

Thomas Rotherham College



Guidance Notes

Please read these notes carefully before you fill in the application form



TRC's PLACE IN THE LOCAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY

Thomas Rotherham College is one of three FE sector colleges in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough. It is the only sixth form college in the borough and the largest single provider of full time general education courses for 16-19 year olds. There are two general FE colleges [RCAT/Rother Valley and Dearne Valley Colleges] which have much higher proportions of adult students, particularly in the day time and which run largely vocational programmes. Rotherham's small and medium sized FE sector colleges are surrounded to the north, west and east by the much larger Barnsley, Sheffield and Doncaster GFE/tertiary colleges, with medium sized colleges to the south in north Nottinghamshire and north Derbyshire.

Secondary school provision in Rotherham consists of eight 11-16 schools, two of which are Catholic schools which draw on extended catchment areas beyond the Borough boundaries, and eight 11-18 schools. While a small number of the District's students move out to independent schools in Sheffield and Wakefield, Rotherham is a net importer of secondary pupils from neighbouring LEAs.

THE PRESENT COLLEGE AND ITS STUDENTS

TRC's core business is providing full-time courses for 16-18 year olds. There are just over 1500 such students currently enrolled and the total will stay around this level for the next few years. Around 65% of our students come directly from the Rotherham 11-16 schools, with a further 15% coming from the Rotherham 11-18 schools, 10% from our two partner schools in Sheffield and Doncaster and the final 10% choosing to come from state and independent schools from as far afield as Penistone, Wakefield and beyond Doncaster. 1400 of these students are following advanced programmes, the majority at GCE AS/A2 Level.

We are aiming to work with partner providers to increase the post-16 participation rate in the area; we do not at present cater for students with severe learning difficulties. 13% of our 16-18 students are drawn from minority ethnic groups, almost all of these coming from the local Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. This reflects the ethnic mix of the area, but students from Asian backgrounds are more heavily represented at TRC than in the population of Rotherham as a whole.

We are also expanding into markets that the college was not able to access before incorporation. The Community & Business Division manages a

substantial programme of both accredited and recreational provision on the main site and in a range of community centres, attracting over 800 part-time adult learners annually. It has increasingly taken on training work through the Train to Gain programme.

THE COLLEGE'S MISSION, AIMS AND VALUES

The College's mission statement was reviewed in 2007/8 and is as follows:

Thomas Rotherham College aspires to be a centre of educational excellence in Rotherham, where students from local communities achieve advanced skills and qualifications and join together to pursue lifelong learning in a welcoming and supportive environment.

The college will achieve its mission through:

- Valuing and caring for the personal development needs of all its students and staff;
- Recognising the variety of skills and experience that every individual brings to learning and inspiring each one to grow in confidence, creativity and aspiration;
- Working in partnership with local schools, colleges, employers, sports and community organisations;
- Engaging closely with statutory and voluntary agencies to further economic prosperity and social inclusion in Rotherham and South Yorkshire;
- Ensuring that equality of opportunity is central to all the college's practices, systems and procedures.
- Celebrating and positively reflecting the diversity of the Rotherham community.

TRC aims to be a focus for civic pride through the preservation and sensitive development of its Moorgate Road site and through ensuring that its facilities and services are accessible to, and prized by the people of Rotherham.

STAFFING AND ORGANISATION

The college has some 200 employees [170 full-time equivalent staff]. There are ninety plus teaching staff based on the main site, most of whom are full-time, and over 100 staff in other areas, many of whom work part-time. We have increased our staff numbers in each of the past four years to cater for additional student demand and service provision.

The Senior Management Team comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, Director of Finance and Development, Director of 14-19, Director of IT & Systems and Director of Community & Business Development. They work alongside the Teaching and Learning Management Group, which is charged with leading the continual drive to improve learners' experiences and outcomes, and the Support Staff Team Leaders who lead development of support services across the college.

Teaching staff teams for 16-18 year old students are grouped into five Programme Areas for the college's core 'sixth form' work. The sixth Programme Area is our Community & Business Division, which is responsible for the community education programme, both on and off site, for customised training for local businesses and for sport and recreation development. Support staff are organised into teams, with increasing integration between teaching and support staff, especially in the Community Division. All aspects of facilities management, including grounds maintenance, cleaning and catering, are provided in-house.

PREMISES AND RESOURCES

The current college premises occupy an attractive single site on Moorgate Road, which runs south from the town centre. The site is about twenty minutes walk from the transport interchange and central shopping area. The present site on which TRC stands has an historical record for providing education which dates back to 1876. The central section of the imposing main building [Grade 2 listed] was constructed at that time, with further additions in the 1890s, 1960s and considerable development over the past 10 years with six new buildings or extensions.

Alongside improvements and extensions to the buildings, we have continued to invest heavily in resources, especially IT for communication and learning, over the past five years. Inevitably, with the rapid development of e-learning and e-business and management, the IT

infrastructure needs to be both flexible and robust and the college has developed a long term IT strategy to ensure this.

MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY

Teaching and learning is managed by the Teaching and Learning Management Group which is responsible for the overall direction and performance of the full range of provision. There is a participative structure in which a broad range of standing committees plays a central role.

The college regularly benchmarks all aspects of its performance externally.

Our first full inspection under the new Common Inspection Framework took place in the week 8th to 12th November 2004. The report was published in February 2005 and is available on the OFSTED website; it highlighted many positive aspects but also some important areas for development. The 2005, 2006 and 2007 Annual Assessment Visits follow these up and document a wide range of actions and progress which have taken place since the Inspection. Success rates have risen over the past 5 years and are in line with national averages for Sixth Form Colleges. Value-added for Advanced level courses has improved markedly in the same period and now shows a positive overall outcome, with students on average achieving higher than would be predicted from their qualifications on entry. Progression rates to Higher Education, including the universities of Oxford and Cambridge are high.

WORKING AT TRC

There are many benefits to working at TRC, some of which are outlined below.

Pay and expenses – annual pay awards are made after negotiations at a national level between the Sixth Form Colleges Forum (SFCF) and the recognised unions. Staff placed on either the teachers' main pay scale or scale 1 – 6 of the Support Staff pay scale will receive annual increments unless performance is judged to be unsatisfactory.

Holidays – all full time support staff have a generous holiday entitlement, dependent upon grade. The entitlement to holidays increases with service and is in addition to 13 days of statutory leave entitlement.

Sick Pay – staff are eligible for occupational sick pay up to a maximum of 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay (dependent upon length of service).

Relocation expenses – help may be given to assist in relocating. Each case is considered individually.

Pension – all staff contracted to work for more than 3 months are eligible to join either the Teachers' Pension scheme or the South Yorkshire Pension Authority Pension scheme, dependent on the job they do. Both schemes are contributory, contracted-out, salary-related schemes. Further information on both schemes is available from the Personnel Manager.

Sports Centre – the college has a sports centre and gym on site which staff can join at reduced rates.

Childcare vouchers – the college operates the Busy Bees scheme which allows staff to access childcare vouchers to pay for a range of childcare provision

Car parking – there is ample free car parking on site.

Smoking - We have a duty to provide a safe working environment. We recognise that both smoking and passive smoking can damage people's health so we have a no-smoking policy throughout the college site, with the exception of a small outdoor smoking area at the rear of the premises.

APPLYING FOR A JOB WITH US

The application form and letter of application are the first steps in the process we use to choose employees. They play an important part in deciding whether or not we invite you to come for the selection process. Our decision on whom to invite will be based on the information you give on your application form, which we will compare with the person specification. If a lot of people meet the essential shortlisting requirements of the person specification, we may use other assessment methods such as tests or other desirable requirements listed on the specification.

We do not make any assumptions about you or your abilities. If you do not tell us we will not know.

Before you start

- Read all the information first to make sure that the job and the conditions are suitable for you
- Please use extra sheets if you need to
- Check the closing date and allow time for your application form to reach us.

We will not normally consider applications we receive after the closing date.

Completing the application form

General pointers

- Read the application form carefully before you write anything. It may help to make some rough notes so you can organise your thoughts
- Please write or type your application in **black ink** so we can photocopy it if necessary
- Fill in all the parts of the application form. If some parts do not apply to you, write 'N/A' (not applicable) in the space provided
- Use extra sheets if you need more space for your information but remember that it is quality that counts, not quantity
- It is a good idea to keep a copy of your finished application form
- Your application form should be geared to the job you are applying for; don't send the same one for different jobs, unless it is suitable
- Make sure the information you give us is clear, precise and easy to understand
- If you are an internal applicant, you must not take it for granted that the shortlisting panel will know your details. You must make sure that you give full details on your application form

THE APPLICATION FORM

Front page – Job details

Please indicate the title of the job you are applying for

Section 1 – Employment

Enter the names and addresses of your current employer.

Give brief details of the duties you undertook for your current job. We also need your salary/wage, and, if you are still employed, the period of notice required by your employer.

Section 2 - Employment history

Enter the names and addresses of all your past employers. Start with the your most recent past employment. Don't forget work experience and voluntary or unpaid work. If there are any gaps in dates, please tell us why; for example, if you were unemployed.

Give brief details of the duties you undertook for each of your jobs.

Section 3 – Further/Higher Education

If we ask for a qualification in the person specification, make sure that you give us all the information we ask for, for example, grades, level and length of qualification/study. If we ask you to come to the selection process, we will need to see your original certificate(s) or proof from the examining body.

Section 4 – Secondary Education

If we ask for a qualification in the person specification, make sure that you give us all the information we ask for, for example, grades, level and length of qualification/study. If we ask you to come to the selection process, we will need to see your original certificate(s) or proof from the examining body.

Section 5 – Additional training, short courses relevant to this application

Include any short courses, seminars or workplace training you have done that you feel are relevant to your application. Indicate the length of course/training. If you hold a valid First Aid Certificate please indicate this here with the expiry date.

Section 6 – Membership of professional bodies

Include any membership of professional bodies that you feel are relevant to your application.

Section 7 – Further information and References

The interview date will in most cases be shown on the job advert. Please state on the application if you will be unavailable on that date and whenever possible we will try to offer you an alternative interview date.

You need to give details of two people (not relatives) to act as referees. If you have worked before or are currently working, one referee must be your present or last employer. If you are a student, your referee should be your college tutor. Your work referees should be people who know about your experience, skills and abilities, and have acted as your direct line manager.

Please note that as well as asking your referee for their comments on your experience, skills, abilities and so on, we will also ask for details about your recent sickness, absence and current disciplinary record.

COVERING LETTER

Please ensure that you enclose a covering letter with your application describing why you feel that you are suitable for the post and outlining the skills that you have that are appropriate to the post.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY MONITORING FORM

In addition to the application form and covering letter, you are also asked to complete an Equality & Diversity monitoring form.

The information you supply in this form allows us to monitor our recruitment process to ensure no candidate is treated more or less favourably on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnic origin or belief. The data helps us to know if we are doing all we can to ensure appointment is on merit and create a workforce representative of the community. Please be assured that this information is not seen by the panel short-listing for interview and will not be used in the selection decision.

Candidates with a Disability

According to research, around 1 in 5 people are regarded to have a disability. Disability is defined under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 in a specific way. Under the DDA, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial (more than minor or trivial) and long-term (more than 12 months, rest of life, recurring condition) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This list of disabilities is not exhaustive or exclusive but examples include visual and hearing impairments, mobility difficulties, cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions. Mental health conditions and learning difficulties are also classed under the definition of disability.

If you have any doubts as to whether your condition is classed as a disability, you can obtain guidance from specialist websites such as: Disability Rights Commission at www.drc.org.uk Telephone 08457 622633 / Textphone 08457 622644, or from the Government at www.direct.gov.uk.

Why should you tell us? - Disclosure of disability is a matter of personal choice. Informing us that you have a disability allows us to make reasonable adjustments for you at all stages of the recruitment process.

Under the national Disability 'Two Ticks' Symbol Scheme, Thomas Rotherham College is committed to arranging an interview for all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for the job. Please indicate if you are seeking an interview under this scheme. You may be receiving support from a disability agency/organisation such as Remploy or Shaw Trust. If you have already been in contact with these agencies, you are asked to inform us on the application or supplementary information form. This ensures that we continue your links with these organisations to enable them to help you.

We have received recognition from Jobcentre Plus of our commitment as an employer towards the recruitment, employment, retention and development of applicants with a disability. Jobcentre Plus provides a Disability Employment Advice service and will provide advice and support when requested.

Eligibility to work in the UK

You will be asked to confirm that you are entitled to work in the UK at application stage. If you are invited to an interview you will be asked to provide evidence of this entitlement - for example, passport, birth certificate or valid work permit. If you require any further details about the documents, which confirm eligibility to work in the UK please visit www.workingintheuk.gov.uk or telephone 0870 606 7766.

Criminal Record

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working for us as we do not discriminate against ex-offenders. We will only take account of previous convictions if the nature of the offence is relevant to the type of work you would be doing. In your application tell us about any 'unspent' convictions you may have as defined in the rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All Thomas Rotherham College employees who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess relevance and circumstances of offences.

However, if a risk assessment of the post has indicated that the post is exempt from the act, you will need to tell us about all 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions and cautions as part of your application. If successful at the selection stage, we will conditionally offer you the post while we contact the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess your suitability for the position.

The advert and the person specification will tell you whether the job is exempt and if a disclosure will be requested.

If details given in your application or from the disclosure indicate any offences that are cause for concern we will discuss this in detail with you either at interview or in a separate discussion. The outcome of this discussion may result in us not progressing your application any further or withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

You need to be aware of the Criminal Records Bureau Code of Practice. This is available on request from Thomas Rotherham College or from www.disclosure.gov.uk

Failure to declare a conviction, caution or pending police action which later comes to light could result in dismissal.

Our policy statement on the Recruitment of ex-Offenders is available at the back of this booklet.

Finally sign the form to:

- agree to us storing and using your personal information for this recruitment exercise
- confirm all details supplied in the form are correct. Thomas Rotherham College reserves the right to verify any of the data supplied in your application.

Please return your application form and a covering letter on time to the address shown in the letter within your application pack. Please send a stamped addressed envelope if you require confirmation of the receipt of your application.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We will contact you shortly after the closing date if we want you to come to the selection process. However, if you don't hear from us within 15 working days of the closing date, please assume that you were not successful this time. We hope an unsuccessful application will not stop you from applying for another job with us in the future.

DATA PROTECTION

We will only use the information on your application form for our recruitment and selection process, and also to check the effectiveness of this process. As we will be able to identify you from the personal details you have given us, we will treat this information as confidential.

If you are unsuccessful, we will confidentially destroy your application form within six months of the date the post was filled.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

You have the right to complain if you feel that you have been unfairly discriminated against in any stage of the recruitment and selection process because of your sex, marital status, age, race, disability, sexuality or religion, or if you feel that we have not dealt with your application fairly. You should first contact the Personnel Office on (01709) 300651 who will look into the matter for you. All enquiries will be dealt with in confidence. If you still feel that you have a cause for complaint, you may use our complaints procedure.

POLICY STATEMENT ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

- As an organisation using the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Thomas Rotherham College complies fully with the CRB Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed
- Thomas Rotherham College is committed to the fair treatment of its employees, potential employees or users of its services, regardless of race, sex, religion, sexuality, marital status, age, disability or offending background
- We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience

- A disclosure is only requested after a risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the post concerned. For those positions where a disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position
- Where a disclosure is part of the recruitment process, we require all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process
- Unless the nature of the position allows Thomas Rotherham College to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we will only ask about “unspent” convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- We ensure that all those in Thomas Rotherham College who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position sought which could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment
- We make every subject of a CRB disclosure aware of the existence of the CRB Code of Practice and a copy is available on request
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position, the nature of the offence, how long ago and what age you were when it was committed and any factors which may be relevant.

Failure to declare a conviction, caution or pending police action, will disqualify you from appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light.

If you would like to discuss whether a conviction you have would prevent you from working with children, or vulnerable adults telephone The Personnel Office on (01709) 300651 in confidence, for advice.

FINALLY

If you need any help or advice in applying for a job, filling in the application form, preparing your CV, or if you need this document in your language or in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, electronic and audio-tape versions contact us at:

Tel: (01709) 300651

E-mail: personnel@thomroth.ac.uk

Visit our website at www.thomroth.ac.uk

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Application - On the closing date for the vacancy the applications and the Equal Opportunities monitoring forms are separated. The applications are passed to the selection panel for consideration and short-listing and the Equal Opportunities form is retained by the Recruitment Team for monitoring purposes.

Short-listing - Short-listing is carried out by comparing the applications to the Job Description and Person Specification. The strongest applications from candidates who have demonstrated that they meet the requirements of the post are selected. These candidates are then invited for interview. The interview date will usually be published with the advert and candidates who have not received an invitation to interview by that date should assume they have not been successful for short-listing.

Interview and Selection - The successful candidates are contacted (by email unless you state otherwise on your application) and invited to interview. The invitation will include details of where and when the interview will take place and state which documents that you must take along.

Details of any additional selection methods will also be notified at this stage, for example testing or presentation. At the interview, candidates will be asked questions that relate to; duties of the post as detailed in the Job Description, skills, knowledge and experience required as shown in the Person Specification.

Offer of Employment - Following the interview, and any other selection methods, the recruiting manager will contact the successful candidate to make an offer of employment. The offer will be conditional until all pre-employment checks have been completed satisfactorily. This often will be a telephone call, followed up by a letter.

The unsuccessful candidates will also be informed at this time, usually by telephone within a few days of the interview. Feedback will be available at this stage.

Pre employment checks - Pre employment checks will take place, which will include:

- Checking of references *
- Confirmation of qualifications required for the post *
- Confirmation of eligibility to work in the UK *
- Disclosure of convictions *
- Criminal Records Bureau check (where appropriate to post)

Those indicated * will be carried out at the interview stage.

Once the pre-employment checks are complete, the candidate will be contacted to confirm the offer of employment and arrange a suitable starting date.



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