

INTRODUCTION

Massachusetts state regulations (603 CMR 4.00) require all state-funded career/vocational technical education (CVTE) schools and CVTE programs at public high schools to develop and implement admissions policies that comply with state and federal law, as well as relevant guidelines issued by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the U.S. Department of Education.

I. ADMISSIONS

When Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) receives more applications than it has available seats, SVAHS runs a weighted lottery system to determine which students it will admit. The process SVAHS applies has been approved by its Board of Trustees, and the Board of Trustees will approve the use of these criteria annually. SVAHS's admission policy is on file at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School admits students and makes available to them its programs, privileges, and courses of study without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability.

If a student's primary home language is not English, SVAHS will provide them with an application form in their home language upon request. Please contact our Admissions Counselor, Lauren Devine, at ldevine@smithtec.org or (413) 587-1414 x3414 if you have questions or need help filling out the application form.

SVAHS is committed to providing educational opportunities to students experiencing homelessness. Please contact SVAHS's liaison, Rebecca Wanczyk, at rwanczyk@smithtec.org, (413) 587-1414 x3402, (413) 587-1405/fax and 80 Locust Street, Northampton, MA 01060 with any questions.

Students with disabilities may voluntarily identify themselves to SVAHS to request reasonable accommodations during the application and admission process.

Neither a student's disability nor the primary language of their home will have any effect on their admission to SVAHS.

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, SVAHS recruits, markets, and analyzes enrollment and retention with "deliberate, specific strategies to promote equal educational opportunities and attract, enroll, and retain a student population that, when compared to students in similar grades in sending districts, has a comparable academic and demographic profile." These strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Attending students and/or parent events at sending district middle schools.
- Yearly data analysis of the academic and demographic profiles of population trends.

- Providing informational in-person presentations to 8th grade classes each fall in addition to email & mail communication.
- Providing an open house, tour days, and shadow days.
- Ensuring up-to-date information on www.smithtec.org of our philosophy, programming, and campus life activities is easily accessible and available in multiple languages.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Any current 8th grade student or entering 9th, 10th, or 11th grade student is eligible to apply.

RESIDENT STUDENTS:

Any students who are residents of Northampton (including Florence and Leeds) may apply for admission to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Students may only be admitted to SVAHS if they have been promoted to the grade they are seeking to enter, so students should be aware that their admission is conditional - if they are not ultimately promoted to enter the grade they have applied for, their admission will be rescinded.

NON-RESIDENT STUDENTS:

Students who are not residents of Northampton (who are from tuition-districts) may apply for admission to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Students may only be admitted to SVAHS if they have been promoted to the grade they are seeking to enter, so students should be aware that their admission is conditional - if they are not ultimately promoted to enter the grade they have applied for, their admission will be rescinded. Please note that non-resident students' home districts would be responsible for tuition and transportation, not the individual family, if a student is accepted.

HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS:

Students who are formally homeschooled may apply for admission at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School full-time and will be subject to the same admissions standards as other applicants.

TRANSFER STUDENTS:

Transfer students from another Chapter 74 vocational/technical and agricultural school are eligible to apply for fall admission, or admission during the school year to grades 9-12 at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Students may only be admitted to SVAHS if they have been promoted to the grade they are seeking to enter, so students should be aware that their admission is conditional - if they are not ultimately promoted to enter the grade they have applied for, their admission will be rescinded. Transfer students will be subject to the same admissions standards as other applicants.

HOMELESS, FOSTER CARE, AND CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES:

Students who are classified as homeless, in the care and custody of the Department of Children and Families, or children of military families, will be evaluated according to the same admissions standards as other applicants. Once the student is accepted and an approved non-resident tuition form has been received (if applicable), enrollment shall be immediate with or without required documentation being attained. Students transferring or placed on the waiting list will be enrolled immediately upon the availability of an opening. The Admissions Counselor will notify the Homeless/Foster Care/Military Children liaison when applicants classified above apply to SVAHS to ensure no barriers to applying or enrolling exist.

SCHOOL CHOICE:

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School does not participate in the inter-district school choice program. The inter-district school choice program, M.G.L. c. 76, S 12B, allows parents/guardians to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School is a public independent vocational/technical and agricultural school overseen by a Board of Trustees elected by the citizens of the City of Northampton. Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. We are committed to providing quality vocational/technical and agricultural programs.

The **Superintendent** of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School is:

Dr. Andrew Linkenhoker
alinkenhoker@smithtec.org
(413) 587-1414 ex: 3406

The **Principal** of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School is:

Mr. Joseph Bianca
jbianca@smithtec.org
(413) 587-1414 ex: 3413

The **Admission Coordinator** at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School is:

Lauren Devine
ldevine@smithtec.org
(413) 587-1414 ex: 3414

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School to supervise the administration of the policies and procedures required to admit and enroll students, consistent with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidance.

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School has an Admissions Team appointed by

the Principal and is comprised of the Assistant Principals, School Counselors, Director of CTE, and other staff as necessary.

The Admission Team's responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Development and implementation of admission procedures
- Collecting applications from the local schools
- Processing of applications
- Acceptance of students according to the procedures in the Admissions Policy
- Establishment and maintenance of wait lists of applicants
- Disseminating information about Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School through local school assemblies and press releases

V. ADMISSIONS COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School disseminates information about the school through a variety of methods:

- Fall visitations with an informational presentation to eighth grade students in local schools, when allowed. (This will satisfy the awareness event requirement.)
- Scheduled group tours for interested students conducted by the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School Admission Team in conjunction with sending district school counselors, when allowed. (This will satisfy the awareness event requirement.)
- An Open House scheduled for the first Sunday of November. Prospective students and their parents/guardians and sending school staff, have an opportunity to visit all vocational/technical and agricultural programs, speak with teachers and administrators and view a presentation about all academic and shop offerings. (This will satisfy the awareness event requirement.)
- Parents/guardians may schedule individual visits at a mutually convenient time. To schedule an individual visit and tour, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the guidance department. (This will satisfy the awareness event requirement.)
- Distribution of brochures during the eighth grade visitations and at the annual Open House, which describe vocational/technical and agricultural programs including academic courses, athletics and other extracurricular activities, cooperative work education, and special education services and programs.
- Interested students and their parents/guardians are also encouraged to visit the school's website (www.smithtec.org), which is updated on a regular basis. The application for admission, admission policy, program of study, and additional information about services and activities offered at the school are accessible online, and may be translated into a number of languages.

VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR FALL ADMISSION TO THE NINTH, TENTH, AND ELEVENTH GRADES

1. Applications will be open to students interested in applying to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School for fall admission to the 9th, 10th, or 11th grade no later than November 1st.

To be included in the admissions lottery, applicants must:

- ☐ Obtain an application online at www.smithtec.org, or a hardcopy from a middle school guidance counselor or designee, or contact the admissions office at SVAHS.
- ☐ Complete all elements of the application, either online OR on the hardcopy.
- ☐ Submit the completed application to the admissions office online (preferred), via mail, or through a middle school counselor no later than February 15th.
Applications are available in home languages online.
- ☐ Participate in one Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School awareness event. These events are held on campus and virtually and registration verification is required to document the student's attendance at the event.

For additional weight in the lottery, has the student provided a demonstration of student interest including but not limited to a personal essay, a letter of recommendation from a non-family member (counselor may provide this recommendation), or an audio or video presentation.

- ☐ If "yes", one additional weight is assigned.
- ☐ If "no", no additional weight is assigned.

2. It is the responsibility of the sending school counselor (or other school personnel, if applicable) to provide the following information for each applicant to determine if an applicant receives any additional lottery weight. SVAHS will request this data be provided with an effective February 15th end date and count back 270 school days. **No data prior to 7th grade may be considered.**

- ☐ Does the applicant have fewer than 27 unexcused, full-day absences over the 270 school days prior?
 - ☐ If "no", one additional weight is assigned.
 - ☐ If "yes", no additional weight is assigned.
- ☐ Has the applicant been suspended or expelled pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 37H or 37H ½ over the 270 days prior? If yes, the following elements will be examined by Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School:
 - ☐ Was the incident on school premises or at a school-sponsored or related event?
 - ☐ Was the incident possession of a dangerous weapon or assault of educational staff?
 - ☐ Has the felony been adjudicated or has the student made an admission of guilt in court?
 - ☐ If "no" to any element, one additional weight is assigned.
 - ☐ If "yes" to all elements, no additional weight is assigned.

ADMISSIONS TIMELINE

By November 1	Admissions Application is open and available.
February 15	Deadline for all students to complete an application and awareness event for review and entrance into a lottery.

February 15	SVAHS requests attendance and discipline attestation from sending districts to determine potential extra weights.
April 1	Deadline to file <i>Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Nonresident Student Tuition Application</i> with the Superintendent of the nonresident student's district-of-residence.
Month of April	Public lotteries (announced at least one week prior) for completed student applications submitted by deadline and offer letters sent.
15 calendar days after notification of acceptance	Selected students must confirm or decline acceptance of the offer of enrollment.

LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications received after the published deadline will be drawn from a separate lottery if additional seats become available and only after the initial lottery waitlist has been exhausted.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students requesting to transfer into the ninth grade after the opening of school will be evaluated according to the same admissions policy as students entering the program at the beginning of the school year and will be accepted on a space available basis.

Non-vocational program transfer students wishing to enter Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School may do so at the beginning of either tenth or eleventh grade on a space available basis and according to the same admission policy.

Applications from students who are enrolled in a state-approved (Chapter 74) vocational/technical high school program in another school (transfer students) will be considered for admission (including admission during the school year) if they relocate away from their current school and wish to pursue the same program of study at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Applications will be evaluated according to the same admissions policy.

WITHDRAWN STUDENTS

Students who withdraw from Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School and who are attending or not attending another high school may reapply following the procedures contained in this admissions policy. A student who has withdrawn is not guaranteed acceptance.

VII. SELECTION PROCESS

When more students apply to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School than there are available seats, SVAHS uses the following weighted lottery system to select students for admission:

- All students with completed applications by February 15th are entered into one of two potential lotteries. Students will receive an official correspondence to confirm a completed application was submitted. A completed application is only considered from applicants who also satisfied the awareness requirement. The first potential lottery is for Northampton residents. The second potential lottery is for non-resident students. Any applicant submitting a non-resident tuition application will be placed in the non-resident lottery (even if one parent/guardian resides in Northampton).
- As identified in Application Process VI.2, students will be assigned additional weight in the admissions lottery for meeting criteria in the following areas:
 - Attendance
 - Behavior
 - Interest
- Students will receive a correspondence after February 15, but before the lottery, to verify they are being placed into a particular lottery, their assigned lottery identification number, and how many additional weights they are receiving. Applicant parents/guardians are encouraged to review this correspondence to verify all information is accurate prior to the lottery.
- The two potential lotteries will take place according to the following seat allocations: Northampton (30 seats) and non-residents (120 seats). The date of the lotteries will be published on the school's website with reasonable public notice at least one week prior to the lotteries.
- Students not offered admission after the lottery will be placed on a wait list for that particular applicant pool. Northampton students will be on the Northampton wait list and non-resident students will be on the non-resident wait list.
- The lottery will be conducted electronically. The lottery results and corresponding wait lists will be published to the school's website. Applicants can look for their assigned number and see where they stand within the lottery or wait list. The publishing of the lottery results on the school's website does not constitute official notification. Separate notifications will be sent to applicants.

VIII. EXPLORATORY PROGRAM

Because Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School offers more than five Chapter 74 state-approved programs, SVAHS provides a half-year exploratory program for 9th grade students, which is based on the applicable Vocational Technical Education and Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

All ninth grade students who enroll in the fall at Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School participate in a vocational/technical and agricultural exploratory program designed to help them learn about their talents and interests relative to a variety of

vocational/technical and agricultural programs. Students initially explore each vocational/technical and agricultural shop for one day. Students then list their top exploratory choices and explore each of them for an entire week.

Students are evaluated and scored (0-100 points) by their shop teacher during the exploratory week in each shop. At the end of this four (4) week exploratory period, each student selects their program of choice, as well as a second and third choice from the four (4) explored shops. Students are admitted into the shop of their choice based on the student's exploratory grade rank in that shop. In a situation where two (2) or more students attained the same grade rank, attendance will be the determining factor.

Vocational teachers evaluate each of their students throughout the exploratory (one-week exploratory) process. Students are evaluated and scored (total of 0-100 points for each exploratory week). While there is some flexibility in the scoring categories, each shop must choose one rubric and maintain that same rubric to grade their students for the entire exploratory process. All shops are required to use the same four categories which are: shop expectations and workplace safety (maximum of 20 points), participation/engagement (maximum of 20 points), career aptitude (maximum of 20 points), task completion (maximum of 20 points). Each shop then must choose 2 of the following 4 categories to grade their students for the remaining 20%: clean up (maximum of 10 points), professionalism (maximum of 10 points), punctuality/preparedness for tasks (maximum of 10 points), and homework (maximum of 10 points).

Students who wish to transfer from one shop to another shop during the school year may apply for a transfer. Transfer requests will be considered subject to the availability of openings in the student's desired shop. Each transfer applicant will be interviewed and counseled individually to determine the appropriateness of the transfer for the particular student.

Students on an individual basis and as necessary, who enroll in Smith Vocational after grade 9, may explore one or more vocational technical programs that have openings. This "mini" exploratory could last from two to three days before the student makes a program selection.

X. REVIEW AND APPEALS PROCESS

Admission to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School

The applicant's parent/guardian, within 15 calendar days of official notification after the lottery, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter to the Admission Team requesting an appeal meeting with the Principal. The Principal will schedule a time to meet with the student and parent/guardian. The Principal will respond in writing with their decision within 15 calendar days following the appeal meeting.

Admission to Specific Programs within Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School

Students who have been admitted to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School will need to apply to a specific program of study (also known as a "shop") during the first semester of the 9th grade year.

If the student applies to a program and is denied after the Exploratory Program, they may request to be added to the waitlist of their program of choice by emailing ldevine@smithtec.org.

XI. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School maintains records of all students who apply, enroll, or are waitlisted, to facilitate analysis of its admissions system and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School will provide this information to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request.