Mission to align with Durham University entry requirements. 3.8 Addition of Academic Entry Requirements for MA in Contemporary Christian Leadership, revision of entry requirements for admittance graduates in other disciplines with experience of theology or religious studies to postgraduate programmes. 4.1 Update of link to Common Awards website. 4.6 Addition of deadlines for APL applications.
July 2025	1.7	3. Entry Requirements Removal of the entry requirements for Certificate of Higher Education in Christian Ministry and Mission (180 credits). The programme will be withdrawn from delivery at Emmanuel Theological College ahead of 2026/27.
July 2026	1.8	1.7 Update to wording: “...any blemished disclosures will be reviewed and assessed by the College’s Safeguarding Lead before any offer of admission is made.” Previously this paragraph referred to “one of the College’s Safeguarding Advisors”. 2.1.1 Update to College’s website address. 2.1.3 Update to Application Portal website address. 2.2.2 Addition: “and for sponsored candidates on our Children, Young People and Families stream.” 3.3 Update to wording: “For example, this may be a short written assignment on a topic provided by the Admissions Team.” Previously this paragraph stated “For example, this may be a written book review or a theological reflection on a topic provided by the Admissions Team.”

		3.6 Additional paragraph: All applicants offered a place to study at Emmanuel Theological College must be eligible to study in the UK and will be asked to evidence eligibility to study in the application process, and in-person at enrolment. 3.7 Additional paragraph: Emmanuel Theological College is not a licensed student sponsor, and as a result cannot sponsor Student Route visas or give advice to applicants on visa related matters. Applicants intending to undertake study while holding a work or other visa are responsible for ensuring they meet the conditions of their visa, and maintain eligibility to live and study in the UK for the duration of their programme. 5.2 Update to College’s website address. 6.3, 6.4 Amendment to title “Chair of the Board of Trustees” from “Chair of Trustees”
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Introduction

At Emmanuel Theological College (hereafter “the College”) our goal is the formation of Christ-centred, hope-filled, and mission-orientated lay and ordained leaders who will equip the whole people of God for the whole mission of God.

This Admissions Policy explains our approach to recruiting and admitting applicants to appropriate pathways and programmes, including the relevant criteria and processes used by the Admissions Team. It explains how we maintain fair treatment of all potential students and sets the standards for all staff involved in admissions.

The Dean of the College has the final responsibility for admissions and may delegate part or the whole of this task to other members of staff, either directly employed by the College, or seconded from partner organisations. General enquiries and the administration of the process is held by the Admissions Team.

1 Overarching Requirements & Core Principles for Admission

- 1.1 The College seeks to admit students with a lively and demonstrable commitment to engage in Christian ministry and/or leadership in a local church context throughout their training pathway.
- 1.2 To that end, the Admissions process seeks to reflect the College’s duty of care to applicants to ensure they are appropriately qualified to be enrolled on its Common Awards/Durham University validated programmes. Where applicants do not meet the requirement, the Admissions Team will help direct them to other appropriate options such as the College’s internally validated *Pop-Up Theology* programme.
- 1.3 All applicants must be aged 18 or over on the 1st September of the academic year of entry.

Sponsoring Dioceses & Ministerial Candidates

- 1.4 Applicants who are preparing for ordained, LLM or Reader ministry (hereafter, “Ministerial Candidates”) must be sponsored by a sponsoring Bishop (referred to elsewhere in this policy as “sponsoring diocese(s)”). The Church of England has its own criteria for sponsoring students for ministerial training.
- 1.5 As part of the Admissions process, sponsoring dioceses are required to confirm in writing to the College that Ministerial Candidates have successfully passed through diocesan safer recruitment processes, including having secured an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service, where this is required by law.

Independent Applicants

- 1.6 Emmanuel Theological College welcomes applicants who are not sponsored for ministerial training by a Church of England diocese (hereafter, “Independent Applicant”) who meet overarching and programme-specific entry requirements.
- 1.7 If an Independent Applicant applies for admission to a programme of study that will include regulated activity (as defined by the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended)*) they must successfully complete the College’s safer recruitment process, in addition to meeting the entry criteria for any programme of study. The safer recruitment process includes, but is not necessarily limited to, providing the names and addresses of appropriate referees and completing a confidential self-declaration form. Where legally required and permitted it also includes securing an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service. In these cases, any blemished disclosures will be reviewed and assessed by the College’s Safeguarding Lead before any offer of admission is made.

Auditors

- 1.8 Auditors can be defined as individuals who are permitted to attend learning sessions without undertaking assessment. Consequently, auditors cannot receive academic credit in exchange for their attendance. To preserve the continuity and quality of experience for all students, Auditors are admitted at the discretion of the College to attend blocks of modules spanning the academic year.
- 1.9 Not all modules are suitable for auditing, and the College reserves the right to refuse admission to a prospective Auditor on the grounds that the desired module is not suitable for auditing, and/or it would disrupt the learning experience of the College's on-course students.

Equality & Diversity

- 1.10 The College is committed to developing and maintaining an inclusive and diverse learning community by recruiting students able to develop both academically and formationally within an environment that celebrates an increasingly diverse student population. All applicants are assessed on the basis of merit and potential, including their motivation to benefit from the range of academic opportunities available within the College. The College interprets "merit" as the positive attributes of an applicant seeking to study at the College, which is based on evidence of prior achievement and experience; and defines "potential" as the applicant's scope to benefit from the course and the promise of future achievement.

Applicants with a Disability

- 1.11 Applications from prospective students with disabilities are welcomed, and will be considered on the same criteria and principles as for other candidates. The College is committed to making arrangements, wherever reasonable and practicable, to enable students to flourish in their studies. Students with disabilities are encouraged to make a disclosure in their application to enable reasonable adjustments to be planned from the earliest possible opportunity.
- 1.12 The College operates a Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policy, and details of this can be supplied on request by the Admissions Team.

2 Admission Process

2.1 Preliminary Stages

- 2.1.1 Information relating to the College's programmes is available on the College website, <https://emmanueltheologicalcollege.ac.uk>
- 2.1.2 Prospective applicants are warmly invited to attend Open Days and Evenings offered by the College, and details of these events and how to book are available on the College website.
- 2.1.3 All applicants must complete the College's online application form available on the College's Application Portal: <https://apply.emmanueltheologicalcollege.ac.uk/login> (a link to the Portal is also available on the College website).
- 2.1.4 We will contact applicants to confirm receipt of their application within five working days.

2.2 Interviews

- 2.2.1 Following receipt of a completed application form via the Application Portal, the Admissions Team will conduct a preliminary screening. Unless it is clear that the applicant does not meet either overarching or programme-specific admissions criteria at that point, the applicant will be invited to interview.

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- 2.2.2 An interview may form part of diocesan selection processes for Reader/LLM candidates, and for sponsored candidates on our Children, Young People and Families stream.
- 2.2.3 Candidates for ordination and independent applicants will usually be interviewed by a Tutor or the Dean.
- 2.2.4 Teaching starts in September for all programmes. The following programmes also have an additional intake in January:
- Foundation Award in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
 - Certificate of Higher Education in Christian Ministry and Mission;
 - Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
 - Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
 - BA (Hons) in Theology Ministry and Mission;
 - Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
 - Postgraduate Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission;
 - Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission
 - MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission; and
 - MA in Contemporary Christian Leadership.
- 2.2.5 Typically, admissions interviews take place from November to July for September intake, and from January to November for January intake.
- 2.3 *Decision*
- 2.3.1 The Admissions Team will contact applicants by email following interview communicating the College's decision. In the event an applicant is offered a place at the College, they will receive an offer email with a formal offer letter attached (the College does not issue offer letters by post).
- 2.3.2 In reaching a decision with regard to applicants who are Ministerial Candidates, the Admissions Team will take account of recommendations in the Bishops' Advisory Panel Report and any reports from the Diocesan discernment process, as well as any input from the responsible diocesan officer (Sponsoring Bishop, Diocesan Director of Ordinands/Vocations, Warden of Readers etc.).
- 2.3.3 Decisions are based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and their suitability for the programme for which they have applied (mindful of any requirements laid down by any professional body or the requirements of the Church of England for ministerial candidates).
- 2.4 *Offer*
- 2.4.1 A Conditional offer means that the applicant has yet to satisfy all entry requirements, but the Admissions Team anticipate that the applicant is likely to meet overarching and programme-specific admissions criteria ahead of enrolment. Details of our offer conditions (including a deadline) and how the applicant should satisfy them will be set out in the offer letter.
- 2.4.2 An Unconditional offer means that the applicant satisfies outright all academic or other requirements for entry to the desired programme of study.
- 2.5 *Feedback*
- 2.5.1 Feedback following the admission interview will be given to applicants on request. Should an applicant want to receive feedback in respect of any other element of their application, they must make a request in writing to the Admissions Team. Feedback will normally be supplied in writing (typically by email) within twenty working days of receiving such a request.

3 Entry Requirements

- 3.1 In the event an applicant's academic record does not meet the standard entry requirements for specific programmes at Diploma of Higher Education level or below, the Dean will determine eligibility for admission through consideration of the applicant's employment history and other experience alongside evidence provided through the admissions process.
- 3.2 Applicants not meeting the standard entry requirements will be required to demonstrate their potential to benefit from their chosen programme, in addition to evidencing significant and relevant work experience in lieu of the usual formal academic qualifications.
- 3.3 The College reserves the right to ask an applicant to complete a written admissions task, if evidence is needed of their capacity to study at the level appropriate to the relevant programme. For example, this may be a short written assignment on a topic provided by the Admissions Team. Applicants will be sent the relevant information and any additional material needed (e.g. a copy of a book for review) and asked to complete and return the written task by a specified date.
- 3.4 Accredited Prior Learning may be granted to students who supply appropriate evidence of learning that fulfils the relevant learning outcomes at the appropriate level. No more than one third of a programme's total credits may be comprised of accredited prior learning.
- 3.5 In addition to meeting the relevant overarching admissions criteria, the following University entry criteria apply. However, entry to programmes is flexible, and is dependent on an applicant's experience, employment and education. Prospective students are encouraged to contact the College's Admissions Team in the event of concerns or queries regarding suitability for Common Awards programmes, or educational background.
- 3.6 All applicants offered a place to study at Emmanuel Theological College must be eligible to study in the UK and will be asked to evidence eligibility to study in the application process, and in-person at enrolment.
- 3.7 Emmanuel Theological College is not a licensed student sponsor, and as a result cannot sponsor Student Route visas, or give advice to applicants on visa related matters. Applicants intending to undertake study while holding a work or other visa are responsible for ensuring they meet the conditions of their visa, and maintain eligibility to live and study in the UK for the duration of their programme.

3.8 Academic Entry Requirements for Undergraduate Programmes:

Foundation Award in Theology, Ministry and Mission

- Normally a minimum of one A-level (Grade E or above), or equivalent.
- An IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required from applicants for whom English is not their first language, (with no component under 6.0).

Certificate of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission (120 Credits)

- Normally a minimum of one A-level (Grade E or above), or equivalent.
- An IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required from applicants for whom English is not their first language, (with no component under 6.0).

Diploma of Higher Education in Theology, Ministry and Mission

- Normally a minimum of two A-levels (Grade E or above) or equivalent;
- An IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required from applicants for whom English is not their first language, (with no component under 6.0).

BA (Hons) in Theology, Ministry and Mission

- Normally a minimum of two A-levels (Grade E or above) or equivalent;

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- Graduates in other subjects may enter the BA programme;
- Students who have completed successfully the Common Awards Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission may be admitted to Level 6 of the BA programme;
- An IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required from applicants for whom English is not their first language.

3.8 Academic Entry Requirements for Graduate Programmes:

Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission

- Normally an upper second-class Honours degree (2:1) or equivalent;
- Graduates in other subjects may enter graduate programmes;
- An IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent is required from applicants for whom English is not their first language.

3.9 Academic Entry Requirements for Postgraduate Programmes:

Postgraduate Certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission

Postgraduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission

MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission

MA in Contemporary Christian Leadership

- Normally an upper second-class Honours degree or equivalent in a subject related to the proposed course of study;
- Normally students will need a good degree (or other Level 6 qualification, such as a Graduate Diploma) in theology;
- Graduates (classed as first-class or 2:1 Honours) in other disciplines with experience of Theology or Religious Studies to at least FHEQ Level 4 (undergraduate Certificate level, awarded with verifiable credit and an overall mark of at least 66%) may also be admitted to the Postgraduate programme;
- Given its professional development orientation, students are likely to be preparing for a ministerial or related vocation or be actively engaged in such a profession;
- An IELTS score of 7.0 or equivalent is required from applicants for whom English is not their first language.

4 Accredited Prior Learning

4.1 Students who are admitted to programmes of study validated by Common Awards/Durham University may be eligible to apply for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL). For further details please see <https://www.dur.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/admissions/>

4.2 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is the process by which an applicant applies for and may be granted an exemption from some modules on their programme because an academic judgment is made that they have already met most or all of the Learning Outcomes attached to those modules

4.2.1 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): an applicant will have met these Learning Outcomes by passing all or part of a course of study that was formally assessed and certificated by a higher education provider, thereby gaining credits at a specific level, as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

4.2.2 Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): the applicant will have met these Learning Outcomes in other ways perhaps through work, through private study, or through uncertificated training.

4.2.3 The College considers applications for Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning and Accreditation of Experiential Learning in consideration of The University of Durham's regulations

4.3 Applications for APL are processed following the admissions interview and before registration on a University validated programme.

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- 4.4 Applicants who are Ministerial Candidates should discuss APL with the Admissions Team, who will undertake an initial assessment of eligibility against Durham University's regulations. Where an APL application appears to be eligible for consideration, the Admissions Team will supply forms for completion by the student, with support from the Admissions Team.
- 4.5 APL applications are usually considered by the Dean or their delegate, on behalf of the Board of Examiners. The College will refer APL applications for consideration by Durham University, where appropriate or required by University regulations. The Admissions Team will inform the applicant of the outcome of the APL application.
- 4.6 The deadline for APL applications for admission to programmes with a September start date is 1st September of the academic year of registration. The deadline for APL applications for admission to programmes with a January start date is the 30th November of the academic year of registration.

5 Admissions Records

- 5.1 The College documents the reasons for admissions decisions in order to facilitate high-quality service and provision of feedback to applicants upon request.
- 5.2 Data will be handled and retained in line with the College's Privacy Notice for Prospective Students, and with current data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. Our Privacy Notice for Prospective Students includes details of the legal bases for processing, data processing procedures, data storage and retention periods is available on our website <https://emmanueltheologicalcollege.ac.uk>.

6 Complaints Procedure

- 6.1 The College is committed to ensuring a positive applicant experience. If an applicant has a specific concern regarding a procedural error, irregularity or mal-administration; or if they feel they have been otherwise treated inappropriately in the course of the admissions process; they should first raise their concerns informally with the Dean no more than 28 days after the event (unless there is good reason for the delay).
- 6.2 In the first instance, and where possible, the Dean will attempt to resolve the complaint informally.
- 6.3 Should attempts to resolve the informal complaint be exhausted, and the applicant remains dissatisfied, the Dean will escalate the complaint to the Formal Complaint Procedure and the complainant will be informed of the deadline for submitting a formal complaint in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- 6.4 Complainants must contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees within ten working days of the Dean's correspondence outlining the Formal Complaints Procedure (unless there is good reason provided for a delay). Complaints to the Chair should be made in writing and sent via the College, marked for the Chair of the Board of Trustees' attention and as 'Private and Confidential'.
- 6.5 The Chair will review an admissions complaint referred to him/her in relation to the administration of the College's policies and procedures and will normally determine an outcome. The Chair reserves the right to refer any admissions complaint for consideration by a wider complaints panel.
- 6.6 If the applicant remains dissatisfied once the College's informal and formal procedures are exhausted, the applicant has the right to request a review by The University of Durham. The University will determine whether to review the admissions complaint to ascertain whether the College's admissions policies and procedures had been implemented correctly. If procedural irregularities are identified, the complaint might be referred back to the College for further review.
- 6.7 Please note that the College cannot consider complaints relating to decisions regarding diocesan sponsorship for training for Ministerial Candidates. Such complaints should follow the procedures of the relevant diocese.

6.8 The College does not consider admissions complaints from any third party.