# St Mellitus College

# Admissions Policy

St Mellitus College (SMC) wishes to operate open, fair, and effective procedures for admitting new students to the institution. This policy sets out the criteria for admission to accredited programmes, the processes for assessing the potential of prospective students, and for making them an offer of a place. It also sets out the procedure for dealing with complaints and for maintaining the necessary records for the processing of admissions on an applicant-by-applicant basis.

This Policy governs admission to all accredited undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the College. It does not cover Beginning Theology or non-accredited study.

***Process***

Programmes at SMC will be published via the SMC website for both potential independent students and ordinands.

Recruitment of ordinands is also through networking with Bishops, DDOs and other ministers involved in enabling ordinands to secure a training place.

Sometimes independent undergraduate and postgraduate students are referred through similar processes, but they are more likely to find out about SMC and its programmes via the college website – www.stmellitus.ac.uk.

To ensure parity across all College sites, the administration of admissions is held centrally by the Admissions Officer, who is overseen by the Academic Registrar.

An application is initiated by completing an electronic application form via the College website. This forms a key part of the evidence on which the College will make its decision as to whether to offer the applicant a place. Upon receipt of the form, a member of the Admissions Team at the relevant centre undertakes a preliminary screening of the application, and, unless it is immediately clear that the candidate cannot satisfy the admissions criteria (see below), invites the applicant to an interview and passes their application to the academic staff member who will be interviewing them. If a criminal conviction is declared on the application form, this will be followed up by the Safeguarding Officer.

At the Open Day or Evening, the prospective student will have the opportunity to sit in and sample some undergraduate teaching, meet students and staff, hear an introductory talk

about the College, and be given a tour of the site. All prospective ordinand students are interviewed either in person on the Open Day or online by at least one core member of the academic staff. All prospective independent students are invited to an interview at a later date following a successful application. At the discretion of the centre director, interviews for prospective independent students may be held on the same day as the Open Day. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email that their application is not being pursued. Applicants will hear from the college within four weeks of the submission of an online application.

A standard agenda is used by the interviewer which gives the candidate the opportunity to show whether they fulfil the admissions criteria (or could fulfil them by the time of enrolment). A written record is made of the interview in the form of notes on the agenda.

Following the interviews, all interviewers meet together with the Admissions Officer or equivalent onsite coordinator to discuss and agree offers. This collaborative approach ensures that all students are treated equally. Interviewers form their judgment as to whether the applicant either meets the criteria for admission or will do so by the time of enrolment on the basis both of their written application and the interview. Provisional decisions are made with respect to offers. At this stage the offer will usually be conditional on the receipt of satisfactory references, and other conditions may also be attached (for example, achievement of requisite A level grades, regulatory approval for non-standard admissions by the accrediting University, or arrangement of a long-term placement for students for whom that is relevant). In some circumstances a candidate may need to wait for University approval prior to be given an offer.

In some cases, the College will require further evidence before making or confirming an offer – for example, for postgraduate candidates or for candidates seeking admission direct to level 5, the transcript of the applicant's previous studies. All postgraduate candidates must normally submit a piece of work at level 6 of at least 2,000 words in order to assess their aptitude for level 7 work.

Two references are taken up for each candidate, normally one academic and one personal, with the exception of all ordinands who have already been through a rigorous selection within the Church of England. Where in the judgement of the College there is uncertainty concerning the applicant's suitability for a particular programme, they may either not be offered a place or, at the discretion of the College, be offered a place on a lower award with the possibility of transferring to a higher award subject to satisfactory progress. Such a transfer would be subject to a further application in accordance with this policy, and applicants should note that admission to the higher award is not guaranteed by passing the lower award. Satisfactory progress is usually considered to be achieving average marks of 2:2 or higher to progress from a Certificate to a Diploma, or Diploma to BA Degree. In the case of ordinands who receive 3 years of funding and are offered the BA Degree route with the possibility of moving to a postgraduate programme in their second year: ordinands must normally achieve an overall 1st

on the Certificate in order to switch to a postgraduate programme. If these higher grades are not met, the ordinand would continue on the BA programme.

Applicants who have fail marks recorded for modules from a previous Common Awards programme, even if awarded a lower exit award, are considered as having been withdrawn for academic failure and are therefore not eligible to return to another Common Awards programme to top up their credits for a higher award where those credits would have contributed to a higher award, e.g., if a student has failed any undergraduate level credits they cannot return to complete any higher (or lower) undergraduate level programme.

Applicants will be notified of the College's decision in writing by email normally within 10 working days of interview. Successful applicants will receive the Terms and Conditions, the Student Protection Plan, the Student Compensation Policy and a Reply Form included with the offer letter, and the candidate must confirm on the Reply Form that they have received, read, and accept the Terms and Conditions. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the outcome of the interview with a letter of decline.

Where references and/or further information are required (for example proof of highest qualification or safeguarding certificates), offers will be conditional and applicants will be given a deadline by which these will need to be provided.

After acceptance of the offer and return of the Reply Form, a member of the Admissions Team or centre equivalent will confirm receipt within 10 working days.

Should a candidate wish to defer their offer, they can indicate this on the Reply Form and the offer will be valid for one academic year. Students taking up a deferred offer will be liable to pay the fees in place for the year of enrolment.

Candidates will be asked to inform the College of any complex medical conditions which may affect their studies or specific learning differences, formerly called 'specific learning difficulties or any other physical disability'. This information will not be used in determining whether to offer the candidate a place, but to ensure the College has adequate opportunity to make preparations and any adjustments necessary for the candidate.

As candidates will provide their full legal name and date of birth as per their proof of identity, they will be requested to bring in their photo ID, such as a current passport (or other accepted proof of identity) as part of the induction process as a new student enrolling at the College and as a student at the accrediting University.

***Criteria for admission***

As a College which offers qualifications in Christian theology and ministry, St Mellitus looks to admit students who show promise of being able to complete their programme at the relevant level of qualification and who will be able to exercise ministry and leadership within the church, either during or after their course of study.

Successful applicants must meet all relevant criteria for 'all students' and some will need to meet the criteria for more than one additional category (for example, if they are an ordinand hoping to pursue a postgraduate programme, they will need to meet the additional criteria both for ordinands *and* for postgraduate students).

Criteria for all students

- The College will only consider applications from students who will be 18 by the time they enrol.
- Aptitude for study appropriate to the level of the qualification applied for (see below for further details with respect to each programme).
- Sympathy with and willingness to engage fully with the worshipping life of the Centre at which they are studying.
- Willingness to engage appropriately with the rest of the student body and staff team at both their own centre of study and, where relevant, the wider SMC student body.
- Evidence of maturity of character suitable for Christian ministry and theological study.
- Evidence of involvement in and commitment to the mission of a local church, which would normally be part of a member denomination of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and/or the Evangelical Alliance.
- Involvement in ministry and preferably leadership in a local church or church-related context, or sense of vocation to be a Christian presence in a secular workplace.
- Evidence of ability and desire to communicate the gospel in both formal and informal contexts.
- Evidence of good interpersonal skills on a one-to-one basis.
- Evidence of ability to work collaboratively as part of a group.
- Potential for growth into future leadership or leadership positions within the church.
- Desire to study the breadth of topics covered by the course.
- Adequate ability to understand and communicate in written and oral English. The College's application forms will ask students to disclose if they are not native speakers of the English language. Should they not be a native speaker, the following criteria would apply:
    - For students applying for undergraduate courses: IELTS 6.5 (with no component under 6.0) or equivalent.
    - For students applying for postgraduate courses: IELTS 7.0 (with no component under 6.5) or equivalent.

Equivalent to the IELTS tests could include other forms of formal assessment in English, including but not limited to having undertaken an accredited level 4 or above course in a humanities-based subject. Final decisions on equivalence, and on the necessity of individual students undertaking language tests will remain with St Mellitus College, in consultation with Common Awards.

- Fit of the student with the ethos of the College and suitability for cohort and group participation and involvement.

- Students need to be proficient computer and internet users to study on our programmes.
- Ability to provide proof for all qualifications listed on the application form.
- Ability to provide verification of identity as part of the application process.
- International students would need to acquire a Visa for the entirety of the course before applying, as we are unable to offer sponsorship.

Please note that candidates asked to complete an English language proficiency test as part of the admissions process incur this cost at their own expense. For ordinands, this cost will be covered by the Diocese.

The UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) definition of a mature student is someone who is over 21 at the start of their undergraduate studies, or over 25 at the start of their postgraduate studies.

Additional criteria for undergraduate students

- Undergraduates will normally have three A Levels (grade C or above) or equivalent for direct entry to a BA, two for entry onto a Diploma and one for entry onto a Certificate and Foundation Award (see below for possible exceptions). Applicants for the Foundation Award with lower grades are to speak to the admissions team.
- For the Certificate in Higher Education in Christian Ministry and Mission, candidates will normally have two A levels (grade C or above) or equivalent for direct entry as a result of the programme being 180 credits (CertHE 180) as opposed to 120 credits.
- For the Graduate Diploma, because the programme takes place alongside students taking the final year of their BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission, the College is responsible for ensuring that successful applicants can demonstrate sufficient prior aptitude for theological study such that they will not be disadvantaged by entering study at St Mellitus College at this level. Applicants must normally have a 2:1 Honours Degree in a humanities-based subject or a Diploma (HE) in Theology with a substantial proportion of their graded credit at Merit/2:1 level. However, especially for mature students, prior professional experience will be taken into account as well as educational qualifications. This will be assessed in the candidate's interview and may require additional evidence of that professional experience.
- Have completed the Safeguarding training on 'Basic Awareness' and 'Foundations' and provide the certificates as part of the application process. These can be completed on the Church of England National Safeguarding Team's online learning portal here.

Additional criteria for undergraduate students doing the Youth Ministry or Children Ministry Focus

- Capacity to undertake a part-time placement in a ministry context as per the parameters detailed in the Youth / Children Ministry Placement Handbook.
- Have completed the Safeguarding training on 'Basic Awareness' and 'Foundations' and provide the certificates as part of the application process. These can be completed on the Church of England National Safeguarding Team's online learning portal here.
- Have a valid DBS check and provided proof of it.

Additional criteria for postgraduate students

- As noted above, normally submission of a degree level academic paper of no less than 2,000 words written in the last 5 years, which must demonstrate the candidate's aptitude for postgraduate level study. Where a candidate cannot supply written work from within a 5-year currency, they will be assessed in their interview and may be asked to submit other evidence of experience that might be applicable to their application.
- A 2.1 Honours Degree is normally required for direct entry to any of our postgraduate programmes (see below for possible exceptions).
- The applicant's BA (Hons) should be in Theology or have contained substantial study of Theology up to level 6. 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 merit or distinction, or with an overall mark of at least 60%) may also be admitted to the programme.
- Applicants with a Graduate Diploma in Theology or an equivalent subject will be considered, and the College will look to satisfy itself at interview as to whether the candidate has adequate preparation and grounding for study at postgraduate level.
- However, especially for mature students, prior professional experience will be taken into account as well as educational qualifications. This will be assessed in the candidate's interview, and they may be asked to submit other evidence of experience that might be applicable to their application.
- Have completed the Safeguarding training on 'Basic Awareness' and 'Foundations' and provide the certificates as part of the application process. These can be completed on the Church of England National Safeguarding Team's online learning portal here.

Additional criteria for all ordinands

- Recommendation for training from a Church of England Stage 2 Panel or equivalent from a different church (with agreement from a Church of England Bishop). This process includes an assessment of the candidate's educational aptitude for training.

- Share the College's commitment to 'Generous Orthodoxy' i.e. working and worshipping together with ordinands from across the breadth of the Church of England and beyond.
- Have completed the Safeguarding training on 'Basic Awareness' and 'Foundations' and provide the certificates as part of the application process. These can be completed on the Church of England National Safeguarding Team's online learning portal here.
- Have a valid DBS check and provided proof of it.
- Current independent students who wish to transfer to an ordinand route will need to complete the ordinand application form.

Additional criterion for full-time context-based ordinands

- Capacity to undertake a -3-day placement in a ministry context, including a Sunday

Exceptions

- Where the requirements for aptitude for study appropriate to the level of the qualification applied for are not met, the College may at its discretion choose to offer places to students who can evidence:
    - equivalent academic potential, normally after the satisfactory completion of an enhanced interview which involves an academic discussion of a theological text.
    - having passed the educational criteria associated with the discernment process.

If there is any doubt about the candidate's aptitude for study at the desired level, as noted above, the College may offer the candidate the chance to commence on a lower award.

Please note that certain candidates will be asked to complete an enhanced interview which involves an academic discussion of a theological text supplied by the College to the candidate in advance of the interview.

***Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)***

Candidates who have prior accredited study or whose own learning and wide life experience have enabled them to meet learning outcomes for particular modules or levels within their course may, if they wish to, apply for Accredited Prior Learning (APL) for formal exemption from those modules or levels. This is a separate process to the process for application for admission and is normally subsequent to it. The College is governed by the policies of its accrediting University with respect to the award of Accredited Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accredited Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) (see the Durham Common Awards Policy for Accreditation of Prior Learning). Any applicant or student who wishes to apply for APCL or APEL should contact the Admissions Team. Candidates who wish to apply for APCL must provide relevant evidence of prior learning which normally includes transcripts and

module descriptors to support the process of mapping those modules on to modules taught at SMC. Candidates applying for APEL must provide evidence as requested by SMC. There may be certain scenarios where an applicant may not be offered a place until the accrediting University has approved the application for APCL or APEL. APCL or APEL is not permitted on the Foundation Award.

***Records***

The College keeps electronic records of:

- number of applicants per programme;
- number of offers per programme;
- number of offers accepted.

***SMC's obligations in the Admissions Process***

(a) routinely to document the reasons for admissions decisions in order to facilitate the provision of feedback to applicants upon request;

(b) to endeavour to resolve any concerns raised by applicants informally in the first instance;

(c) to operate fair, effective, and timely procedures to enable students to raise admissions complaints in the event that informal resolution is unsuccessful;

(d) to document clearly its internal procedures for raising admissions complaints so that applicants are aware of: the opportunity to raise an admissions complaint; the procedure they will need to follow to raise a complaint; which member(s) of core staff to contact at each stage in the process.

(e) to ensure that complainants are aware of their right to refer admissions complaints to the relevant accrediting University should they remain dissatisfied after the SMC has reviewed the complaint formally;

(f) not to discriminate against applicants who request feedback or make a complaint should they submit another application;

(g) to oversee admissions complaints through its Management Committee in order to monitor quality and standards, and report to the University. SMC will ensure effective record-keeping to ensure that any decisions made throughout the process are documented clearly for review and audit purposes.

***Review of the admissions policy***

The Admissions Policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Team. This review will include information provided to prospective students to ensure that it is accurate and current. The review will also consider the admission statistics collected for that academic year.

***Admissions Appeals and Complaints***

Admissions appeals or complaints may be progressed according to the following process:

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| **LEVEL 1: Appeal or investigation of the complaint by the College** | |
| **STAGE 1:**<br>**SMC: Informal resolution** | Prospective students who wish to make an appeal or raise a complaint should do so as soon as possible, and no more than 28 days after the event unless there is good reason for the delay. Even if a formal complaint is received, we will try to resolve the complaint using informal mechanisms in the first instance, where appropriate. This will involve a conversation either by telephone or in person between the applicant and thePrincipal or their nominee who will be a senior member of College staff. This conversation will identify the basis of the appeal or complaint and any relevant evidence. Information will be sought from the members of staff implementing the selection process. At the conclusion of these informal resolution attempts, the student will be informed of the formal complaint procedure and any deadline for submitting a formal complaint (normally 14 days). |
| **STAGE 2:**<br>**SMC: Formal resolution** | The formal stage will be instituted only if the informal procedures have been exhausted and the appellant or complainant remains dissatisfied. They will be required to submit a written account of the basis of their appeal or complaint explaining why they believe that their appeal or complaint is justified. This document should normally be submitted within 14 days of Stage One ending.<br><br>The Principal or their nominee will consider written evidence from the appellant or complainant in relation to this admissions policy. This will require information on the procedures undertaken by staff involved in the admissions process and will examine the relevant written records. The Principal will adjudicate on whether or not the appeal or complaint should be upheld. The result will be sent to the applicant in writing within 28 days of the formal complaint being received. |
| **LEVEL 2: Referral to the University** | |
| **STAGE 3: University review** | If the complainant remains dissatisfied once SMC's informal and formal procedures are exhausted, they will be informed of their right to request a review by the relevant University. The University will determine whether to review the admissions complaint and will ascertain whether SMC's admissions policy and processes have been |

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| | implemented correctly. If procedural irregularities are identified, the complaint may be referred back to SMC for further review. |

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