

# St Padarn's Institute Admissions Policy and Procedure



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ST PADARN'S INSTITUTE

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# St Padarn's Institute Admissions Policy and Procedure

## 1. Contents of Policy

1. Contents of Policy
2. Introduction
3. Policy Framework
4. Key Principles
5. Responsibilities for Applications Process
6. Admissions Process
7. Admission of Candidates preparing for Recognised Ministry
8. General Selection Criteria (All Programmes)
9. Criteria for Admission (Specific Programmes)
10. Admissions with Prior Learning
11. Mature Applicants
12. Deferred Entry
13. International Learners
14. Age on Entry
15. Applicants with Disabilities and Additional Learning Needs
16. Outcome of Application Process
17. Changes to Programmes
18. Discontinuation of Programmes
19. Document Verification
20. Prior Extenuating Circumstances
21. Equality of Opportunity
22. Marketing and Promotion
23. Data Protection
24. Right of Appeal
25. Process of Making a Complaint or Appeal concerning the Admissions Process or Decision
26. Policy Approval and Review

## **2. Introduction**

This policy applies to admissions to university-validated St Padarn's Institute programmes.

St Padarn's is committed to ensuring that the admissions process is easily accessible, fair, transparent and consistent and provides each learner with a good quality application experience. For the purposes of admission to St Padarn's, as well as assessing the applicant's academic ability and their potential to study and achieve the intended award, the Institute also assesses the following:

- The applicant's eligibility to live and study in the UK for the duration of the course
- The applicant's fee status, including their eligibility for Learner Finance, bursaries, grants and other funding
- The applicant's English Language ability.

## **3. Policy Framework**

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following regulations, policies and procedures. This list is not exhaustive:

- B.Th. and M.A. Handbooks
- St Padarn's Learning Support Policy
- St Padarn's Auditing Policy
- St Padarn's Equality and Diversity Policy
- St Padarn's Code of Conduct
- St Padarn's Learner's Contract
- Church in Wales' Data Protection Policy
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Enabling Student Achievement. November 2018
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals. November 2018
- Academic Quality Handbook – University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

- Core Regulations Documents: Durham University
- UK Visa and Immigration documentation.

#### **4. Key Principles**

The Institute's recruitment, selection and admissions are informed by its Vision Statement: *To serve God's transforming mission of love for Wales by being a community focused on mission-orientated formation and training for the whole people of God.*

This document specifies the principles and processes used for considering applications to study at St Padarn's Institute, linking them with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.<sup>1</sup>

St Padarn's is committed to ensuring that all our information for those who enquire and for applicants is clear and provides relevant information for making informed decisions on courses. The Institute endeavours to ensure that all information available to applicants on its website [www.stpadarns.ac.uk](http://www.stpadarns.ac.uk) is up to date. However, as printed materials may have been published well in advance of the start of any programme, the Institute reserves the right to make variations to the published contents, methods of delivery or specific entry requirements of courses if such action is reasonable and considered to be necessary. Enquirers, applicants and their families are encouraged to visit the campus in Cardiff or one of our Learning Communities.

#### **5. Responsibilities for Applications Process**

- 5.1** Each application is considered individually, based on information submitted on the application form and supporting documentation required by St Padarn's.
- 5.2** St Padarn's will assess and process all applications only on the information provided.
- 5.3** Recruitment, selection and admissions processes are managed by the Director of Operations, who will be trained in all aspects of this policy and admissions procedures. Enquiries are initially handled by the Registry.
- 5.3.1** All St Padarn's staff involved in the admissions process follow the criteria

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<sup>1</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

and procedures for selection consistently and professionally. However, academic discretion in considering all other available information underpins the selection process to ensure individual circumstances are taken into account and that it is fair across a range of experiences and expertise.

**5.3.2** Applicants for university accredited study will be enrolled on the appropriate university course and will be subject to the rules, regulations, and procedures of the accrediting university.

## **6. Admissions Process**

**6.1** Applications to all undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes at St Padarn's should be made directly using the application form provided. Candidates with disabilities which prevent them from using the form may request application materials in another format.

**6.1.1** Applications for courses validated by the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David should use the St Padarn's application form which can be obtained from the St Padarn's Registry.

**6.1.2** Applications for courses at Durham University should use the St Padarn's application form which can be obtained from the St Padarn's Registry.

**6.2** Applications for study should be returned to the St Padarn's Registry.

**6.3** Once a complete application is received by the St Padarn's Registry the application will be processed as follows:

**6.3.1** The Registry normally aims to complete initial processing of all applications within 5 working days during which time references may be requested.

**6.3.2** Applicants will, if needed, be interviewed either in person or by telephone / video by a member of the academic staff.

**6.3.3** All applications for admission to undergraduate programmes are considered by the B.Th. Admissions Group.

**6.3.4** All applications for admission to postgraduate programmes are considered by the PGT (Postgraduate) Admissions Group.

**6.3.5 Decisions on admission will be made by the appropriate Admissions Group.**

**6.3.6 Successful applicants** will receive a letter of offer (explicitly stating any conditions) normally within 5 working days of the appropriate Admissions

Group meeting.

**6.3.7 Unsuccessful applicants** will receive a rejection letter (with explanation and advice) normally within 5 working days of the appropriate Admissions Group meeting. All unsuccessful applicants will be informed of their right to complain and appeal against an application decision or the conduct of the process.

**6.3.8** Applicants must confirm their acceptance of a place on a course within 15 working days of receipt of the letter of offer. Confirmation of the acceptance of a place must be made using the [Acceptance of a Place form](#) which will be sent with the letter of offer.

**6.3.9** When completing the application form, at interview stage, and when a letter of offer is sent, learners will be informed of their right to complain and appeal about an admissions decision, and about the process for doing this.

## **7. Admission of Candidates Preparing for Recognised Ministry**

**7.1** Candidates preparing for recognised ministry are admitted to St Padarn's for training for that ministry on the sponsorship of their Bishop (or equivalent Church authority), who will sign a sponsorship form to indicate this. Normally this will be on the advice of the Provincial/Regional Discernment Board after the candidate has attended a provincial or regional discernment residential event.

## **8. General Selection Criteria (All Programmes)**

Entry routes for all programmes of study will include the widest possible range of criteria to enable each applicant's capabilities to be fully assessed. The following factors, in no particular order will be used when deciding whether to make an offer for a particular programme:

- Applicant's past performance in public examinations
- Objective assessment of any factors that affected past performance
- Objective assessment of work and/or life experience or skill-based knowledge
- Academic potential including previous theological study
- Applicant's potential to meet specific and general entry requirements
- Ability of applicant to benefit from the proposed programme of study

- Ability of the candidate to complete the learning outcomes of the proposed programme
- Applicant's understanding of the programme applied for
- Understanding of, and acceptance of, the aims and ethos of St Padarn's
- The observations of the candidate's references as to their suitability for the programme of study (including suitability for placements)
- Appropriateness of application according to eligibility criteria
- Satisfactory references where required
- Ability to meet fees
- Health (ability to complete the programme of study).

**8.1** In order for St Padarn's to be assured that the admissions criteria have been satisfied, assessment will be made by means of information contained on the application form, transcripts and qualifications certificates, personal interview (on campus or by telephone / video), and references supplied.

**8.2** St Padarn's will seek to provide access to higher education to the broadest range of participants within its policy of widening access and participation and equal opportunity.

**8.3** This means that all applicants will be considered solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential to succeed in their chosen course. This will be done within the framework set by the Institute's policies and procedures including those regarding suitability for practice and applicants declaring a criminal conviction.

**8.4** The Admissions Groups have the right to consider for discretionary admission applicants whose lack of academic qualification is compensated by experience.

**8.5** All places are offered in accordance with this policy.

**8.6** Any significant changes to a programme made between the time of offer and completion of registration will be notified to applicants and the options available will be advised at the earliest opportunity.

### **8.7 English Language Requirements: General**

**8.7.1** Only English speakers (according to the UKVI list of English-speaking countries <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english>) are exempt from taking an English language proficiency test.

**8.7.2** The normal expectation for English language proficiency is IELTS. Where this is not available, assessments of English proficiency, alternative English language qualifications such as ESOL, TOEFL (taken at official testing centre) will be considered.

## **8.8 English Language Requirements: Programme Specific**

**8.8.1** For our Undergraduate programmes, an IELTS score of 6.0, with a minimum of 6.0 in all categories is required where applicant's home country is not listed by the UK Government as a majority English-speaking country.

**8.8.2** For our Masters programme, an IELTS score of 6.5, with a minimum of 6.0 in all categories is required where the applicant's home country is not listed by the UK Government as a majority English-speaking country.

**8.8.3** For our Postgraduate Research programmes, an IELTS score of 7.0, with no component under 6.5 in any category, is required where the applicants home country is not listed by the UK Government as a majority English-speaking country.

**8.9** St Padarn's is not currently a sponsoring establishment for Tier 4 visa applicants.

Exemptions from English language requirements are normally only granted to those applicants who have either been resident in the UK for a long period of time or who have obtained their academic entry qualifications, through the medium of English, from a recognised institution in a majority English-speaking country (as defined above). Any claim for exemption from IELTS testing must be emailed to [admissions@stpadarns.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@stpadarns.ac.uk) at the time of application. The decision of St Padarn's on this matter will be final.<sup>2</sup>

## **9. Criteria for Admission (Specific Programmes)**

In addition to the general selection criteria of the previous section, the St Padarn's Academic Board will determine specific criteria for each programme. These specific criteria are publicly available on the St Padarn's website.

**9.1** Applicants with qualifications from other educational contexts outside Europe will be considered on a case-by-case basis, using transcripts and where necessary samples of work. Samples of work and transcripts will be assessed by St Padarn's

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<sup>2</sup> IELTS scores (or recognised equivalent) will only be accepted within two years of the test result. Applicants cannot be interviewed or accepted onto a programme of study until a satisfactory IELTS (or recognised equivalent) results certificate has been received by St Padarn's.



academic staff who will draw on their experience of teaching other learners from similar contexts, and their own international teaching experience to assess the suitability of the learner to undertake the programme.

**9.2** In some cases, where applicants do not meet the academic requirements due to exceptional circumstances, a written piece of work may be set to assess their academic suitability for the course for which they have applied. St Padarn's may deem it necessary for the applicant to undertake further work to reach the required standard before beginning any Programme of study.

## **10. Admissions with Prior Learning**

St Padarn's accepts applications based on Prior Certificated Learning and Prior Experiential Learning and this is a standard and important feature of its admissions process. All staff with responsibilities for recruitment and admissions will keep up to date with developments internationally and nationally.<sup>3</sup>

NB The universities which validate our programmes employ different terminology to describe the process by which prior learning may contribute to their awards. The validating university for our undergraduate programmes uses the terms Recognition of Prior Learning (RPEL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL). The validating university of our postgraduate programmes uses the terms Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

**10.1** The Recognition / Accreditation of Prior Learning requires a careful assessment of what has been learnt and may involve preparation by the applicants in order for them to demonstrate the learning they feel they have already achieved.

**10.2** The consideration of prior learning applications for **undergraduate** programmes is undertaken by the validating university using their own prior learning policies and processes.

**10.3** The assessment of prior learning applications for **postgraduate** programmes is undertaken by St Padarn's using the validating university's policies and procedures; decisions are subject to review and, if necessary, revision by the validating university.

**10.4** Applicants should be aware that for **undergraduate** programme an application for Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning application may require the payment of a fee to the validating university. Applicants should be aware that this may represent a substantial amount; applicants will be advised of the cost prior to

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<sup>3</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018. Guiding Principles 5 and 6.

the initiation of work required for an RPEL application.

**10.5** Requests for Recognition / Accreditation of prior learning are normally dealt with at application stage.

**10.6** For applications to **postgraduate** programmes that are validated by Durham University further detailed information on the relevant policies and procedures can be found at <https://www.durham.ac.uk/departments/academic/common-awards/policies-processes/admissions/>.

## **11. Mature Applicants**

Anyone who is 21 at the start of their undergraduate course is eligible for consideration as a mature learner. St Padarn's recognises that typically such applicants are highly motivated. Many may apply who do not have appropriate qualifications from within the formal education system; their applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **12. Deferred Entry**

Deferred entry is granted at the discretion of the Programme Leader. Applicants should indicate that they wish to defer entry on their application form. Applications for deferred entry will be considered equally up until the point of confirmation. Normally, deferred entry is granted for one year only.

## **13. International Learners**

All non-EU learners require permission to study in the UK for courses longer than 6 months. St Padarn's is not currently an institution which can sponsor learners who require a Tier 4 visa, and therefore cannot at present accept such applicants.

## **14. Age on Entry**

For undergraduate learners the expected age of entry to St Padarn's is 18 years or over at the point of enrolment.

## **15. Applicants with Disabilities and Additional Learning Needs**

The Institute operates a Policy to ensure equal opportunities and access for people with disabilities including those with additional learning needs. Applications from learners with disabilities and additional learning needs are welcomed by St Padarn's.

**15.1** The Institute seeks to ensure that those responsible for the recruitment of learners do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly against people with disabilities.

**15.2** Registry staff will ensure that any necessary arrangements are made to enable an applicant with a disability to complete the applications form and submit relevant documentation and attend a formal interview if that is required.

**15.3** Support for learners with Disabilities and Additional Learning Needs is set out in the [St Padarn's Equality and Diversity Policy](#) and the [St Padarn's Learning Support Policy](#).

## **16. Outcome of Application Process**

**16.1** Applicants who do not meet the entry requirements for the course they wish to take will be informed of other more appropriate courses offered by St Padarn's at the same time as being notified of the decision on their initial choice. All applicants will be informed of their right to complain and appeal against an application decision or the conduct of the process.

**16.2** Applicants who have met the entry requirement of St Padarn's will receive an offer of a place subject to available places remaining on a course. The number of places available on a given course will be determined annually by the Academic Board. Any offer of a place made will include details on how to respond to the offer and further information on subsequent steps. St Padarn's will inform its applicants of any significant changes made to a programme, and in cases where such changes no longer meet an applicant's needs, will use its reasonable endeavours to provide a suitable alternative internally or help secure a comparable course at an alternative institution.

**16.3** Learners will be registered with St Padarn's for their programme of study and also with the relevant validating university.

**16.4** The following, additional information will be made available to learners before they commence their programme of study:

- Academic and other support services available
- Relevant programme handbook and programme regulations
- SPI's Policies and Procedures
- Accommodation details (if appropriate)
- Induction information

- Moodle login details
- St Padarn's email details.

## **17. Changes to Programmes**

St Padarn's reserves the right to make variations to the contents or methods of delivery of programmes, if such action is reasonably considered to be necessary.

## **18. Discontinuation of Programmes**

**18.1** St Padarn's reserves the right to discontinue or merge programmes both before and after a learner's admission. Circumstances where a programme may be discontinued include, but are not limited to, lack of demand, departure of key personnel, withdrawal or reduction in funding and/or change of law.

**18.2** If a programme is discontinued St Padarn's will contact applicants as soon as the decision is made to explain the decision and offer advice about the applicant's best course of action. This may include offering a suitable alternative internally or helping to secure a comparable course at an alternative institution.

## **19. Document Verification**

**19.1** All learners will be required to present original academic and personal documentation (or certified copies) at enrolment prior to the start of the programme of study.

**19.2** Documentation is verified by Registry staff. If any information relevant to the application is found to be fraudulent, inconsistent with the application or missing, the application will be deemed void and the offer of a place will be cancelled.

**19.3** Learners should identify referees to support their application. If St Padarn's has any reason to believe that the learner or their referee have:

- Left out any information (including qualifications the learner has completed, any qualifications with an unsuccessful grade; or any qualifications for which results are still pending)
- Given false or misleading information
- Supplied a personal statement, or parts of a personal statement, that has not been written by the learner.

St Padarn's reserves the right to take any necessary steps to check with the learner

and third parties whether it is accurate or complete.

**19.4** St Padarn's reserves the right to cancel an application if the Institute, having carried out suitable checks, believes that any of the issues raised under 19.3 are deemed to have taken place.

## **20. Prior Extenuating Circumstances**

**20.1** It is the applicant's responsibility to inform St Padarn's of any extenuating circumstances that may lead, or have led to, past academic performance that is not truly indicative of their true potential.

**20.2** St Padarn's reserves the right to request further information from a third party when an applicant requests extenuating circumstances for past qualifications. If deemed necessary, and with the applicant's permission, the applicant's academic institution, examination body, doctor or other appropriate third party may be contacted.

## **21. Equality of Opportunity**

The Institute recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide equality of opportunity to all potential learners during the enquiry, and to follow a fair, transparent and professional recruitment and selection process.<sup>4</sup>

**21.1** St Padarn's will make every effort to ensure that applicants are treated solely on the basis of their merit, abilities and potential. St Padarn's is committed to ensuring that unlawful direct or indirect discrimination does not take place. We are also committed to avoiding discrimination on grounds of socio-economic background. We believe that diversity is a positive contribution to the learning experience at St Padarn's (see [St Padarn's Equality and Diversity Policy](#)).<sup>5</sup>

**21.2** St Padarn's will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly by showing appropriate sensitivity to individual differences. It will also ensure that decisions about recruitment, selection and admission at all levels are based solely on objective academic and non-academic criteria that have been made available to applicants prior to application.

**21.3** The Institute will ensure that staff involved with admissions are aware of the

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<sup>4</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018. Guiding Principle 1.

<sup>5</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Enabling Student Achievement. November 2018. Guiding Principles 2 and 5. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/enabling-student-achievement>

moral, regulatory and legal issues affecting equal treatment of potential learners and applicants.<sup>6</sup>

**21.4** The Institute will ensure that policies and procedures related to admissions and enrolment are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to support its mission and strategic objectives and that they remain current and valid in the light of legislation and regulatory requirements. The Institute will also ensure that staff involved with recruitment and admissions, are competent to undertake their role and kept up to date with legislation and regulatory requirements.<sup>7</sup>

**21.5** The Institute will seek to promote and develop diversity of its learner body by:

- Treating each applicant on his/her own merit
- Identifying learner potential as well as acknowledging past academic and other achievements
- Ensuring that all publicity campaigns and material, correspondence and application forms reflect the diversity of the learner population and potential application group, avoiding inappropriate images or descriptions of the learner body.

## **22. Marketing and Promotion**

**22.1** Information contained in prospectuses, website, flyers, or brochures will be available to applicants before and during the application process. This information should be comprehensive and will cover the following areas:<sup>8</sup>

- Programmes offered, details of programme structures, duration, mode of attendance and end qualifications
- The nature of the Institute, its purpose, ethos, aims, and objectives
- The cost of study, including tuition and other fees and payment arrangements where these have been determined in advance of publication of materials
- Academic entry requirements
- Advice on sources of financial assistance (internal and external)

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<sup>6</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018. Guiding Principle 5.

<sup>7</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018. Guiding Principle 5.

<sup>8</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access. November 2018. Guiding Principle 4.

- Institutional policies on equal opportunities
- The complaints policy
- The role and requirements of any external validating and accrediting bodies.

**22.2** Promotional material should not contain unfair or misleading statements about other institutions.

**22.3** Institute staff should follow the principles of responsible recruitment. All staff involved in the recruitment process will work closely together to ensure they are fully aware of the information that should be made available to applicants.

**22.4** The Institute will respond to all enquiries as quickly as possible, and normally no later than a maximum of 5 working days, after receipt of an enquiry.

## **23. Data Protection**

**23.1** All applications to St Padarn's are covered under the General Data Protection Regulation. The information provided in applications will only be used for admissions purposes and will form part of the learner's record if they accept a place. Data relevant to the application will be entered into the St Padarn's database and the progression of the application monitored through to commencement on a programme of study. The information will be confidential between the applicant, St Padarn's and any other parties the applicant has consented to as part of the application process (e.g., referees and validating university). However, St Padarn's may have to release information to authorised outside agencies, such as the police or the Home Office, to prevent or detect fraud. St Padarn's submit learner name and contact details to the validating university solely for the purposes of recording learner details and progression information. By registering for a programme leading to a university validated award the learner agrees to the sharing of their information with the validating university. The validating university will not make any contact with learners unless there is a specific need in relation to their studies towards a validated award.

**23.2** It is the learner's responsibility to keep their personal information up to date with St Padarn's and to notify them of any changes or errors.

**23.3** In line with the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation, applicants have a general right of access to personal data which St Padarn's processes about them. Full details of how to make a request to access personal data can be found at <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/privacy-notice/>.

**23.4** For full details on Data Protection see [Church in Wales' Data Protection Policy](#).

## **24. Right of Appeal**

St Padarn's wishes all applicants to have a positive experience in going through the application process and makes every endeavour to provide applicants with all the necessary information they require and to support them in making an informed choice regarding the best course for them. However, applicants who are unsatisfied about the handling of their application, have the right to make either an informal and/or formal complaint or appeal in writing to the Principal within 28 days of receiving notification of the rejection of their application.

## **25. Process of Making a Complaint or Appeal concerning the Admissions**

### **Process or Decision<sup>9</sup>**

An admissions complaint is a complaint about a procedural error, irregularity, or maladministration in admissions policies or processes. In the first instance, you should attempt to resolve matters informally with St Padarn's. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal process, you can submit a formal appeal. When making admissions decisions, St Padarn's staff will exercise academic judgement. You cannot appeal or complain about an admissions decision on the basis that you disagree with this academic judgement.

**25.1** Notice of an intention to appeal must be given in writing to the Principal by the applicant within 28 days (unless there is a good reason for the delay) of the date of the letter containing the disputed decision on the application.

**25.2** The Principal (or a nominated member of the senior staff) will investigate the complaint or appeal and reply with their decision within 15 days of receiving the complaint or appeal.

**25.3** You can complain if you have evidence: that St Padarn's did not follow its own stated admissions policies and processes correctly, or that an aspect of the institution's admissions policies and processes was inherently unfair, unjust, or lacking in the transparency required to allow applicants to understand the

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<sup>9</sup> UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Concerns, Complaints and Appeals. November 2018. <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/concerns-complaints-and-appeals>



process, or that there was an error or omission in the admissions process that materially affected the admissions decision.

**25.4** For postgraduate courses that are validated by Durham University the university may review the complaint after the internal complaints process of St Padarn's has been completed. The university will examine whether the admissions policies and processes were fair, transparent, and were followed correctly, without significant errors or omissions.

## **26. Policy Approval and Review**

This policy as well as all other policies, procedure, and guidance documents relating to learners studying at St Padarn's, will be available to all, monitored regularly and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

**26.1** The Director of Operations has overall responsibility for the admissions policy, including its approval and review.

**26.2** The Admissions Groups (PGT and B.Th.) and Registry staff have responsibility for overseeing the admissions processes and ensuring that decision making complies with the regulations of the validating university and other external bodies, where appropriate.

**26.3** This document can be found on the SPI website: [www.stpadarns.ac.uk](http://www.stpadarns.ac.uk).

**26.4** Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

**26.5** This policy will be included in staff induction.