

2023
V3

Admissions & Application Policy

Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that learners are fully aware of Debut's admissions and application criteria and that a wider audience is achieved and maintained. Our widening participation strategy focuses on trying to ensure that learners with the ability to succeed at Debut are not deterred from applying by any of the myths and misconceptions that continue to surround the industry.

We liaise with agencies such as

- Job Center Plus
- Essex County Council (Employability & Skills Teams)
- The Advice Store
- Beyond Youth

to ensure that anyone with social background issues are not excluded in applying.

Our philosophy underpins our commitment to ensure that 'the right learner is signposted to the right course for their individual needs and career route', which in turn leads to Debut's ongoing commitment to high retention, success and timely results.

Objectives

- To ensure fairness, consistency, inclusion and equal opportunities for all regarding IAG (information, advice and guidance) and application
- To make clear any specific requirements for admission, such as entry qualifications
- To have defined and standardised procedures regarding induction onboarding, application, course offer, acceptance confirmation from initial contact, ensuring all communication is understood and responded to in a timely and professional manner
- To make clear alternative options available to learners should their intended course not be suitable for their needs or their first choice of course is unavailable
- To ensure applicants are aware of progression courses that meet their personal career needs
- To ensure that applicants are aware of Debut's appeals and complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with the service provided
- To ensure applicants are aware of Debut's fair and inclusive waiting list procedure
- To ensure applicants are aware of all areas of funding support available
- To ensure applicants are aware of additional learning aims they may be required to fulfil as part of their funding/framework within their course programme, such as GCSE resits, functional skills, enrichment or work experience
- Learners are aware of key dates for inductions, enrolments and application deadlines

Strategy Statement

Debut recognises the value of diversity and inclusion and is committed to equality of opportunity for all. It aims to provide an environment in which applicants are treated with dignity and respect and solely on the basis of their abilities, merits and potential. Debut is committed to fair access and encourages applications from all students who are able to demonstrate the potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and to benefit from study at undergraduate or postgraduate level.

Individual applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction. Debut's admissions policies and procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards.

Marketing & Recruitment

Debut is committed to open and consistent messages in its marketing and recruitment information, and to the management of activity which leads to the admission of learners in ways that are fair, clear and explicit and implemented consistently.

Debut ensures that courses are widely advertised to the wider community through:

- Website information
- Careers Roadshows at Colleges and Schools or other venues locally
- Radio Advertising
- Newspaper Advertising
- Leaflets/Prospectus/Brochure Information
- Poster Advertising within Debut Salons
- Poster Advertising via Salons/Spas we have links to
- IAG via Job Center Plus
- Debut Facebook/Instagram/Twitter or other social media platforms
- Collaborative Partner Literature
- Careers Open Days
- HABIA website
- Social Media
- Outside Government Agencies (e.g. Essex County Council, Sign-Post, Job Center)

Step By Step Communication

Debut has adopted a consistent and standardised approach with all new enquiries and applications. This includes a designated staff member (Poppy-Ann Lowe) who is first point of contact. The applicant can now be guided through the process visually from initial enquiry right through to enrolment and course place offer. The emails forwarded keep the applicant informed with regular updates and how long each individual step takes and how they are moving along the process. Applicants have more control over choosing dates and times for contact by Debut and appointments.

The Phone Interview

Following an initial enquiry, the applicant may be asked to confirm a date and time for a telephone interview. They are offered a few dates and if none of these are suitable, the next available date is provided. The telephone interview is conducted by a Contract Manager who oversee specific funding and enrolments. Standardised questions provide Debut with more in depth information so that the applicant can be directed to the most suitable course for their needs. Initial calls can take 10-15 minutes and the applicant has the opportunity to ask questions on a 1:1 basis and disclose any information that they want to regarding any specific needs. Additional information or advice is provided if an individual seeks further guidance prior to onboarding.

Responsibility and Authority

Debut Training Academy has ultimate responsibility for staff, learner and employee to ensure they all receive individual, fair and unbiased advice and guidance and will ensure that the arrangements for overseeing the application and admissions processes are effective, robust and reviewed on a regular basis. As such four members of staff oversee the application and induction process. These designated personnel are conversant with the most up to date information on courses, funding, support and progression routes, including the importance of providing impartial and full IAG:

1. Nikki Roberts

Sales & Recruitment Manager

01268 560552

Nikki@debutacademy.com

For Advanced Learning Loan advice & applications

2. Zoe Jones

Apprenticeship Lead

01268 560552

zoe@debutacademy.com

For Apprenticeship advice & applications

3. Linda Edwards

Centre Manager

01268 560552

linda@debutacademy.com

For Study Programme Classroom Learner applications

4. Poppy-Ann Lowe

Marketing & Events Manager

01268 560552

poppylowe@debutacademy.com

For Short Diploma Courses

IAG (Information, Advice & Guidance)

Debut is committed to delivering impartial information, advice and guidance to all everyone who makes an enquiry through to course offer and throughout their programme. Debut is accredited through MATRIX to ensure their IAG process meets the standards of this kite mark. Debut ensures that the IAG it provides meets the standards required by:

- Ensuring staff training is refreshed intermittently
- Information regarding funding is up-to-date and it's criteria is imparted fully
- Information regarding course expectation and standards are comprehensively provided so applicants are fully aware of course content
- Course information is provided in several formats, such as brochure, PowerPoint, via website, careers workshops, 1:1 meetings and leaflets
- IAG is provided with the client in mind, in an environment suited to their needs
- IAG is provided by telephone call, leaflets, emails, face to face interviews and at a full induction

Confidentiality & Data Protection

Debut is committed to ensuring confidentiality during the admissions process to comply with the requirements and legislation of the Data Protection Act 1998/GDPR and in line with its own separate policies on Data Protection and Confidentiality.

Admissions

Applications for courses ideally should be made as early as feasibly possible for each new academic year commencing in September. Application waiting lists are held for the forthcoming year and sometimes least two years in advance. Course application, whether applying for an NVQ or short Diploma course, will be processed in first instance by the Debut's designated Contract offer (depending on the funding applicable). Information will be gathered at initial enquiry on course suitability and advice will be given to applicants based on their individual circumstances. Applicants are openly encouraged to ring or email prior to application for advice on funding suitability, course availability, prior learning requirements and course content.

Applications can be made through Debut Academy website

www.debutcademy.com

Entry Requirements

Debut is committed to course offers based on equality and inclusion, irrespective of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations or other irrelevant distinction. We also have a responsibility towards applicants to ensure they are undertaking a course that meets their needs, ensuring their ability will not prevent them from undertaking the exacting work for the course and they are fully aware of any other options that may be available to them. Please see 'suitability for course' below for further clarification.

Suitability for Course

Debut will not discourage or turn away applicants without fully assessing their suitability and ability to successfully complete their intended course. We will endeavour to tailor courses to a learner's ability within the parameters we can whilst still meeting the standards of the qualification and guided learning hours or offer an alternative course if at all possible. We strongly feel that Debut would be an irresponsible provider if we were to enrol a learner onto a course which is:

- Not the course they wish to undertake (we would not insist anyone enrolls onto another course just to fill a class).
- Their initial assessment and personal ability data shows that it is very likely that they would not cope with the course level and content they have applied for.
- The course they intend to complete would have a detrimental impact on an existing medical condition in which they have disclosed (clarification from the relevant medical advisor may be sought) before a formal decision is made.
- The course they intend to complete would have a detrimental impact on existing personal problems an applicant is already experiencing. Debut would suggest that the applicant focuses on themselves personally to resolve any barriers and reapply at a future date.
- The learner knows in advance that they would not be able to meet a substantial amount of the guided learning hours required for the NVQ course i.e. absence of more than 2 weeks during a timetabled course. This may be due to a personal circumstance or extended holidays at key times in their programme and this would have a detrimental impact on their success and progress.
- The learner knows in advance there are substantial barriers that may prevent them from fulfilling all the elements of their NVQ qualification. This may relate to them not being willing to participate in important elements of their training or assessments. Formal assessment is a key area that must be undertaken to complete most of the modules within an NVQ and learners cannot be signed off complete without assessments being completed. If the barrier continues to exist prior to commencement of the course, Debut will recommend the applicant does not proceed with their course at that time and reapplies when they have resolved this important issue. We would not want learners to be at a disadvantage and not meet all NVQ requirements.

If after full and considered assessment, it is found that an applicant would be unlikely able to successfully achieve the course of their choice and if Debut are unable to offer a course of a lower level, we will guide them to an alternative training provider who can assist them. An applicant's initial assessment results and prior academic ability are both considered thoroughly and if additional learner support will be sufficient to bridge any gap, Debut will make a course offer. If the gap is far too extensive, then they will be signposted to an alternative course more suited to their needs. If it is noticed an applicant has a very low level outcome but their prior learning and achievement contradicts this then they will be asked to retake their assessments before they progress further down the application process.

Entry Requirements for NVQ Level 2 Intermediate courses:

- Good attendance at prior training provider
- Good references from prior training provider
- Successful 1:1 Admissions Interview
- Minimum Entry 3 BKSB Initial Assessment & Diagnostic Results
- A reasonable grounding in English & Mathematics
- A strong interest in the industry
- Strong commitment to learner expectation criteria targets

Entry Requirements for NVQ Level 3 Advanced courses:

- Good attendance at prior training provider
- Good references from prior training provider
- Successful 1:1 Admissions Interview
- Minimum Level 1 BKSB Initial Assessment & Diagnostic Results
- A reasonable grounding in English & Mathematics
- NVQ Level 2 Beauty (preferred) but not essential
- Strong commitment to learner expectation criteria targets

Entry Requirements for NVQ Level 4 Advanced courses:

- Good attendance at prior training provider
- Good references from prior training provider
- Successful 1:1 Admissions Interview
- Minimum Level 2 BKSB Initial Assessment & Diagnostic Results (preferred)
- A good grounding in English & Mathematics
- Work placement in their specific industry (preferred)
- Strong commitment to learner expectation criteria targets

Entry Requirements for Apprenticeship Programme

- Good attendance at prior training provider
- Good references from prior training provider
- Successful 1:1 Admissions Interview
- Minimum Entry 3 BKSB Initial Assessment & Diagnostic Results
- A reasonable grounding in English & Mathematics
- Good communication skills (preferred) but not essential
- NVQ Level 2 Beauty (preferred) but not essential
- Completion of Apprentice Induction
- Completion of successful Interview with prospective employer
- Completion of successful trade tests (if required)
- Completion of successful trial session(s) (if required)
- Strong commitment to learner expectation criteria targets

Application

- Enquiry forms can be found on Debut website at the link below. The enquiry form lead is allocated to a Contract Manager to : <http://www.debutacademy.com>

- An applicant's enquiry is acknowledged by a staff member who is responsible for initial contact and filtering leads to specific Contract Managers.
- By submitting an enquiry via the website, an applicant's details are automatically added to Debut's Hubspot Database. This serves as a management system to log all calls, contact, emails etc. so that all staff can view and check previous messages.
- Data is held by Debut for a period of 3 years in the event that they may not take up an offer of a course at that time but may consider a course at a later date. This may relate in particular to learners who make an enquiry at a careers event, however they have several years before they finish their education.
- There is usually no deadline for how long an enquiry form can be held on a waiting list, however Debut may ask the applicant to complete a new form at a later date to ensure the information is up-to-date and they wish to remain on the list.

Equality & Diversity

Debut Training Academy will ensure that no applicant is unable to complete an application form. For inclusiveness application forms can be provided in large print, coloured paper or completed by a Debut staff member from a 1:1 interview. To request any of the above please contact Linda Edwards on 07826 916947.

Funding

Applications for Government funded courses are dealt with in accordance with the strict criteria on eligibility and learners will be directed to any appropriate funding available to them. Debut are a responsible provider and will advise all applicants of any negative impact on funding eligibility if their course route does not take the usual stepping stone pathway, ie., applying for a level 3 course prior to a level 2 course (which may reduce any funding for their level 2 course by 50%). Applicants who are not fully funded for a level 2 course will be asked to contribute towards the difference in their training fees and payment plans are available.

Full Disclosure on Application

In order to clearly impart appropriate funding information to applicants, they are strongly advised to disclose full information regarding personal financial circumstances, prior qualifications and training. Failing to provide full and current personal information may affect the information, advice and guidance we will offer. Funding is provided on the basis of the information submitted with enrolment and if an applicant's circumstances changes during their programme they have a responsibility to let Debut know as soon as possible. Debut will access the Direct.Gov learning records service portal to clarify the prior learning of an applicant as this information can affect funding eligibility. It is also necessary to ensure a learner does not repeat a course or module they have already completed previously.

Application Fees

We do not charge fees to process applications or ask for deposits to secure a funded NVQ course unless a learner is co-funded or paying for their course privately (no funding involved). Applicants who are paying for their NVQ or Diploma courses privately may be provided with a payment plan schedule, which may include a payment at commencement of first module or deposit for short course.

Advanced Learning Loans

Debut also ensures that full and comprehensive information regarding Advanced Learning Loans or alternative loan options is provided to applicants at outset of application. They are also directed to the Government website that provides more information. Applicants who may be eligible for Government funding for a ALL funded course will be advised based on their personal circumstances.

Debut will not insist that an applicant applies for a learning loan if they are deemed fully fundable for a level 3 or 4 course (age limit is 19 years). If Debut Training Academy does not have any remaining 19+ AEB funding available, they will signpost the applicant to another provider who may be able to alternatively fund them. We will also signpost applicants to the Money Advice Service so they can make an informed decision before proceeding with any learning loans. Please refer to our Advanced Learning Loan Policy for further information.

Induction Onboarding

Following receipt of an application or enquiry the following process will be followed:

- Telephone interview date will be offered. There may be several dates to choose from and the applicant is required to email back to confirm. Flexibility on induction dates will depend on how near to the actual course start it will be – there may be insufficient time to offer several alternative option dates.
- The applicant is required to email back to confirm acceptance and attendance to their induction onboarding (this may be carried out onsite or over zoom).
- The applicant is asked to complete two online initial assessments (one Maths, one English) so that the starting point of the applicant is ideally known before induction and Debut can confirm that the level of course applied for is suited to their ability before they proceed further.
- The Induction may take up to 2 hours as this includes a full overview of the training, course content, other qualification options, learner expectation, support available, assessment, grading, funding and progression opportunities. Applicants are given opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification of any areas before proceeding to enrolment. Applicants who may be undecided after induction are asked to take time away to consider any decisions carefully, seek additional advice from Debut or consider other training providers before making their final decision about continuing with a course.
- An additional 1:1 interview with the applicant may be conducted on the day of the induction onboarding to clarify any information that may have been disclosed or to enable learners to ask any questions they would like to you privately.
- The applicant is asked to complete two further online diagnostic assessments (one Maths, one English) so that Debut know the applicant's strengths and weaknesses. If it is recognised that any of the online assessments have not been completed appropriately, the applicant will be asked to repeat them before a formal course offer is sent out.
- Applicants that disclose they are or may be dyslexic (with or without a formal dyslexic report) or those with low literacy or numeracy skills may be asked to undertake a dyslexia or dyscalculia screening assessment.

- Applicants who fail to attend their induction or enrolment and do not make any communication to explain reason why may not be offered another appointment. If there is a large intake of applications and places are limited candidates may have to wait to see if there are any places remaining at the end of the enrolment process before being provided with another induction date. Debut ensure that appointment dates are offered in good time, and the candidate can choose one most convenient to them. Debut also confirm the appointment in writing as a reminder. Therefore, a missed appointment can lead to an individual not being progressed further unless there is a genuine reason provided. Debut Academy holds great emphasis in punctuality, attendance and good communication and therefore if a candidate has not shown the commitment and enthusiasm at the very outset for their induction it could be argued they may not be fully committed to good attendance throughout their training programme.

Enrolment

All course offers are subject to the applicant completing all elements required of their enrolment. Applicants are also notified of any specific paperwork evidence to bring with them at enrolment to complete the process. As well as mandatory enrolment paperwork, additional forms are required to be completed, which provide essential information on medical or learning disabilities or recognition of prior learning details. Our IAG staff will take time during each enrolment to check all enrolment paperwork with each candidate to clarify anything disclosed on their application or to seek additional supplementary information. Application forms are completed electronically by the applicant and signed by them.

Admission of learners with unsatisfactory prior attendance or references

Debut has the right to request a reference from the previous training provider of an applicant if they feel that additional information will be beneficial prior to making a decision regarding a formal course offer. Unsatisfactory references, poor prior attendance with a previous training provider or if an applicant has been excluded from a previous college environment for a serious matter will result in a more in-depth interview with the applicant and Center Manager, prior to a decision being made at their discretion.

Debut reserves the right not to admit an applicant who previously attended a training provider and they failed to make sufficient effort towards successfully completing their studies or staying on programme for the duration of their course and completing. If a learner was previously Government funded but failed to successfully complete their course, they may not be eligible for further funding for the same/similar level course again. More importantly, Debut must be seen to be responsible when tax payer's money and ESFA funding is involved. At the forefront of funding Debut must take into account maintaining high success, timely completion and high retention rates as a training provider to ensure future funding and jobs are secured.

References from prior training providers are also taken into consideration, especially if information on an applicant indicates a learner failed to show any commitment to their course (where there was no overriding reasonable explanation) or were withdrawn or suspended through serious gross misconduct.

Debut Training Academy has an overriding duty to ensure all our existing and new intake learners are not put at any risk, and Government funding is appropriated responsibly.

Course offers may also be withdrawn if an individual fails to set up and apply for their Advanced Learning Loan for the course they have applied for. Debut will wait a reasonable amount of time for this process to be completed and applicants must be proactive in ensuring that they provide all supporting ID evidence needed to the SLC.

If a loan application is unlikely to be approved or ID evidence may take longer than the period of time prior to the actual class start date then the course place will be at risk and the applicant may be asked to reapply at another time.

Course Offer

Following completion of all necessary enrolment elements and Debut establishing suitability for course, a letter of offer will be forwarded and each applicant will be required to confirm their place by a deadline date. Should no response be received then a second attempt to confirm course commencement will be sought from the applicant and if unsuccessful a letter will be sent to the applicant with a 7 day deadline to respond or their application will be withdrawn.

Course offers may be withdrawn after acceptance and before commencement if one of the following is brought to our attention:

- The applicant has failed to disclose important information that could affect them completing the course they have applied for (this could be relating to a medical condition, learning difficulty etc).
- A matter of gross misconduct has been brought to Debut's attention that was not disclosed previously
- The applicant has failed to produce specific evidence (by a deadline date) that has been requested by Debut to enable them to commence. This could be relating to a GP or consultant letter Debut has asked them to gain as a professional opinion to confirm course suitability.

Cancellation of a Course by the College

Where insufficient numbers have applied for a course it may be necessary for Debut to postpone or cancel courses. Debut will endeavour to inform applicants as soon as they are aware that a course is full, cancelled or postponed and where possible, provide a date when the course may be available again. Applications are held the on waiting list until such time the course can go ahead.

Quality

The quality of the admissions, application, induction and enrolment process is monitored at the end of year review as well as via Induction questionnaire feedback. Our rigorous application, induction and enrolment process is also evaluated by the Academy's retention and success rates.

Debut recognises that learners are more successful if they enrol on courses that are relevant to their intended career path, can achieve, are fully supported throughout its duration and they are aware on the outset of what specific learner commitment and expectations are required.

Cancellation of a course place by a Learner

When cancelling a confirmed booking onto a course by a learner, Debut insists that sufficient notice is provided, at least 14 working days if possible and in writing. Short notice withdrawals may prevent Debut from having sufficient time to enrol others onto the same course in time for course commencement.

Admissions Process Appeals

In the event of an applicant disputing a decision not to admit them to Debut, the applicant may appeal in writing, in conjunction with Debut Complaints or Appeals Procedures.

Linked Policies

Please refer to Debut's linked policies below for additional information regarding Admissions and Application Standards:

- Academic & Vocational Appeals Policy
- Advanced Learning Loan Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Communication Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Inclusion Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Guide to Fees & Payments Policy
- Initial Assessment Policy
- IAG Policy
- Induction Procedure – Learner Policy
- PSED Support Policy
- Review & Appraisal – Staff Policy

- Review & Appraisal – Learner Policy
- Staff CPD/Personal Development Training Policy
- Skills for Life/Transferrable Skills Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy

Policy Revision

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