

## ADMISSION POLICY

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

An admissions 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 twelve at Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admissions Policy. The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District Committee approved this policy on October 18, 2018.

### **II. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational 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, gender identity, sexual orientation, homelessness or disability.

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

Students with disabilities may voluntarily self-identify for the purpose of requesting reasonable accommodations during the entire application and admissions process.

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

### **III. ELIGIBILITY**

Any eighth, ninth, tenth or eleventh grade student who is a resident of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District (Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Grafton, Hopedale, Millville, Milford, Mendon, Millbury, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge) who expects to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local district is eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School. Resident students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admissions Policy. Priority for admission is given to Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District residents according to the District Agreement.

Students who are not residents of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year subject to the availability of openings to Blackstone Valley provided they expect to be promoted to the grade they seek to enter by their local district. Nonresident students will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admissions Policy.

Transfer students from other Chapter 74 State Approved Programs are eligible to apply for fall admission or admission during the school year to grades 9-12 at Blackstone Valley 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 Admissions Policy.

### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Blackstone Valley Tech is a public regional vocational technical school located in Upton, Massachusetts. Blackstone Valley Tech is a member of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Blackstone Valley Tech is committed to providing quality vocational technical programs.

It is the responsibility of the Blackstone Valley Assistant Superintendent-Director [Principal] to supervise the administration of the policies and procedures required to admit and enroll applicants in conformity with this Admissions Policy.

Blackstone Valley has an Admissions Committee appointed by the Assistant Superintendent-Director [Principal]. The committee is chaired by the Director of Student Life and consists of members of the Administration, Guidance, Special Needs, Vocational Technical and Academic Departments. Responsibilities of the Admissions Committee include:

- A. determination of standards for admission
- B. development and implementation of admission procedures
- C. processing of applications
- D. ranking of students
- E. acceptance of students according to the procedure and criteria in the admissions policy
- F. establishment and maintenance of a list of acceptable candidates to be considered for admission when/if seats become available.

The Blackstone Valley Tech Director of Student Life is responsible for disseminating information about Blackstone Valley Tech through local school assemblies and press releases, and for collecting applications from the local schools.

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School District Agreement:

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School District is governed by a School Committee composed of one elected member with residency consideration for each town and district wide election across all 13 communities. Annually, the Admissions Committee makes a recommendation to the School Committee regarding the number of positions available for new students for the coming school year. Originally, these targeted ratios were established by comparing each town's student population in grades 9 through 12. Those original ratios have changed only slightly, due to each town's commitment to building expansions over the years.

Since Valley Tech is a selective secondary school, these ratios apply only to the extent that each town provides qualified applicants. A qualified applicant is one whose score in the selection process (refer to pages 7-9) puts a student in rank order above the cut-off score. The cut-off score is based on the number of positions the School Committee has determined are available for new students for the coming year.

In accordance with the Educational Reform Act, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District Committee votes annually on whether to adopt school choice. Currently, by such vote, Valley Tech is not a choice school. The overwhelming application interest from member towns contributed significantly to this decision.

**V. RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

1. Blackstone Valley Tech disseminates information about the school through a variety of methods.
  - a. Representatives from Valley Tech will visit each sending school in the fall (October/November) to meet all eighth graders and conduct an informational program about the vocational-technical-academic offerings available at Valley Tech. This program consists of viewing a video about the school, a question and answer period and a review of dates relative to tours of the school, Parents' Night [Open House], and due date for completed applications.
  - b. An Open House is scheduled in Late November/Early December. Prospective students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) have an opportunity to visit all vocational-technical programs and speak with teachers as well as view a presentation about all offerings.
  - c. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may schedule individual and/or group visits at a mutually convenient time.
  - d. Brochures, which describe vocational technical programs including academic courses, sports, cooperative education, and special education resources, are distributed during the 8th grade visitations and the Open House.

## VI. APPLICATION PROCESS

### APPLICATION PROCESS - FOR FALL ADMISSION\* TO THE NINTH, TENTH, ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH GRADE

1. Students interested in applying to Blackstone Valley Tech for fall admission to the ninth, tenth, eleventh or twelfth grade must:
  - a. Obtain an application from their local school Guidance Counselor as early in the school year as possible.
  - b. Return the completed application form to their local school Guidance Counselor by the deadline set by the Guidance Counselor.
  - c. Attend an interview at their local school, conducted by Blackstone Valley Tech Staff or come to Valley Tech for an interview.
2. It is the responsibility of the local school Guidance Counselor to:
  - a. Complete their portion of the application form.
  - b. Forward the completed applications to the Office of Student Life at Blackstone Valley Tech by the first Friday in February. Complete applications include:
    - (i) Completed application form (including required signatures).
    - (ii) For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the grade 7 and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 courses taken and marks obtained in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science from the local school report card/transcript are required. For applications to grades 10, 11 & 12 (fall admission) courses taken and grades obtained from the previous school year and terms 1 & 2 of the current school year in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science from the local school report card/transcript are required.

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), grade 7 and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 unexcused absences from the local school report card/transcript are required.

For applications to grades 10, 11 & 12 (fall admission) the sum of the previous school year and terms 1 & 2 current school year unexcused absences from the local school report card/transcript is required.

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the grade 7 and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 behavior records from the local school report card or from the local school Guidance Counselor's recommendation are required. For applications to grades 10, 11 & 12 (fall admission) the previous school year and terms 1 & 2 of the current school year behavior records from the local school report card/transcript or from the local school Guidance Counselor's recommendation are required.

For applications to grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 (fall admission), the local school Guidance Counselor's recommendation for each candidate is required.

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\* applying for admission during the winter and spring to begin classes the following fall

3. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. The Office of Student Life at Blackstone Valley Tech will notify the local school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the application that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
  - b. The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Blackstone Valley Tech Admission Office in the event that the problem is not resolved by the local school Guidance Counselor.
  - c. If after notifying the local school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete for ten school days, the application will be voided.

APPLICATION PROCESS - FOR ADMISSION TO THE NINTH, TENTH, ELEVENTH AND  
TWELTH GRADES FOR THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR\*

1. Students interested in applying to Blackstone Valley Tech for admission for the current school year must:
  - a. Obtain an application from their local school Guidance Counselor.
  - b. Return the completed application form to their local school Guidance Counselor by the deadline set by the Guidance Counselor.
  - c. Attend an interview at Blackstone Valley Tech. If the applicant or parent/guardian cannot provide transportation, a representative from Blackstone Valley will go to the local school to interview the applicant.
2. It is the responsibility of the local school Guidance Counselor to:
  - a. Complete their portion of the application form.
  - b. Forward the completed applications to the Office of Student Life at Blackstone Valley Tech. Complete applications include:
    - (i) Completed application form (including required signatures).
    - (ii) For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year) the current school year to the date of the application marks in English language arts or its equivalent, social studies, math and science from the local school report card/transcript are required.  
  
For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year) the current school year to the date of the application unexcused absences from the local school report card/transcript are required.

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\* applying for admission during the school year to begin classes during the same school year, as opposed to applying for admission one school year to begin classes the next school year in the fall

For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 & 12 (admission during the school year) the current school year to the date of the application school conduct/discipline information from the local school report card/transcripts or from the local school Guidance Counselor is required.

For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 (admission during the school year) the local school Guidance Counselor 's recommendation of the candidate is required.

3. If incomplete applications are received, the following procedures will be followed:
  - a. The Blackstone Valley Tech Office of Student Life will notify the local school Guidance Counselor responsible for submitting the application, that the application is incomplete and will request completion.
  - b. The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Blackstone Valley Tech Office of Student Life in the event the problem is not resolved by the local school Guidance Counselor.
  - c. If after notifying the local school Guidance Counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s), the application remains incomplete for ten school days, the application will be voided.

#### LATE APPLICATIONS

Applications received after the first Friday in February deadline may not be accepted. If accepted, they will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and their composite score will be computed. They will be placed in rank order on the established applicant list.

#### TRANSFER STUDENTS

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 Blackstone Valley Tech. All transfer applicants must attend an informational meeting at Blackstone Valley Tech. If the applicant or parent/guardian cannot provide transportation, an official from Blackstone Valley Tech will go to the local school to meet with the applicant. Their applications will be evaluated according to the provisions of this Admissions Policy.

#### WITHDRAWN STUDENTS

Students who withdraw from Blackstone Valley Tech and who are attending or not attending another high school may reapply to Blackstone Valley Tech following the procedures contained in this admission policy and will be evaluated using the criteria contained in this Admission Policy.

## VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

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:

A. Scholastic Achievement: Maximum 25 points

<b>Grade Averages</b>	<b>Points</b>
80 - 100	25
70 - 79	20
65 - 69	15
60 - 64	10
0 - 59	0

For applications to grade 9 (fall admission), the average of grade 7 and terms 1 & 2 grade 8 marks in English, social studies, mathematics and science from the local school report card/transcript are used. For applications to grades 10, 11 and 12 (fall admission) the average of the previous school year and terms 1 & 2 of the current school year marks in English, social studies, mathematics and science from the local school report card/transcript are used. For applications to grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 (admission during the school year) the current school year to the date of the application marks in English, social studies, mathematics and science from the local school report card/transcript are used.

B. Attendance: Maximum 15 points

Absences for excused medical reasons will not be counted. However, documentation is needed to support medical absences.

The absences from Grade 7 are added to the absences from the first 2 terms of Grade 8 and then divided by six (6) to establish a final average of absences per term. Points are awarded as follows:

<b>Average Days Absent Per Term</b>	<b>Points</b>
0	15 points
1	12 points
2	10 points
3	8 points
4	5 points
5+	0

C. School Discipline/Conduct: Maximum 15 points

The number of days a student has been suspended in school and out of school are recorded. Maximum points are awarded to students who have never been suspended: (Please note: 6 Detentions = 1 Suspension).

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Points</b>
Excellent	15
Above Average	10
Average	5
Below Average	0

D. Local Guidance Counselor's Recommendation: Maximum 15 points

A member of the Guidance Department in each member town will complete a recommendation based on a rubric on the application form.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Points</b>
Excellent	15
Above Average	10
Average	5
Below Average	0

E. Interview: Maximum 30 points

Representatives from Valley Tech will conduct personal interviews with all students who apply. The interviewer will award a maximum of 30 points for the applicant's answer to 5 questions. Questions range in point value from 1 to 8 points. The same five interview questions are asked of each applicant and are scored using a rubric.

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Points</b>
Excellent	30
Above Average	23
Average	18
Below Average	10
Poor	0

After points are given in each area, the points are totaled for each applicant. A maximum total of one hundred (100) points can be earned.

## **VIII. SELECTION PROCESS**

In March, members of Valley Tech’s Admissions Committee will assemble to review all fully completed applications received by the first Friday in February. They will check each application for accuracy before awarding rating points in each category. After awarding rating points, each category will be totaled. The applicants from each town will be ranked from high to low. Students listed above the cut-off score will be selected for admission. Those below the cut-off point will be placed on a Waiting List. While each town has a targeted goal, only qualified students are accepted. The cut-off score is determined annually by ranking all applicants from top to bottom and selecting the number of applicants necessary to fill the Freshmen Class (i.e. 400 applicants, 225 top ranked are accepted). All students and their local guidance counselors are advised of their admissions status (accepted, waiting list) by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in April.

Non-resident applicants are evaluated using the criteria in this Admissions Policy and will be placed on the applicant list after the resident applicants. Non-resident applicants on the list will only be accepted if all resident applicants have been accepted.

Applications received after the first Friday in February will be evaluated using the same criteria as other applications and their composite score will be integrated in rank order on the established applicant list.

Late applicants whose applications were not received by Blackstone Valley Tech by the first Friday in February will receive a letter informing them of their status.

## **IX. ENROLLMENT**

In order to enroll at Blackstone Valley Tech for the fall, applicants must have been promoted to the grade they wish to enter by their local school district. In addition, they must have passed courses in English language arts or its equivalent and mathematics for the school year immediately preceding their enrollment at Blackstone Valley Tech.

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

All ninth grade students enrolled at Blackstone Valley Regional Technical High School participate in a vocational technical exploratory program (August through December) designed to introduce each student to several career pathways while helping them discover their talents and interests through a brief (typically 4-5 days) immersion in seven different vocational-technical areas. Students choose three programs to explore, and Blackstone Valley Tech provides the remaining four, including one gender based, non-traditional shop (i.e. Automotive for a female student or Cosmetology for a male). Throughout the Exploratory experience, vocational teachers evaluate each student based upon a common rubric/scoring guide in the following areas:

- Competency in technical area
- Following Instructions
- Quality of Work
- Safety

- Behavior

Students may receive a maximum of 40 points in each criterion for a total of 200 points. Exploratory scores are then entered into IPASS, tabulated, organized and reported to each individual student and his/her parent/guardian the week following each experience.

At the conclusion of the exploratory period, each student selects his/her program of choice; as well as second through seventh choices from the explored shops. The administrative team meets to review scores and student requests which are sorted to rank order the students according to their score in the shop the student requested as their first choice.

Students are admitted into the shop of their choice based on the point total they received in their first choice shop. For example, a student with a point total of 150 would be admitted before a student with a point total of 120.

When a technical program exceeds its capacity for enrollment, the following steps are taken for placement:

1. Students are placed in their 2nd through 7th choices according to their choice of program (shop).
2. Their rank order (using exploratory scores) is then compared to other students requesting that shop.
3. In all cases, tie scores are broken by the cumulative average of all seven exploratory evaluations.
4. Program wait lists are created when students are placed in a program other than their first choice, yet would like to be in a different shop that is at capacity. Students on a wait list are rank-ordered by their exploratory evaluations. Waitlisted students are notified if an opening occurs in their desired shop and given the option to change shops or remain in their current placement.

After placement, students continue in the shop in which they were placed for the remainder of their school tenure unless they request a transfer. Students who wish to transfer from one shop to another may apply for transfer through their school counselor by completing a Request for Shop Transfer form and obtaining the appropriate signatures after the second trimester is completed. If a student did not receive any of their seven choices and wishes to explore additional shops they may do so for two additional cycles provided there is space to safely do so. Transfer requests will be considered subject to availability of openings in the requested program(s). Each transfer applicant will receive career counseling prior to final transfer approval.

Students who enroll in Blackstone Valley Tech High School after grade 9 will be accepted into a specific technical program upon admission. If, after enrollment, the student desires a shop change, the students may apply for transfer through their school counselor by completing a Request for Shop Transfer form and obtaining the appropriate signatures. Transfer requests will be considered subject to availability of openings in the requested shops. Each transfer applicant will receive career counseling prior to final transfer approval.

## **XI. REVIEW and APPEALS**

The applicant's parent(s)/guardian(s), upon receipt of a letter from Blackstone Valley Tech indicating that the applicant was not accepted, may request a review of the decision by sending a letter requesting a review to the Director of Student Life within thirty days of the receipt of the letter. The Director of Student Life will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within thirty days.

If after the review, the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the findings of the review they may do so by sending a letter requesting a meeting with the Superintendent-Director to appeal the Director of Student Life's findings. The Superintendent-Director will respond in writing to the parent/guardian with a scheduled date for the appeal within thirty days of the receipt of the letter. The Superintendent-Director will respond in writing to the letter with their decision on the appeal within thirty days of the meeting with the Superintendent-Director when the appeal was presented.

The applicant's parent/guardian, upon receipt of a letter from Blackstone Valley Tech indicating that the applicant was not accepted or placed on a waiting list for a particular program (shop)(major), may request a review of the decision by sending a letter requesting a review to the Director of Student Life within thirty days of the receipt of the letter. The Director of Student Life will respond in writing to the letter with the findings of the review within thirty days.