

LIPA
SIXTH FORM
COLLEGE

Admissions
Policy 2026 Entry

Version No:	1.8
Version Date:	June 2025
Ref:	SG18-015
Document Owner:	Edward Pinner, Principal
Next Review Date:	October 2026
Approving Committee	Local Governing Body

Document Version History

Version	Date	Ref	Change Summary
1.0			New Policy.
1.1	March 2018	SG18-015	Revised.
1.2	August 2019	SG18-015	Revised.
1.3	December 2020	SG18-015	Revised.
1.4	February 2021	SG18-015	Revised.
1.5	February 2022	SG18-015	Revised
1.6	February 2023	SG18 - 015	Revised
1.7	June 2023	SG18 - 015	Revised & updated
1.8	June 2024	SG18-015	Revised & updated
1.9	June 2025	SG18-015	Revised & updated

Admissions Policy 2026 Entry

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1 Overview and Mission Statement

LIPA Sixth Form College opened its doors to its first Year 12 students in September 2016. A Free School Academy funded by the Department for Education, we offer fulltime University of the Arts London (UAL) Level 3 Extended Diploma pathways in creative and performing arts for 16- 18-year olds from across Liverpool, Merseyside and beyond.

Inspired by the purpose and achievements of the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, LIPA Sixth Form College focuses on a range of creative and performing arts pathways. We offer students the opportunity to achieve nationally-recognised UAL Level 3 qualifications, while at the same time experiencing excellent teaching and the breadth of professional industry experience our teaching team offers. Influenced by the LIPA ethos of collaborative working across all pathways and our emphasis on project-based learning, we can provide what our students need to prepare for a wide range of performing, technical theatre and design futures.

“LIPA has proved itself. Now [with LIPA Sixth Form College] we are offering what we do earlier. It’s an exciting development.”

Paul McCartney, Lead Patron, LIPA

Students at LIPA Sixth Form College choose a pathway on which to focus – UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma pathways for September 2026 entry will be offered in Acting, Dance, Music Performance & Production, Musical Theatre, Technical Theatre and Design for Performance.

LIPA Sixth Form College is fully inclusive and works to develop the creative potential of young people from across Liverpool, Merseyside and beyond. Creative and performing arts- specific qualifications and/or previous formal experience are not required to successfully gain a place at LIPA Sixth Form College, as we recognise that not everyone will have had the same opportunities so far. Instead, we look closely at each applicant for evidence of passion, aptitude and potential to make the most of their time with us, in preparation for going on to Higher Education or straight into employment.

However, we require applicants to achieve a minimum of 5 GCSEs/iGCSEs or equivalent at grade 4/C or above, to equip them with the skills required to successfully manage the academic element of each pathway. Those students who do not achieve English and/or Maths GCSE at grade 4 or above will be required to retake those subjects alongside and in addition to their UAL Level 3 Extended Diploma studies.

2 Key Principles

LIPA Sixth Form College operate our own arrangements for admissions, and we will publish our Admissions Policy on our website by 1 October for the forthcoming year. This information will include how many places will be offered in that year, the minimum academic requirements for entry, and how places will be allocated if LIPA Sixth Form College is oversubscribed. It will also include details of how we will operate our Waiting List.

3 Planned Admissions Number and Capacity

The Government Information About Schools number for 2026 is 365. **Applicants for September 2026 entry to LIPA Sixth Form College's pathways will have been born between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2010). We cannot accept applications from any student born before 1st September 2008.**

Our primary geographic catchment area is defined as Merseyside, comprising the postcode sectors below:

- Liverpool - postcodes L1-L19, L24-L27
- Wirral - postcodes CH25-CH32, CH41-CH64
- Sefton - postcodes L9-L10, L22-L23, L29-L31, L37-L38, PR8-PR9
- Halton - postcodes L24, L35, WA4, WA7-WA8
- Knowsley - postcodes L10, L14, L16, L24-L26, L28, L32-L36, WA8
- St Helens - postcodes L34-L35, WA3, WA5, WA8-WA12, WN4-WN5, WN8

If we do not fill our all places through applications from students within this catchment area, we will offer places to applicants from outside Merseyside.

4 Minimum Entry Requirements

It is expected that applicants will achieve a minimum of 5 GCSEs/iGCSEs or equivalent at grade C/4 by August 2026. An offer of a place at LIPA Sixth Form College requires a minimum prediction of 5 GCSEs/iGCSEs or equivalent at grade C/4 or above, to be confirmed in writing by the applicant's current school.

5 Application Process

LIPA Sixth Form College provides a range of creative and performing arts qualifications within a specialist setting. By offering industry-level excellence and experience through learning and training opportunities, we equip our students to move forwards onto the professional ladder, with a range of performance, design or technical skills and understanding which will prepare them for Higher Education or employment. Our Application Process recognises this and reflects our mission and purpose.

There are four stages in the Application Process to join LIPA Sixth Form College:

Stage 1

Applicants are asked to complete and submit the application form for September 2026 entry. Online applications are available on the LIPA Sixth Form College website.

Application forms must be submitted between 1 September 2025 and 31 January 2026. All students are recommended to submit applications before the published deadline (31st January 2026). Places may be limited by pathway vacancies.

All applications we receive before the deadline are considered and to help inform our decision as to who will progress to Stage 2 we look at:

- each student application individually;
- the reference provided by the high school or most recent education provider, including attendance, punctuality, conduct and application;
- the predicted grades provided by the high school for Level 2 qualifications;
- the suitability of chosen pathway and level of study;
- the personal statement, including wider interests;
- the commitment to being part of LIPA Sixth Form College and their chosen pathway;
- the quality of the application;
- the availability of places;
- the receipt of the application before the deadline.

LIPA Sixth Form College welcomes all applicants and recognises and values the uniqueness of every individual. The College welcomes applicants with learning difficulties and disabilities and will make particular arrangements to help such applicants and their parents/carers through the admissions process. Applicants and/or their parents must ensure as much information as is necessary is given to college at application stage and pre-assessment session, so that sufficient access arrangements, if needed, can be put in place. The appeals panel are not able to retrospectively consider an application where the appellant discloses a SEND or safeguarding need, after the assessment sessions have taken place.

Stage 2

All successful applicants for September 2026 entry will be invited to attend an assessment session. These will be held during February 2026, and applicants will be notified of the date and time - guidance notes to help preparation will also be sent out at this time. Alternative dates and times can be arranged (subject to availability), so long as sufficient notice and a genuine reason is given.

The LIPA Sixth Form College Assessment Process is made up of three key activities (audition(s)/pre-prepared work, the interview and group workshop) which in turn are referenced against the six key attributes we believe prospective students need to possess to be successful on their pathway. These are:

- 1 knowledge, ability and experience in the chosen pathway;
- 2 commitment to the chosen pathway and to working hard to maximise potential;
- 3 the ability to work effectively with others;
- 4 broad interest and engagement with the wider world;

- 5 self-awareness;
- 6 a spirit of enterprise and initiative.

Please note that applicants have to complete **all** stages of the Assessment Session for their chosen pathway to be considered for a place at LIPA Sixth Form College. If applicants attend on the day and are not able to complete all stages of the assessment session, and they have not arranged and agreed access arrangements in advance with the Inclusion team, they will be instructed to attend at another time. Please see the table below for details as to where in the Assessment Session the six key attributes are assessed:

LIPA Sixth Form College Key Attribute	Pre-Prepared Work /Audition	Interview	Group Workshop
1 knowledge, ability and experience in chosen pathway	√	√	√
2 commitment to chosen pathway and to working hard to maximise potential	√	√	
3 the ability to work effectively with others			√
4 broad interest and engagement with the wider world	√	√	
5 self-awareness		√	√
6 a spirit of enterprise and initiative		√	√

Assessment sessions will consist of:

Acting

- ✓ Group Workshop
- ✓ Audition
- ✓ Interview

Dance

- ✓ Group Workshop
- ✓ Audition
- ✓ Interview

Music Performance & Production

- ✓ Group Workshop
- ✓ Audition 1 – Material selected by candidate
- ✓ Audition 2 – Material selected by LIPA Sixth Form College
- ✓ Interview

Musical Theatre

- ✓ Group Workshop
- ✓ Dance Audition
- ✓ Singing and Acting Audition
- ✓ Interview

Technical Theatre

- ✓ Group Workshop
- ✓ Pre-prepared work

- ✓ Interview

Design for Performance

- ✓ Group Workshop
- ✓ Pre-prepared work
- ✓ Interview

Our assessors will score the audition(s)/ pre-prepared work, the interview and group workshop (if required). All aspects of the assessment **must be completed on the day**. If you are unfit to participate in either the workshop(s). auditions, interviews or pre-prepared work on the day **you must not** accept your audition/interview date. Please contact Admissions and a 2nd audition/interview maybe arranged at a later date. **Please note, second auditions/interviews are held after the first round have taken place and there may be less students at these sessions than in the first.** The **scoring framework** we will use for

Acting,

Dance,

Technical Theatre

Design for Performance is as follows:

Group Workshop						
Inadequate 1	Poor 2	Partial 3	Satisfactory 4	Good 5	Very good 6	Outstanding 7
The applicant is unable to contribute to the group/ Individual workshop activities.	The applicant's group/ individual skills and contribution is ineffective related to the workshop activities, demonstrating a poor level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays some group/ individual skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating a partial level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays a command of group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating satisfactory levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays a convincing command of group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays a very good command of group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating very good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays excellent group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating excellent levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.

Audition/ presentation of pre-prepared work						
Inadequate 1	Poor 2	Partial 3	Satisfactory 4	Good 5	Very good 6	Outstanding 7
The applicant is unable to perform or present their work.	The applicant performs or presents work which demonstrates minimal preparation and a limited level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents work which demonstrates some preparation, demonstrating a partial level of skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents prepared work, demonstrating a satisfactory level and of skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents well prepared and considered work, demonstrating good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism	The applicant performs or presents very well prepared and considered work, demonstrating very good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents extremely well prepared and highly considered work, demonstrating excellent levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.

Interview			
Poor 1	Satisfactory 2	Good 3	Outstanding 4
The applicant demonstrates a limited level of understanding and commitment regarding their specialism, with an under-developed awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates a satisfactory level of understanding and commitment for their specialism, with an awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates good levels of understanding and commitment for their specialism, with a good awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates excellent levels of understanding and passion for their specialism, with an excellent awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.

The **scoring framework** we will use for **Musical Theatre** is as follows:

Singing, Dance, and Acting Auditions are scored out of 7*						
Inadequate 1	Poor 2	Partial 3	Satisfactory 4	Good 5	Very good 6	Outstanding 7
The applicant is unable to perform or present their work.	The applicant performs or presents work which demonstrates minimal preparation and a limited level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents work which demonstrates some preparation, demonstrating a partial level of skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents prepared work, demonstrating a satisfactory level and of skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents well prepared and considered work, demonstrating good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism	The applicant performs or presents very well prepared and considered work, demonstrating very good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents extremely well prepared and highly considered work, demonstrating excellent levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.

****Practical scores out of 21 are aggregated and standardized to achieve a score out of 14
(÷3 x 2)***

Musical Theatre Interview			
Poor 1	Satisfactory 2	Good 3	Outstanding 4
The applicant demonstrates a limited level of understanding and commitment regarding their specialism, with an under-developed awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates a satisfactory level of understanding and commitment for their specialism, with an awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates good levels of understanding and commitment for their specialism, with a good awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates excellent levels of understanding and passion for their specialism, with an excellent awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.

The **scoring framework** we will use for **Music Performance & Production** is as follows:

Group Workshop				
Inadequate 1	Poor 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Outstanding 5
The applicant is unable to contribute to the group/ Individual workshop activities.	The applicant's group/ individual skills and contribution is ineffective related to the workshop activities, demonstrating a poor level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays a command of group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating satisfactory levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays a convincing command of group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant displays excellent group skills related to the workshop activities, demonstrating excellent levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.

Audition 1 – Material selected by candidate				
Inadequate 1	Poor 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Outstanding 5
The applicant is unable to perform or present their work.	The applicant performs or presents work which demonstrates minimal preparation and a limited level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents prepared work, demonstrating a satisfactory level and of skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents well prepared and considered work, demonstrating good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism	The applicant performs or presents extremely well prepared and highly considered work, demonstrating excellent levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.

Audition 2 – Material selected by LIPA Sixth Form College				
Inadequate 1	Poor 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Outstanding 5
The applicant is unable to perform or present their work.	The applicant performs or presents work which demonstrates minimal preparation and a limited level of creativity and skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents prepared work, demonstrating a satisfactory level and of skill in their specialism.	The applicant performs or presents well prepared and considered work, demonstrating good levels of creativity and skill in their specialism	The applicant performs or presents extremely well prepared and highly considered work, demonstrating excellent levels of creativity and skill in their specialism.

Music P&P Interview		
Poor 1	Good 2	Outstanding 3
The applicant demonstrates a limited level of understanding and commitment regarding their specialism, with an under-developed awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates good levels of understanding and commitment for their specialism, with a good awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.	The applicant demonstrates excellent levels of understanding and passion for their specialism, with an excellent awareness of their own strengths and areas for further development.

Any applicant needing access arrangements for any of the aforementioned activities must organise these in advance with the Inclusion Team. This is to ensure the applicant is able to access all aspects of the assessment session and to ensure quality of support. Communication about arranging this will be sent from Admissions.

Stage 3

Following the assessment sessions, our assessment panel will review the assessment marks made for each applicant to create an overall ranking of applicants. The maximum mark an applicant can achieve is 18, so those achieving 18 marks will be prioritised over those achieving 17, and so on until maximum capacity for each pathway is reached. The assessment session score of each applicant for audition/prepared work, interview and workshop are for internal use (ranking) only and will not be shared with applicants when outcomes are sent out.

We acknowledge that not all musicals require performers to dance to a high standard. To provide opportunities for Musical Theatre candidates who have limited dance experience, candidates who are not initially ranked within the top forty will be scored again with the dance score omitted, recalculated, and ranked from forty-one.

Written confirmation of the outcome of the assessment sessions will be sent out to each applicant in March 2026 detailing **one of three** outcomes:

1. A conditional offer (dependent on achieving a minimum of 5 GCSEs/iGCSEs or equivalent at grade C/4 or above in their forthcoming exams) to join LIPA Sixth Form College in September 2026 on the pathway of their choice, **or**
2. A place for the applicant on the college reserve list for the pathway of their choice (see below*), **or**
3. Notification that their application for their pathway of choice was unsuccessful on this occasion.

* There is an opportunity for a second chance assessment session (audition and interview) for applicants placed on the **reserve list only**, if the applicant feels they did not do themselves justice at the original assessment session. Applicants will be asked to articulate how and why they feel they can improve on their first assessment session score to be considered for a second chance assessment session.

LIPA Sixth Form College will admit any applicant with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) whose statement names LIPA Sixth Form College **and** who meets the minimum GCSE entry requirements **and** who meets the minimum assessment criteria (in audition/pre prepared work, interview & workshop). Please note that all applicants have to complete **all** stages of the assessment session of their chosen

pathway to be considered for a place at LIPA Sixth Form College. If applicants attend on the day and are not able to complete all stages of the assessment session, and they have not arranged and agreed access arrangements in advance with the Inclusion team, they will be instructed to attend at another time.

Stage 4

Applicants will be asked to accept a conditional offer, normally within 14 days of receiving it. Failure to respond within 14 days or by the date stated in the offer/reserve list email may result in the offer being withdrawn. For those applicants who have accepted a place at LIPA Sixth Form College for September 2026, an information pack containing details of the enrolment process will be sent out in July 2026.

Enrolment for September 2026 entry will begin on Thursday 20th August 2026. Students will be asked to enrol and bring their GCSE results with them. **It is only at this stage that the offer of a place is finalised and the student will be enrolled providing that they have achieved the minimum entry requirements.**

6 Oversubscription Criteria

In the event of the September 2026 intake at LIPA Sixth Form College being over-subscribed by applicants of equal ability and potential, places will be allocated in the following order of priority:

- 1 We will first admit any applicant with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) whose statement names LIPA Sixth Form College who meets the minimum GCSE entry requirements and who meets the minimum assessment criteria (in audition/pre prepared work, interview & workshop).
- 2 Where we receive more than 190 applicants who are all predicted to achieve the minimum academic standards of 5 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, we will apply the following criteria in order:
 - a) Those achieving 18 points in the assessment process in the following order:
 - i. applicants who are, or who have previously been, looked after by a local authority¹
 - ii applicants living within the catchment area of Merseyside who are eligible for Further Education Free School Meals
 - iii applicants living within the catchment area of Merseyside
 - iv applicants living outside the catchment area
 - b) Those achieving 17 points in the assessment process prioritised as at 2a) i-iv above, in that order.

¹ A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

- c) Those achieving 16 points in the assessment process prioritised as at 2a) i-iv above, in that order.
 - d) Those achieving 15 points in the assessment process prioritised as at 2a) i-iv above, in that order
 - e) Those achieving 14 points in the assessment process prioritised as at 2a) i-iv above, in that order
- 3 Any other students who are predicted to achieve the minimum academic standards of 5 GCSEs/iGCSEs or equivalent at grade C/4 or above, prioritised as at 2a) i-iv above, in that order.

If oversubscribed within any criterion, LIPA Sixth Form College will prioritise applicants on the basis of the distance of their permanent home to LIPA Sixth Form College. Distance will be measured by a straight line on a map from the front door of the applicant's home address to the front door of LIPA Sixth Form College using an electronic system, for example Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

If applicants are tied for the final available place because they live exactly the same distance away from the college, places will be allocated randomly and this process overseen by someone independent of LIPA Sixth Form College.

7 Waiting List

It may be that some applicants do not achieve their predicted grades or decide not to attend LIPA Sixth Form College for whatever reason. We will therefore establish a 'Waiting List' with applicants who are on the reserve list prioritised in line with our oversubscription criteria. The Waiting List will operate until the 3rd week of September of each year.

8 Second chance assessment session (audition and interview)

Applicants who are not offered a conditional place through this process have a right to request a second chance audition and interview if they are placed on the reserve list only. Details of this process will be included in the outcome letter sent out in March 2026. *NB. Where a student requests this, they will be asked to articulate how and why they feel they can improve on their first assessment session to be considered for a second chance assessment session.* Unsuccessful applicants (not placed on the reserve list) are unable to request a second chance audition.

9 Appeals procedure

Applicants who are not offered a place through the Admissions Process (outcome 3) have a right to appeal against this decision.

The appeal must be sent to LIPA Sixth Form College Admissions appeals@lipasixthformcollege.org within fourteen days of the decision being communicated to the applicant. The appeal can be made by either the applicant or their parent/carer. We recommend you obtain proof of read receipts for all appeals correspondence. LIPA Sixth Form College will send an email acknowledging receipt of the appeal.

The appeal letter must clearly state the grounds of appeal. An appeal may only be made on the grounds that the college has not followed its own admissions procedure. This is referred to as the "**Permitted Grounds**". Any appeal not made on Permitted Grounds will not be upheld. It is therefore very important that the appeal in writing states clearly how the college has not followed its own procedure in reaching a decision not to admit an applicant. **Please note that SEND & safeguarding issues cannot be considered retrospectively at appeal if they were not included in the original application and/or communicated with the college prior to an applicant's audition.**

All appeals will be considered by an appeals panel. The appeals panel consists of three people, including a chair, and two panel members who are independent to the college. The appellant and the college will both be required to submit evidence by a set date ahead of the meeting, and the panel may restrict the addition of further evidence after this date. The panel *may* undertake such enquiry into the matter as it considers appropriate and necessary to reach a determination. The panel also may choose to invite the appellant and/or parent/carer to a meeting if this is considered necessary to better understand the grounds for the request or because the panel wishes to ask questions of the appellant or parent/carer.

After careful consideration of the request for a review and any representations made by the appellant, parent/carer and the college, the panel will conclude by:

1. upholding the original decision not to offer the applicant a place;
2. determining that there is sufficient evidence before the panel that the applicant meets the required artistic standard, and therefore the appellant should be offered a place (please note that the appeals panel will not introduce its own tests to assess artistic suitability]
3. referring the application for admission back to the college to be considered afresh.

The decision of the panel, which is final, will be communicated via email. There will be no further right of appeal at this point.

10 Late Applications

Applications received after the deadline of 31 January 2026 will only be considered should places remain after the consideration of all applications received on or before the deadline.

11 Equality and Diversity

In operating admission arrangements, LIPA Sixth Form College will do everything it reasonably can to enable every applicant to perform at their best, and in making acceptance decisions will not discriminate between applicants on grounds of gender, gender reassignment, disability, SEN, faith, ethnicity, socio-economic class or sexual orientation provided they meet the criteria for entry.

12 Timetable for Applications for September 2026 entry

June 2025	September 2026 entry Admissions Policy and Process published on www.lipasixthformcollege.org
1 September 2025	Application form for September 2026 entry available at www.lipasixthformcollege.org
1 September 2025	Applications period for September 2026 entry open until 31 January 2026
31 January 2026	Applications period for September 2026 entry closes
February 2026	Assessment (Audition, interview and workshop)
March 2026	Outcome letters to arrive with all applicants for all courses
20 th August 2026	GCSE results day
20 th & 21 st August 2026	Enrolment of successful applicants
1 st September 2026	Term begins at LIPA Sixth Form College