

Early College Transfer (ECT) Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Applying to the Programme

Do I need to register with my local Education Welfare Team?

Yes. It is essential that parents/carers register with their local Education Welfare Team. This enables them to support your application following their assessment of your home education provision.

Do I need to provide evidence of my child's current studies?

Yes. To ensure your child is working at the level required for Level 2 study, we ask parents/carers to provide a portfolio of work completed at home. Please bring this to your individual meeting with a member of the ECT team.

What is the application process?

The application process for the Early College Transfer (ECT) programme consists of the following stages:

1. Submit an Application – Applications should be completed via the website and returned with any supporting information requested.
2. Attend an Informal Meeting/ Interview – Applicants and parents/carers will meet with a member of the ECT team to discuss the learner's suitability for the programme.
3. Attend a Taster Session – Applicants will take part in a taster session within their chosen vocational area to ensure the course and college environment are the right fit.
4. Enrolment – Successful applicants will be invited to enrol and receive information about induction and their start date.

Before attending interview we recommend attending an Open Evening to learn more about the programme, meet the tutors and ECT team, and explore the college environment.

College Expectations

What are the expectations for ECT learners?

All learners are expected to demonstrate the college values of:

- Achievement
- Attendance
- Aspiration
- Attitude

If a learner is struggling to meet expectations, an intervention meeting will be arranged involving the learner, parent/carer, and a member of the ECT team. In some cases, where college is not yet the right environment, a learner may be asked to leave the programme and encouraged to reapply when they are more "college ready".

Settling into College

What support will my child receive when starting at Calderdale College?

Although learners joining our Early College Transfer (ECT) programme are expected to demonstrate a level of independence and maturity, we recognise that moving from home education into a college environment is a significant step. We provide the following support to help them settle successfully and thrive in the college environment. Before the start of term, learners take part in a short induction programme, giving the opportunity to meet other learners and become familiar with the college environment. This includes a taster session in their chosen vocational area and initial assessments in Maths and English.

We have an open door policy in our ECT office (B12), where learners are welcome to drop in at any time. We are a small team with many years of experience supporting 14–16 year olds and are committed to ensuring learners feel supported, enjoy their time at college, and achieve their full potential.

In addition, every learner receives an individual tutorial each half term to review their progress, attendance, wellbeing, and overall experience. Parents and carers are always welcome to contact us if they have any concerns.

Additional Needs and Support

My child has additional needs. Will the College provide support?

Calderdale College is not a specialist provision, and there is currently no additional funding available to support learners without agreed external funding arrangements. Our vocational tutors are specialists in their subject areas and are experienced in supporting a wide range of learners. While we understand many aspects of neurodiversity and make reasonable adjustments where possible, learners must be able to manage within a large, busy, and structured college environment.

Many learners find that the shorter timetable and vocational focus reduce some of the challenges they previously experienced in school. However, if it becomes clear during the early weeks that college is not yet the right environment, we will have an open and honest discussion with families and may recommend deferring for a year.

What if my child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

If your child has an EHCP, their needs will be discussed with both you and our Inclusive Learning Team before enrolment. Additional support can only be provided where funding has been agreed by the Local Education Authority. Parents/carers are responsible for securing this funding prior to their child starting the programme.

Can the College assess my child for dyslexia or other learning differences?

Unfortunately, we are unable to carry out assessments for dyslexia, Irlen Syndrome, or other specific learning differences. However, if your child already has assessment reports or supporting documentation, we can share these with our Inclusive Learning Team. They can then advise on exam access arrangements, reasonable adjustments and recommendations for tutors to support your child's learning.

Monitoring Progress

How will I be kept informed about my child's progress?

As a further education college, our systems differ from those used in schools. Parents/carers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with our online learning platforms, including assignment tracking systems and CenturyTech. CenturyTech creates an individual learning pathway for each learner, allowing both parents and tutors to monitor progress. These platforms will allow you to monitor:

- Assignment deadlines
- Feedback and referrals
- Learning progress
- Topics studied
- Independent learning activity

As we do not have the same staffing and resources as schools, parents/carers play an important role in monitoring their child's progress through these platforms. Our ECT team remains available to answer questions, and tutors are always happy to speak with parents/carers where required.

Please direct any enquiries to ECT@calderdale.ac.uk, and we will ensure they reach the appropriate member of staff.

Attendance and Holidays

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

We prefer learners not to take holidays during term time due to the impact on their studies. Unlike schools, however, we do not issue fines. To support home-educating families, our ECT academic year runs from mid-September until late June, providing opportunities to take holidays outside traditional school holiday periods. Please be aware that vocational courses involve approximately eight hours of study each week, so missing even one week can have a significant impact.

GCSE Study

Can my child study GCSEs only?

No. Due to capacity restrictions, learners must study one GCSE alongside a vocational programme.

Can my child study more than one GCSE?

No. Due to the limited guided learning hours available to home-educated learners, students can study only one GCSE alongside their vocational qualification. However, if a learner joins us in Year 11 and studies the alternate GCSE independently at home, they may be able to sit this as an external candidate at Calderdale College, provided their mock examination results demonstrate they are working at the required level.

The current examination entry fee is between £65 and £77, although this may change each year. If you are interested in this option, please discuss it during your initial interview.

Does the College offer Foundation and Higher GCSE courses?**English GCSE**

There are no separate Foundation and Higher tiers in English, so all learners have the opportunity to achieve the highest possible grade.

Maths GCSE

Our standard delivery covers the Foundation tier curriculum. If a learner demonstrates strong mathematical ability and wishes to sit the Higher tier paper, we will support this. The Maths tutor will assess your child's suitability during the first few weeks of the course. If Higher tier entry is appropriate, this will be discussed with parents/carers. Responsibility for learning the additional Higher tier content rests with the learner and parent/carer, supported by resources such as CenturyTech. Tutors will advise on which additional topics need to be studied.

Costs and Financial Support**Are there any course fees?**

There are no tuition fees for the ECT programme. However, some vocational courses require specialist equipment or clothing (for example, safety boots for Construction courses), which must be provided by parents/carers.

Is there any financial support available for 14–16-year-olds?

Unfortunately, the government bursary schemes available to 16–18 year olds in further education are not available for home-educated learners aged 14–16.

The government states:

"It remains the case that when parents choose to electively home educate their children, they assume financial responsibility for their children's education."

For more information, please visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education

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