

Admissions Policy

2022-2023

Reviewed by Tom Caston: 13 December 2021

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Next review: December 2022

Summary

This policy concerns admissions to the college for GCSE, A level, Pre-Programme and NCUK programmes of study. It does not cover extramural programmes of individual tuition or Oxbridge coaching. MPW selects on the basis of academic ability, previous educational record (including prior school references), entrance tests (if appropriate), performance at interview and assessment of special needs. No prospective student is offered a place at the college without attending an interview.

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds, irrespective of nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. Human rights and freedoms are respected but must be balanced with the lawful needs of our college community and the rights and freedoms of others. Our capacity to deliver appropriate programmes for students with various kinds of disability (including special educational needs) are not all-encompassing but we are always looking to develop them further.

There are size limits to the number of students that can currently be admitted to the whole college, to individual year groups (particularly at GCSE) and to individual classes, where there is an absolute maximum of nine students in any one group. The exception to this is the NCUK Programme where the maximum is fourteen students in any one group. For students seeking admission close to one of our entry points, there may also be timetabling constraints imposed by the combination of subjects being sought, though for those applying in good time there are no such restrictions.

1 About the college

- MPW is co-educational.
- The college is non-denominational.
- The maximum college roll is 240.
- The age range is normally 14-20, with natural entry points for pupils who have just completed Years 9, 10, 11, 12 or 13. The college also admits a small number of mature students each year.
- The GCSE school (Years 10 and 11) comprises 25-30 students. Approximately 120 students are studying A levels with MPW over two-year courses. The remaining students are studying A levels with MPW over eighteen-month, one-year or shorter courses or following university foundation programmes.
- Our principal entry point is in September and there is a smaller entry in January. However, subject to place availability, students are also accepted at other times of the year as late joiners. Where possible, such late joiners are integrated into appropriate existing teaching groups and may receive supplementary tuition to facilitate the transition.

2 Aims of MPW's admissions process

- To identify and admit students who will benefit from the academic provision available at the college.
- To ensure that prospective students understand, and are in sympathy with, the ethos and aims of the college.
- To provide educational advice leading to an academic programme tailored to each student's specific needs.
- To identify and recruit students who are keen to achieve academically and are prepared to work hard to achieve this goal.

3 Application procedure

- Potential applicants receive a prospectus pack from the College Registrar, containing a college prospectus, course outlines and, if appropriate, materials specific to those students who may be considering applying to study Art, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science or Law at university or who wish to apply for entry to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.
- If a student wishes to proceed to the next stage of the admissions process, an interview is arranged by the College Registrar. Prospective students are usually accompanied by a parent or guardian; this is an entry requirement for students aged under 16 at the start of the academic year.
- MPW organises Open Afternoons/Days throughout the year. Prospective students may attend an Open Afternoon/Day prior to or after their interviews. Open Afternoons/Days give prospective students and their parents or guardians the chance to meet Heads of Department and current students and to see the college operating during a working day. Prospective students may also attend “taster days”, when they sit in on lessons to experience first-hand what studying at MPW is like and, for prospective sixth-form students in particular, to get a flavour of what studying certain subjects involves.

The process preceding the offer of a place at the college has four elements:

1. Interview;
2. Assessment of performance in previous examinations; entrance assessments (for students where English is not their first language and some GCSE students); scholarship exams;
3. Reference from the applicant’s previous school(s) (or education provider); and
4. Assessment of special educational needs (if applicable) to determine any reasonable adjustments that are required.

3.1 Interview

The purposes of the interview are to:

- Explain the academic and extra-curricular provision available at the college;
- Assess the suitability of the student for their chosen course(s);
- Provide advice about careers and/or entry into Higher Education;
- Provide an opportunity for the student and parents/guardians to look around the college;
- Establish whether MPW can offer a suitable academic programme; and
- Answer any questions the student/parents may have about the college.

Interviews are conducted by senior members of staff and in many cases include input from the relevant Heads of Department.

3.2 Assessment of performance in examinations and entrance tests

- Prospective GCSE (Year 10 and 11) students may be required to sit a Mathematics and English Language entry test.
- Students whose first language is not English and who have not studied GCSE English Language usually sit a PASSWORD test and IELTS Writing (marked by the head of English). International students will be required to do entry tests for Mathematics and English unless they can provide official evidence of Maths and English qualifications at the entry requirement level for their proposed courses.
- Prospective A level students are normally expected to have achieved at least six GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) or an equivalent qualification. Under certain circumstances we may require specific grades in certain subjects at GCSE where these subjects are to be continued at A level (especially in Mathematics and Modern Languages).

- Prospective NCUK students must *normally* be aged 17 before the start of the courses and have passes in a minimum of four separate subjects at GCSE, with grades 9-5 (A* to low B) or the equivalent; acceptable examinations equivalent to GCSE at grade 5 (low B) or above or fluency in academic English as demonstrated, for example, by Band 6.5 in IELTS; grade 7 in GCSE Mathematics, or a satisfactory performance in a test set by the Mathematics department. To join the NCUK Science and Engineering streams, prospective students must have a strong background in high school science.
- A small number of academic scholarships are available each year (see Section 10 below). These are normally awarded to students starting a two-year A level course and occasionally to students studying a one-year programme. To apply for a scholarship, students are required to write to the Principal and sit an interview subsequent to this, which usually takes place in the Spring and Summer terms. In assessing whether a student may be awarded a scholarship, we consider the performance in the interview as well as the student's past academic performance.

3.3 References

- The offer of a place at the college is conditional upon a satisfactory reference being obtained from the previous school.
- Reference requests may include a pro-forma reference form, which requests information about safeguarding, academic ability, motivation and behaviour. We also request copies of recent sets of reports. In some cases, we also obtain telephone references from a senior teacher at the previous school.
- At certain times of year, particularly in the period mid-August to early September when a number of students are admitted, it is often not possible to obtain references in advance of a place being offered because many schools are closed. However, references are followed up as soon as is practicable and the college reserves the right to revoke an offer of a place should the reference contain relevant information which was not disclosed during the interview.

3.4 Disability and special needs

- MPW currently has limited facilities for the disabled. However, the college will do all that is reasonable to comply with its legal and moral responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the SEN and Disability Code of Practice 2015 (relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014), in order to accommodate the needs of applicants who have disabilities for which, with reasonable adjustments, the college can cater adequately. The college needs to be aware of any known disability or special educational need which may affect a student's ability to participate in the admissions procedure and take full advantage of the education provided at the college. Parents or guardians of a student who has any disability or special educational needs should provide the college with full details prior to or during the admissions process before accepting the offer of a place.
- Where appropriate, a special needs assessment is conducted by the Head of Academic Support. This member of staff will advise the interviewer on whether MPW has the facilities and expertise to accommodate a particular student and, if so, the nature of the academic support we would provide. If the student subsequently registers at the college, the Head of Academic Support will collate all relevant information from sources such as school references and educational psychologist/medical reports to produce an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If a disability or special educational need becomes apparent after admission, the college will consult with parents or guardians about reasonable adjustments that can be made to meet the student's needs.

4 Offer of a place and registration

No student may be accepted until he or she has attended an interview at the college. After the interview, a letter will be sent to parents/guardians summarising our best educational advice and confirming whether or not we are able to make a formal offer of a place. If the college offers a place, the offer is to be considered unconditional

unless stated otherwise in writing by the college. If a student under 18 years old attended the interview on their own, a further conversation or communication with a parent or guardian is required prior to registration.

When an offer is made, parents/guardians will be issued with the relevant registration forms. Once the registration forms are completed, returned and subsequently acknowledged by MPW, the enrolment process is deemed to be complete (the registration fee is part of the enrolment process though non-payment will not render the signed contract void; the signature is final). At this point, both the fee payer and the student become bound by the college's terms and conditions (see registration form and prospectus). Fees are due before the start of each academic term.

An offer of a place is valid only at the time that it is made. Applicants who decide to register after some delay are advised to check with the college that the place remains available.

Students are allowed, with the agreement of the interviewer, to make adjustments to their academic programme, provided the college is notified of such changes in good time prior to the start of the proposed course and only if the college can provide for such changes.

5 Withdrawal of an offer of a place

MPW reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place under the following circumstances:

1. Information, including for example reference information, is received which has clearly been withheld at the interview stage which would have been a clear case for a place not to be offered.
2. The student arrives with an EHCP, Educational Psychologist report, safeguarding report or disability which was not previously declared and for which the college is unable to provide reasonable adjustments.
3. Non-payment of fees.

6 International admissions

MPW welcomes applications from international students. About 25-30% of MPW's students have been educated previously outside the UK. It is not always possible for international students to attend interviews in Cambridge, so we work with the British Council and a network of carefully screened agents in organising a series of in-country presentations and interviews. As with UK-based international students, applicants are interviewed and assessed by a senior member of staff. Prospective students may also be interviewed via Skype, or another suitable video platform.

A visa will be required if the applicant does not hold a UK passport. EU and non-EU applicants will require a Student Visa to study on a course longer than 6 months. MPW has been awarded a Student Visa licence by the UKVI section of the Home Office and the college is therefore able to sponsor both Child Student and Student visa applications. A confirmation of acceptance for studies (CAS) will only be issued when, following a successful interview, satisfactory evidence of the following has been received:

- An English language qualification in line with the UKVI requirements;
- Transcripts of results/school reports (dated, stamped and signed);
- Passport (and Biometric card, where the student is in possession of one);
- A fully completed registration form and a tuition fee deposit if £9,000; and
- A parental consent letter (Child Student only).

Courses at MPW are taught in English. Students will need to meet the required academic criteria in order to be able to undertake these courses; specifically, they are expected to have reached a level equivalent to IELTS 5.5.

Additional English language lessons, alongside those for their academic subjects, are compulsory for students until a Band 6.5 IELTS score is achieved with at least 6.5 in the written section. In cases where universities have made offers conditional on a lower IELTS Band, such as 6.0, students may be allowed to drop their IELTS classes, at the discretion of their Director of Studies and the Head of EAP and with approval from the Principal. Conversely, where students need a Band higher than Band 6.5 in order to meet their university requirements, they may be asked to remain in their IELTS classes until they reach the required Band. Our advice is that students continue to attend IELTS classes until the end of their academic programme.

Further information about entry to the UK under the Student Visa Route can be found at the website <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas>, where the most up-to-date procedures are explained.

7 Disclosure

Parents or guardians are required at the earliest opportunity to disclose any particular known or suspected circumstances relating to their child's health, allergies, disabilities or learning difficulties or any previous disciplinary issues relevant to their application to join MPW. Failure to provide these may result in an offered place being withdrawn.

8 Special Circumstances

We recognise that a student's academic history can be affected by circumstances, for example:

- If the student has been unwell when sitting examinations or has been absent for any significant period from the previous school.
- If there are family circumstances such as divorce or bereavement.
- If the student's first language is not English.
- If the student has a disability or specific learning difficulties.

In such cases, the college may request additional information — such as an Educational Psychologist's report, medical certificate or samples of work — to assist us in the assessment of the student's suitability.

9 Grounds for Rejection

The following are possible grounds for not being offered a place, but this is not meant to be an exhaustive list:

- Insufficient academic ability for the programme applied for;
- Lack of fit with the ethos and general character of the college;
- Withholding information at interview;
- Exclusion from the previous school for offences such as drug misuse, violence, serious misconduct, bullying or theft; and
- The course required is oversubscribed; if we have to decide between two or more applicants who meet our admissions requirements, preference may be given to a sibling of an existing student or to an applicant with particular skill, talent or aptitude.

10 Academic scholarships

Each year MPW awards scholarships to help fund the fees of gifted and talented students who are likely to gain particular benefit from our academic provision and the more general opportunities the college has to offer. In turn, we expect award recipients not only to contribute to MPW's reputation for academic success but also to participate in broader aspects of college life.

10.1 Type and nature of awards available

Each year MPW sets a budget for academic awards, based on anticipated fee income. The values of scholarships range from 20-50% of tuition fees (except for the Principal's Scholarship, which can be up to a full-fees award).

From time to time a student may wish to put themselves forward for consideration of such a scholarship. In such cases, the decision whether to accept such a proposal and put the student forward for a panel interview lies solely with the Principal.

Scholarships are typically valid for the entire duration of the programme for which a student is enrolled, subject to the college's conditions of the award and the continued academic achievement of the recipient.

10.2 Eligibility and application procedure

Any student applying for a programme of one year's duration or more is eligible to apply for an award.

Applications for awards should be made by the end of February for the following September and only under exceptional circumstances will it be possible to be considered for an award after this date. Parents or guardians of students wishing to be considered for an award should notify the Registrar, who will advise them of the application process.

11 Associated policies and other documentation

- The college prospectus
- The college's terms and conditions
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Disability Policy
- Disability Accessibility Plan
- Academic Support Policy