St Hild Admissions Policy

1 Introduction
1.1 This document sets out the Admissions Policy for St Hild (hereafter, 'the College'). It describes the principles and processes followed by the College with regard to student recruitment, selection, admissions and widening participation activity. It must be read in conjunction with the YTEP Admissions Policy and our Terms and Conditions document. The YTEP Admissions policy sets out the detailed academic requirements for admission to our validated programs with Durham University. The Terms and Conditions document provides contractual details for all admissions to the College whether on validated programs or not.

1.2 The College is committed to equality in education; students are selected on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes. We actively encourage applications from students from all groups who are currently under-represented in higher education. Therefore, the College is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices.

1.3 This policy complies with relevant legislation, with our own Equality and Diversity Policy, meets the expectation of the QAA Code of Practice: Chapter B2, and respects the good practice guides published by Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA).

2 Purpose
2.1 The purpose of this document is to provide policy information to enquirers, applicants, and advisors about recruitment, selection and admissions at the College. It is the policy framework for all members of staff who are involved in recruitment, selection and admissions activity.

3 Scope
3.1 The policy applies to the admission of all students at the College whether to accredited programs with Durham University, St Hild internally accredited programs or simply to audit courses or modules (see 5.5 below)

4 Recruitment and admissions principles and aims
4.1 The College is committed to the five key principles of fair admissions as set out in the Schwartz Report (2004) and accepted across the higher education sector:

- transparency
- minimising barriers to entry
- selecting for merit, potential and diversity
- professionalism
- using assessment methods that are reliable and valid.

4.2 The College recognises that making an application for higher education is an important decision, and is committed to providing potential applicants with accurate and impartial information and advice from the outset. This will help them to make an informed choice regarding the programmes which best suit their interests and skills. It will enable them to apply to programmes appropriate to their interests, academic qualifications and potential.

4.3 The College aims to increase the diversity of its student population, enriching the educational experience for all. Therefore, we seek in our promotional activities to attract a wide range of applicants from different social, cultural and educational backgrounds who can demonstrate the academic ability and the skills required to succeed in their chosen studies, and who have the potential and motivation to be confident contributors to society and / or potential leaders in the life of the Church.

4.4 The College aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination on any ground. Therefore, all applications are assessed on their own merits, and according to the agreed academic and non-academic selection criteria applied to each programme.

4.5 For all programmes, the selection process will take into account an applicant's:

- achieved and pending academic qualifications
- proficiency in the English language (see below)
- academic, professional or church references
- stated interest, commitment and motivation for study
- work, or other non-academic experience (where relevant)
- performance at interview (where relevant)
- portfolio, or sample of written work (where relevant)
- basic IT competence / equipment and / or willingness to learn / acquire them

4.6 Each application will be considered on an individual basis by the relevant centre head and other academic staff (as appropriate), working to agreed admissions criteria. All staff with designated recruitment, selection and admissions responsibilities must be familiar with this policy, and the associated procedures relevant to their areas of responsibility.

5 General Admission Criteria

5.1 Faith commitment

As a registered charity, St Hild's official aim is 'To advance the Christian religion by the promotion of theological education and training.' Our academic programmes are part of the Common Awards suite validated by Durham University: the university's programme regulations state that they are aimed at forming and equipping "Christian disciples and ministers". Therefore, although the College gladly welcomes students of all faiths and none, those who are not able to profess a Christian faith will need to be willing to enter in good faith into a community of study oriented towards these aims.

Furthermore, for most undergraduate awards, it is a Durham University requirement that students successfully complete one or more modules in theological reflection/reflective practice. In light of this, our normal expectation is that students will participate fully, not just in their academic studies, but also in the worshipping life of the College. This is not, however, an absolute requirement.

5.2 Age Requirement

All applicants must be aged 18 or over by the 1st of September of the year of entry.

5.3 IT Competence and Equipment

All of our modules make use of Moodle. Much of our communication is via emails or notices on the Moodle platform. All assignments will require students to use the internet to research topics. Therefore, all students (subject to any reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities) must be able to do the following by the time their course starts:

- Use a keyboard, mouse or touchscreen to input information and commands

- Use word processing applications such as Word, and presentation applications such as Powerpoint
- Send and receive emails and have an email address
- Search the internet and retrieve information from it (though see the academic misconduct policy)
- Use and manage files and folders in order to store assignments and resources
- Download files from Moodle; and upload assignment files to Moodle

All students must have, or have access to, the equipment (eg. Laptop and internet access) to facilitate these functions. If any student does not have these skills and / or equipment then they must be willing to learn and acquire them prior to commencement of a course. St Hild can advise on how students can access free basic IT courses, and financial support may be available for equipment.

5.4 Sponsored Ministry Students
Applicants preparing for licensed ministry in the Church of England whether as lay or ordained must have the approval of their respective Diocesan Bishop OR, if they are part of a ministry experience, pre-training scheme, the approval of the relevant Diocesan Director or Ordinands.

Those applying to be a Baptist Minister-in-Training must be approved by their own Baptist church and the relevant regional association.

Those sponsored by their own church must provide confirmation, in writing, that their church supports the application and takes responsibility for paying any relevant fees.

5.5 Independent Applicants
St Hild welcomes independent applicants who are not sponsored by a denomination or local church but who meet the overarching and program-specific entry requirements. If an independent applicant's chosen programme involves regulated activities as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended), they must successfully complete the College's safer recruitment process, which includes providing appropriate references, completing a confidential self-declaration form, and, if required by law, obtaining an enhanced DBS disclosure.

5.6 Auditors, Internal Assessment and Taster Modules
St Hild welcomes students who may not wish to obtain academic credit with Durham University, but nevertheless would still like to study with us. This can take three different forms.

- Auditors are those students who join the learning community for one or more modules, receiving the benefit of the study opportunity and resources provided, but do not undertake any assignments.
- Internally assessed students also join in study sessions, but their assignments are set and marked by St Hild. They receive St Hild credit, but not Durham credit for such work.
- Taster modules are those which a student takes to help them decide whether subsequent Durham accredited study is appropriate for them. A student may simply 'audit' a module in this way, but more commonly a student will sit the module for internal assessment. If they decide they want to continue with Durham accredited study then this taster module can usually be converted into Durham credit via the Accreditation of Prior Learning process (see also 8. APL below)

Irrespective of which of these options is taken, if the module necessarily involves any kind of placement with vulnerable groups then the prospective student will be required to complete our safer recruitment processes including references and an enhanced

DBS. The College reserves the right to refuse admission to any student if their participation might disrupt the learning experience of other students or if the module is deemed unsuitable for auditing or internal assessment.

5.7 English language proficiency
All programmes at the College are delivered in the medium of English. The College requires successful applicants to demonstrate that their ability to understand and to express themselves in English (reading, writing, speaking and listening) is sufficient to enable them to achieve the full benefit from studying at the College. The full criteria for English Language proficiency are set out in the YTEP admissions policy, but in summary, if English is not the student's first language then the following conditions apply:

- Undergraduate courses – IELTS (or equivalent) of 6.5 with no component under 6.0
- Postgraduate courses – IELTS (or equivalent) of 7.
- Internally assessed / audit courses – no formal IELTS criteria, but assessed on a case by case basis depending on future study intentions, church or denomination sponsorship requirements, and future ministry goals

6 Applicants with Disabilities
6.1 St Hild welcomes applications from prospective students with disabilities. Such applications are considered on the same criteria and principles as other candidates. St Hild is committed to making reasonable and practicable adjustments to enable students with disabilities to succeed in their studies. Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to disclose this information during the application process so that appropriate adjustments can be planned. Please see our full disability support policy for further details.

7 Academic Entry applicants
The following section only applies to those studying for Durham University credit.

7.1 The standard academic entry requirements are a minimum of one 'A' level pass for admission to the Certificate of Higher Education programme. Successful completion of that programme enables progression to the Diploma of Higher Education, and subsequently Bachelor of Arts programmes.

7.1 The standard entry requirements for direct entry to the BA programme are THREE 'A' level passes.

7.2 The standard academic entry requirements for postgraduate study are an upper second-class honours degree, Graduate Diploma or equivalent in theology. Graduates in other disciplines with experience of theology or religious studies to at least undergraduate Certificate level (awarded with an overall mark of at least 60%) may also be admitted to these programmes.

7.3 Applicants who do not meet the standard academic requirements may still be considered for admission based on their professional experience, prior learning, and potential to benefit from the program. Such applicants may be required to complete a written admissions task, such as a book review or theological reflection, to demonstrate their readiness for study at the required level.

7.4 For full details please see the YTEP Admissions Policy

8 Accreditation of Prior Learning
8.1 Applicants may claim accreditation of prior learning (APL), both certificated (APCL) and experiential (APEL), if they have evidence of, or can demonstrate, prior learning that fulfils relevant learning outcomes of their chosen programme. The maximum

number of credits that can be claimed against each award is detailed in the YTEP Admissions policy.

8.2 Applicants seeking Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) will discuss the possibility with the College's Dean of Studies and / or Centre Head. If there is the potential for a positive outcome to an application the applicant will be offered support in producing the evidence needed to demonstrate that they have met the appropriate learning outcomes.

8.3 Applicants are expected to ensure that their APL claim is submitted before they start their programme.

9 Admission Process

The following process only applies to those studying for Duham University credit. Separate processes apply for audit only and internal credit students. Please see our website for further details.

9.1 Following initial enquiries, and possibly an open day visit, all potential applicants will be required to complete an online application form.

9.2 Students will be interviewed by members of our academic team usually comprising the relevant Centre Head, Dean of Studies and / or Principal or Vice-Principal.

9.3 Decisions regarding admission will then be taken by those who have interviewed the candidate and scrutinised their documentation.

9.4 Offer letters (see below) are then sent out by our centre administrators, and they require the student to complete an 'Offer Acceptance Form'.

9.5 The admission process is only complete once we have received a signed Offer Acceptance Form. Following admission, the student then embarks on the College's enrolment process which involves a series of communications inducting the student into the life of the College.

9.6 An admission appeals process is detailed on our website and in the YTEP admission policy.

10 Offers

10.1 Offers to study at the College may be Conditional or Unconditional:

- A **Conditional Offer** means that the applicant has yet to satisfy all entry requirements but is likely to meet them before enrollment.
- An **Unconditional Offer** is made when the applicant has satisfied all academic and other entry requirements.

10.2 All applicants who are offered a place to study at the College will receive an offer letter which details whether the offer is conditional or unconditional, and if the latter what the conditions are. Any conditions attached to an offer of a place will be clear and specific.

10.3 An offer is not a guarantee of funding.

10.4 Applicants in possession of an offer of a place may request that it be deferred to the next intake. Such requests should be submitted in writing to the relevant Centre Head. No guarantee is made that such a request will be approved, though consent will normally be given in such circumstances.

10.5 The College reserves the right to reject an applicant, or to withdraw any offer made, based on an applicant's behaviour during any part of the application process, if

such behaviour is deemed to be unacceptable in accordance with the College's *Code of Conduct* or any other relevant policy of the College.

10.6 Applicants who are unsuccessful may apply again in a subsequent year. Applications will be considered against the standard programme entry criteria for that year of entry. The new application should demonstrate an improvement from the previous application. We may draw upon all information from previous applications when assessing suitability for a programme.

11 Fraud and plagiarism

11.1 The College expects that applicants will have provided full, honest, and accurate information on their application form, and in all subsequent communications. Where the College has reason to suspect that this may not be the case, it reserves the right to investigate the matter fully.

11.2 Although scanned copies of documents may be accepted during the admissions process, original documents can be requested at any stage. Decision makers are experienced in detecting and dealing with fraudulent documents. Programme administrators may ask to see original documents at registration, for confirmation purposes.

11.3 The College will not admit applicants on the strength of information considered to be either fraudulent or plagiarised. Where an applicant is suspected of having provided a fraudulent or plagiarised element of their application, the application will be assessed in the first instance on the basis of standard academic and non-academic selection criteria. If it is recommended that an offer be made, an investigation of the fraud or plagiarism will be carried-out before the final decision is made. The College reserves the right to reject or cancel an application under these circumstances. The College may terminate a student's registration if he/she is found at a later stage to have submitted a fraudulent or plagiarised element of their application to the College.

12 Code of Conduct

12.1 Our Values

Mission is at the heart of all we do. As we pursue our calling as a college, we want to be characterised by these values:

- *Prayerful* – responding to divine calling; waiting on God's wisdom and grace; giving thanks always for God's gifts to us.
- *Collaborative* – partnering with Anglican Dioceses, Baptist Associations and other denominations, resource churches, and other colleges to build capacity for Christian ministry and mission in our region; staff and students working and learning alongside one another to co-create a loving, hospitable and empowering learning community.
- *Courageous* – hopeful and bold in sharing the Good News and building up the people of God; supporting unexpected callings in a culture of risk-taking and responsible teamwork; daring greatly in honest relationships with one another.
- *Pioneering* – creative participation in God's mission; pursuing new things with permission to experiment, to fail and to learn so as to grow; freedom to explore innovative approaches to training, learning and discipleship

In light of these values, this code of conduct applies to all staff and students of the College. It applies whenever we are engaged in work or study associated with the College, and in all our interactions with one another whether they are remote or in person.

12.2 Our Code of Conduct

We will demonstrate respect and courtesy towards one another by:

- allowing one another time to think and speak
- listening attentively in order to understand rather than reply

- using our language carefully seeking to ensure that we do not offend or incite offence
- adhering to appropriate boundaries in our interpersonal relationships
- respecting the views of others and so disagreeing well with grace and humility
- respecting confidential information, including that shared as part of class / formational activities
- refraining from all forms of harassment, bullying or violence, calling out those that engage in such behaviours, and standing as an ally with those who are so victimised

We will practice integrity in all we do by:
- speaking truthfully about ourselves and others
- refraining from all forms of academic misconduct
- applying ourselves diligently to our work and study
- living out these values and principles outside of College and in particular in how we communicate on social media

We will foster a safe, supportive and hospitable environment for all by:
- never acting in a manner that causes alarm or distress for others
- failing to report the unsafe behaviour of others
- never attending work or teaching under the influence of drugs and / or alcohol
- helping one another as we are able
- showing compassion and concern for all

We will show respect for the institutions in which we are involved by:
- respecting and adhering to all the rules and regulations of St Hild, YTEP and our placement churches
- never acting in a way that brings St Hild, YTEP or our placement churches into disrepute

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