

# **SHAWSHEEN VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

An admission process is necessary in vocational technical schools where space is a limiting factor. Vocational-technical laboratories (shops) are designed and equipped to serve a specific maximum number of students safely. Consequently, a complex of such laboratories lacks both the space and flexibility to accommodate the possible needs and/or interests of all applicants. Therefore, a selection process is necessary to determine which applicants may most benefit from such educational opportunities. All applicants to grades nine through eleven at Shawsheen Valley Technical High School will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. The Shawsheen Valley Technical School Committee approved this policy on September 25, 2007.

## **II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

Shawsheen Valley Technical High School admits students and makes available to them its advantages, privileges and courses of study without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

If there is a student with limited English proficiency, a qualified representative from Shawsheen will assist the applicant in completing the necessary forms and assist in interpreting during the entire application process upon the request of the applicant.

Disabled students may voluntarily self-identify for the purpose of requesting reasonable accommodations during the entire application and admission process.

Information on limited English proficiency and disability submitted voluntarily by the applicant, for the purpose of receiving assistance and accommodations during the entire application and admission process, will not affect his/her admission to the school.

## **III. ELIGIBILITY**

The Shawsheen administration shall determine available openings for Grades 9-11. Shawsheen Valley Technical High School is in compliance with State and Federal legislation guaranteeing equal access to public educational institutions. Any eighth, ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade student who is a resident of the Shawsheen Valley Technical School District (Bedford, Billerica, Burlington, Tewksbury, and Wilmington) who expects to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter (9-11) by their local district is eligible to apply for Fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to Shawsheen Valley Technical High School. Resident students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. Priority for admission is given to Shawsheen Valley Technical High School District residents, according to the District Agreement. In situations where Shawsheen is uncertain about residency, the sending school may be asked for verification.

Students who are non-residents of the Shawsheen Valley Technical High School District (out-of-district students) are eligible to apply for Fall admission in compliance with MGL Ch74S7/603CMR 4.03 (6) and must meet the same admissions criteria as resident students. Applications must be made prior to April 1 of the preceding school year. Openings for non-resident students are only considered if there are no students on a waiting list from the Shawsheen District in the grade level and program for which they are applying.

Non-resident applicants will be accepted per this admission policy and M.G.L. c.74 section 7 on a tuition basis provided there are vacancies in the program in which they are interested. If accepted, the sending town will pay the tuition pursuant to M.G.L. c.74 section 7c. and the Massachusetts Guidelines for the Vocational Technical Education Program Nonresident Tuition Process Pursuant to M.G.L. c.74.

Transfer students from other vocational technical schools are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year to grades 9-12 at Shawsheen provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their current school. Transfer students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy. Shawsheen does not participate in school choice.

#### **IV: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Shawsheen Valley Technical High School is a regional vocational technical high school serving five towns. Educational seats for the Vocational Technical School are allotted on the basis of town quotas. These quotas have been determined by historical application patterns. The current town quotas are as follows:

<b>Bedford</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Billerica</b>	<b>32.44%</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>16.32%</b>
<b>Tewksbury</b>	<b>23.71%</b>
<b>Wilmington</b>	<b>17.53%</b>

Shawsheen is a public regional vocational technical school located on an expansive, picturesque campus in Billerica, Massachusetts. Shawsheen is accredited by The New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Shawsheen is committed to providing quality vocational technical and academic programs.

Applications for Shawsheen Valley Technical High School are reviewed by an Admissions Committee comprised of the:

**Director of Guidance**

**Director of Special  
Education**

**Dean of Students**

The Director of Guidance is responsible for insuring compliance with the guidelines of this policy.

The Director of Guidance will serve as the Chair of the Admissions Committee. The Director of Guidance with the assistance of the Admissions Committee will be responsible for the following:

1. Recommending standards for admission
2. Implementing admissions procedures
3. Processing applications
4. Ranking of students
5. Accepting students in accordance with the procedures and criteria contained in this admission's policy
6. Establishing and maintaining a waiting list of acceptable candidates

All applications to Shawsheen are processed through the Guidance Office, which maintains current application files and associated waiting lists.

## **V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

The Shawsheen Guidance Office is responsible for disseminating information about Shawsheen. In addition it is responsible for preparing materials for open houses, and for collecting applications and maintaining application files.

Shawsheen utilizes a variety of forums and methods to provide programmatic information regarding the opportunities available for residents of the district. These activities include the following:

1. Shawsheen staff visit all middle schools in the district beginning in late October and ending in early December. During these visitations, presentations are made to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade residents of the district regarding programs, educational activities, and opportunities after graduation and programs that support a myriad of non-academic activities such as athletics and clubs. A video presentation is given followed by a question and answer period in which 8<sup>th</sup> grade students interact with Shawsheen students and staff.
2. Shawsheen conducts two open houses each year. A Community Open House is scheduled each fall during the month of October. Most recently, the Open House has been moved to Sundays to afford prospective students and their parents/guardians the opportunity to visit all vocational-technical and academic programs and to attend formal presentations regarding the operation of the school and its mission. A second Open House is held in January of each year for applicants. During this Open House, students have the opportunity to participate in vocational-technical activities.
3. Parents/guardians also have the opportunity to schedule individual visits for the purpose of touring the school in the event they are not able to attend an Open House.
4. Brochures and other published materials, including the program of studies, literature of special education resources, co-operative program, extracurricular activities and

opportunities for graduates as well as placement information are available in the Guidance Office and are distributed during Open Houses. Much of the published material is also available in district schools' Guidance Offices. The Shawsheen web site provides all of the above information as well as additional relevant information to district students, parents, and interested district citizens, including a downloadable application and this Admissions Policy. Additionally, Shawsheen periodically mails relevant information, including the school newspaper, to 8<sup>th</sup> grade district students.

5. Prior to the second Open House in January, Shawsheen staff conduct a two night telethon to contact 8<sup>th</sup> grade applicants and their parents reminding them of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Open House and taking the opportunity to answer any relevant questions.

## **VI. APPLICATION PROCESS FOR FALL ADMISSION TO THE NINTH, TENTH, OR ELEVENTH GRADE**

1. Students interested in applying to Shawsheen for **Fall Admission** to the ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade must:
  - a. Obtain an application at an Open House, his/her Guidance Office, Shawsheen's Guidance Office, Shawsheen's web site, or request one by mail, telephone or email.
  - b. Complete the application and return it directly to the Shawsheen Guidance Office. Shawsheen will obtain supportive data including report cards, recommendations, discipline, and attendance records from sending school guidance personnel. **An application is not considered complete unless it contains all appropriate signatures. The parent/guardian must sign the application to indicate approval of their son/daughter's application and authorize the release of information by the sending school.**
2. It is the responsibility of the sending school guidance counselor to submit a hard copy transcript or report card, attendance and discipline records, as well as recommendations for each applicant.
3. Students will be scheduled for an interview with Shawsheen's Director of Guidance or a designee at the applying student's school. In the case of a student absence on the interview day, or in the case of a late applicant, the interview schedule will be mutually agreed upon between the Director of Guidance and the student's counselor and/or parent(s)/guardian.
4. **Completed applications include** all required signatures, hardcopies of grades, attendance, discipline records, and recommendations, as delineated in Section VII of this policy.
5. If an incomplete application is received, the following procedure will be followed:
  - a. The Shawsheen Guidance Office will notify the sending school's guidance counselor responsible for submitting application material that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
  - b. The Shawsheen Guidance Office will notify the applicant's parent/guardian in the event that the local guidance counselor does not resolve the issue.

- c. If after notifying the local school guidance counselor and parent/guardian the application remains incomplete for ten school days, the application will be voided.

### **FOR CURRENT YEAR ADMISSION TO NINTH, TENTH, OR ELEVENTH GRADE**

1. Students interested in applying to Shawsheen for the **current school year** must:
  - a. Obtain an application from his/her local district guidance office or from the Shawsheen Guidance Office. An application may also be downloaded from the Shawsheen web site or requested by mail, telephone, or email.
  - b. Return the completed application form directly to the Shawsheen Guidance Office. The Shawsheen guidance office will obtain supportive documents from the applicant's sending school. **An application is not considered complete unless it contains all appropriate signatures. The parent/guardian must sign the application to indicate approval of their son/daughter's application and authorize the release of grades, attendance, and discipline records by the sending school.**
2. It is the responsibility of the sending school guidance counselor to provide a hard copy transcript or report card, attendance and discipline records, as well as recommendations for the applicant.
3. Students will be scheduled for an interview with Shawsheen's Director of Guidance or a designee at the applying student's school. In the case of a student absence on the interview day, the interview date will be rescheduled on a mutually agreed upon time between the Director of Guidance and the student's parent(s)/guardian.
4. **Completed applications include** all required signatures, hardcopies of grades, attendance, discipline records, and recommendations as delineated in Section VII of this policy.
5. If an incomplete application is received, the following procedure will be followed:
  - a. The Shawsheen Guidance Office will notify the sending school's guidance counselor responsible for submitting the application that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
  - b. The applicant's parent/guardian will be notified by the Shawsheen Guidance Office in the event the issue is not resolved by the local guidance counselor.
  - c. If after notifying the local guidance counselor and the parent/guardian the application remains incomplete for ten days, the application will be voided.

### **Rolling Admissions**

In accordance with the rolling admissions program in which students apply at any time, applicants will be evaluated using the same criteria as those received at any other time and will be integrated in rank order on an established waiting list.

**Transfer Students:** Transfer students will be subject to this admissions policy and criteria and will be accepted on an individual, space available basis.

**Withdrawn Students**

A student who has withdrawn from Shawsheen and is attending or not attending another high school may reapply and will be subject to this admissions policy and criteria.

**VII. SELECTION CRITERIA**

The Shawsheen Admissions Committee periodically reviews the admissions process. They may make recommendations to the Shawsheen School Committee through the Superintendent-Director and the School Improvement Council for approval of any changes including a change in the designated cut off score for admission for the next school year. Guidance counselors from the local schools will be notified of any changes in this regard, upon their approval by DOE, before the admission’s process begins.

The Admissions Committee using weighted admissions criteria processes completed applications. Each applicant will be assigned a score derived from the sum of the sub scores of the following criteria:

- 1. **Scholastic Achievement: English, math, science, social studies**—Maximum Points: 24

<b>Grade Averages</b>	<b>Points</b>
A (90-100)	6
B (80-89)	5
C (70-79)	4
D (65-69)	3
F (00-64)	0

For applications to grade 9 (Fall admission), the average of the applicant’s final grades from grade 7, and grades for the first and second quarter in grade 8 in English, social studies, mathematics, and science from the local school report card/transcript will be used. For applications to grades 10 or 11 (Fall admission), the average of the previous school year’s final grades, and terms one and two of the current school year marks in English, social studies, mathematics, and science from the local school’s report card/transcript will be used.

For applications to grades 9, 10, or 11 (admission during the school year), the current school year to date of the application marks in English, social studies, mathematics, and science from the local school report card/transcript will be used as well as the applicant’s final grades in the previous academic year.

2. **Attendance**—Maximum 16 points

# Unexcused Absences	Points
0-6	16
7-13	11
14-20	6
21+	0

For applications to grade 9 (Fall admission), The sum of unexcused absences from grade 7 and terms one and two of grade 8 as delineated on the local school’s report card will be used. For applications to grades 10 or 11 (Fall admission), the sum of unexcused absences from the previous school year and terms one and two of the current school year as delineated on the local school’s report card will be used.

For applications to grades 9, 10, or 11 (admission during the school year), unexcused absences from the current school year up to the date of application as well as the sum of the previous year’s unexcused absences as delineated on the local school’s report card will be used.

3. **School Discipline/Conduct**---Maximum 26 points

Discipline/Conduct	Points
No Incidents	26
1 Minor Incident	22
2-4 Minor Incidents	16
5 Minor or 1 suspension	10
2 Suspensions	4
2+ Suspensions	0

For applications to grade 9 (Fall Admission), incidents from grade 7 as well as those from terms one and two of grade 8 as delineated on the local school’s report card or discipline record will be used. For applications to grade 10 and 11 (Fall admissions), incidents from the previous year as well as those from terms one and two of the current school year as delineated on the local school’s report card or discipline record will be used.

For applications to grades 9, 10, or 11 (admission during the school year), incidents occurring during the current school year as well as those from the previous school year as delineated on the sending school’s report card or discipline record will be used.

4. **Local Guidance Counselor Recommendation**---Maximum 10 points

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Points</b>
Excellent	10
Above Average	7
Average	5
Poor	0

5. **Interview**---Maximum points 24

The Director of Guidance or designee will interview each applicant. Each applicant will be asked the same questions and rated with a uniform standard. The interview will provide information regarding the student’s reason for attending Shawsheen and his/her ability to benefit there from, the student’s choice of program interest, career goals, and his/her interests and motivation.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Points</b>
Excellent	24
Above Average	20
Average	16
Below Average	12
Poor	0

<b>Point Summary: Scholastic Achievement--</b>	<b>-24</b>
<b>Attendance-----</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Discipline-----</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Recommendation-----</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Interview-----</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Maximum Points Attainable-----</b>	<b>100</b>

After points are assigned to each respective criterion, the points are totaled for each applicant. Using the quotas assigned to each member town, cut off scores are assigned on or before April 1st based on seats available and the distribution of scores attained by applicants. These cut off scores will vary for each town and are affected by the number of applicants. As the number of applicants increases, the cut off scores for each respective town generally increases as well. After a point total for each resident applicant has been determined, applicants are ranked in accordance with their point total and their town’s quota. Upon filling a town’s quota, students remaining on the applicant list are assigned to a ranked waiting list in accordance with their point total. **In addition to a candidate’s “rating score”, Shawsheen conditions its acceptance on applicants having passed courses in English Language Arts or the equivalent and mathematics for the school year immediately preceding their enrollment at Shawsheen, and attain a minimum rating score of 60 or above.**

## VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

Using the guidelines delineated in the criteria section of the Admission Policy, the Admissions Committee at Shawsheen will make recommendations for action on each applicant. Applications will be reviewed, processed, and assigned a point total in accordance with the admissions criteria. **Minimal eligibility requirements include promotion to the next grade and a passing grade in English Language Arts or its equivalent, and mathematics, and a rating score of 60 or above as a condition for acceptance.**

After a point total for each resident applicant has been determined, all resident applicants are placed in order of their point total and town of residence. Applicants are selected in accordance with their criteria point total and the quota of seats assigned to their town of residence. All applicants are accepted, not accepted, or put on a waiting list. As openings occur, applicants are accepted in order of their place on the waiting list as determined by their criteria point total.

On or before April 15th, if a member town does not utilize or fill its assigned quota seats, those seats are distributed to the other member communities in accordance with their assigned quota percentage.

On or after July 1st of each year, if vacancies exist, excess space will be distributed to acceptable candidates out of district.

All students are notified of their status at the conclusion of the school year. Acceptable applications received after April 15<sup>th</sup>, will be added to the waiting list. Additionally, students who are on the waiting list may be accepted at the end of the first or second term of grade 9. Eligible transfer candidates for grades 10 or 11 will be accepted on a space available basis when vacancies occur in the vocational area of their choice. In the event there are more acceptable candidates than spaces available, a waiting list shall be maintained for each technical program. The waiting list shall be based on rank order of the student's total criteria points.

All accepted students are required to take the Stanford Diagnostic reading Test (SDRT) and the Stanford Diagnostic Math Test (SDMT) as well as provide a writing sample as determined and administered by Shawsheen personnel. These assessments are used for placement purposes only and are not used as part of the admissions criteria.

**In accordance with Massachusetts State Law, updated immunization records are required for all incoming students as a condition of enrollment.**

## IX. ENROLLMENT

In order to enroll at Shawsheen for the fall, applicants must have been promoted to the grade they wish to enter by their local school district. In addition, as a condition of enrollment, they must have passed courses in English Language arts, or its equivalent, and mathematics for the school year immediately preceding their enrollment at Shawsheen as well as the attainment of a minimal criteria point total of 60 or greater. All relevant data from the sending school including

updated immunization documents will be required during the enrollment process. Nonresident students must have approval of their nonresident tuition arrangements.

## **X. VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL PROGRAM PLACEMENT**

Freshmen students participate in an exploratory program that allows them to explore 14 distinct career areas from September to April of the freshman year. Upon the completion of the exploratory program, students are asked to rank order their career choices from their exploratory experience. During the course of the exploratory program, instructors rank students in accordance with a structured rating sheet that is used to rate performance in both the vocational area as well as in related theory classes.

During the week students are in shop, they are evaluated on the following five areas:

1. Ability to follow instructions—written and verbal;
2. Completes assignments as directed and in a timely manner;
3. Shop behavior—attitude, cooperation with peers and teachers;
4. Respect for tools and equipment and safety;
5. Quality and completeness of work Students receive a maximum of ten points in each category.

Evaluation of the related theory component of exploratory is comprised of the following five components:

1. Academic foundation—ability to grasp concepts;
2. Completeness of class assignments and homework;
3. Class behavior;
4. Interest in vocational-technical area;
5. Performance on weekly tests.

Students can receive a maximum of ten points in each criterion. Taken together a student can earn a maximum of 100 points during the exploratory cycle with a perfect score in each area. These rating sheets are kept in the student's folder.

Program choices are awarded based on overall exploratory average as determined by the point total they receive in all exploratory shops and space available. If more students select a program major than there are spaces available, students will be rank ordered by exploratory average.

Upper class students entering the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade will have the opportunity to “shadow” in one or more vocational-technical programs prior to making a decision regarding program selection among those with space available. Students will be evaluated and graded by each vocational-technical instructor during the “shadowing” period in the same manner as freshman exploratory students in the above paragraph. If the number of these upper class students seeking a particular shop exceeds the space available within the program in which an upper class student is interested, he/she will be placed on a waiting list for space as it becomes available.

Students who wish to transfer from one shop to another during the school year may request to be placed on the waiting list of their preferred shop. Transfer requests are considered on a space available basis and in accordance with the rating the student received in that particular

program during their exploratory or shadowing experience. Each transfer student will be interviewed and counseled individually to determine the appropriateness of the transfer.

## **XI. REVIEW AND APPEALS**

The applicant's parent/guardian, upon receipt of a letter from Shawsheen indicating that the applicant was not accepted or placed on a waiting list for the school or for a particular program, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter to the Director of Guidance within 15 days of the receipt of the letter. The Director of Guidance will respond in writing to the letter with his/her findings of the review within 15 school days.

If after the review, the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the findings of the Director of Guidance, the parent/guardian may do so by sending a letter within 15 days of receipt of the Director of Guidance's response, requesting that he/she be scheduled to appear before the school's Principal to appeal the Director of Guidance's findings.

Shawsheen's Principal will respond in writing to the parent/guardian with a scheduled date for the appeal within 15 school days of receipt of the letter of request. After this additional appeal has been heard, the Principal will respond in writing with his decision on the appeal within 15 school days of when the appeal was presented. The decision of the Principal is final.