



SOUTHAMPTON CITY COLLEGE

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Southampton City College is committed to widening participation in higher education amongst all under-represented groups. Our mission is to provide excellent career focused learning which prepares our students to succeed at work and in life

Our Vision is to be a college which is recognised as

- Expert in career-led education and training
- First choice for students, parents and employers
- A key partner in the development of skills in Southampton and the Solent
- Outstanding in all that we do

The college HE strategy is focused upon the development and delivery of high quality, vocationally relevant programmes to support internal progression, widen participation and to meet and external demand. The objectives of the HE Strategy are to:

- Deliver Outstanding Learning and a Life Enhancing Student Experience
- Achieve robust financial health
- Plan and deliver a curriculum which equips students with great work and life skills
- Develop a Higher Education infrastructure to deliver a high quality sustainable curriculum offer capable of expanding to accommodate the aspirations of our students and the priorities in the Solent LEP
- Work collaboratively to ensure the continuation of a career-focused higher education curriculum offer in Southampton

2. THE CONTEXT FOR WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Southampton is ranked 67th out of all 326 Local Authorities in England with regards to deprivation: a decline from its previous ranking of 81st. 23% of the City's population lives in the most deprived areas. Southampton now has a greater number of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the 10% most deprived in England, compared with IMD 2010 (an increase from 10 to 19); the seventh largest percentage point increase in England. Education attainment at Level 4 and above is also significantly lower than in the national population, with progress to a Level 4 qualification at 19, 10% below the National Average for the UK.

Within this context of historically lower HE participation and employment achievement, the College is committed to delivering higher education and to enhancing the opportunities for the development of higher level skills within the city and its surrounding areas. We are deliberately inclusive in our entry requirements for Higher Education with many of students being accepted as non- or low-tariff applicants. In addition, 78% of our

students are 25+, 14% are 21 -24 and only 8% are under 21, demonstrating how the College's HE provision serves a very broad age demographic effectively.

In 2017 the overall satisfaction is 100% in the National Student Survey (NSS) which exceeds by 20% the national benchmark for HE in FE.

3. OUR WIDENING PARTICIPATION PRIORITIES

Our widening participation priorities are to:

- Provide opportunities for seamless progression for students who might otherwise not be able to successfully access higher education due to a range of barriers or perceived barriers.
- Raise aspirations so that students not only feel that they can get into level 3 and 4 but that they also belong there.
- Provide students with a range of educational opportunities which enables them to develop the knowledge, behaviour and skills required to progress to higher level skilled employment.
- Creating tailored outreach activities for communities, schools and employers to raise aspirations for HE in lower socio-economic postcode areas

4. WHAT OUR LEARNERS CAN EXPECT FROM US

Examples of how our widening participation strategies are being implemented at Southampton City College include the following:

Widening Participation Activities

- A range of projects are planned in collaboration with the Southern University Network National Collaboration Outreach Programme (NCOP). This includes the recruitment of a Widening Participation Officer who will work with NCOP eligible students to raise their aspirations for Higher Education, and the introduction of a 'People Like Us' mentoring programme in conjunction with Southampton Solent University. The projects will be developed further throughout the course of this agreement.
- Working closely with schools and partner HEIs to raise aspirations and promote lifelong learning, targeting progression to HE courses and attending school careers events to promote advice and guidance on progression opportunities and offer careers advice
- Working with employers in providing a coherent progression route for employees studying part-time, especially HNCs in engineering disciplines.
- Addressing financial barriers to success and creating focused support through hardship fund payments.

Recruitment

- Applications are welcomed from all students irrespective of background.
- The College maintains low cost higher education programmes so that the local community and employers have access to affordable higher education.
- The College provides information and promotes its Higher Education opportunities to potential students, through open events, through progression talks to its internal student population, on the College website and in other forms of social media- aiming to reach the widest audience possible.
- Progression routes are mapped from many internal vocational programmes which have not previously attracted UCAS points for example HNs, Foundation Degrees and Apprenticeships.

- Where students do not meet the entry criteria, the College provides advice and guidance which assists them in identifying an alternative programme of study that will enable access to Higher Education in the future.
- The entry criteria for all higher education programmes at the college include ‘non-standard’ options so as to encourage applications from those who have not followed a standard route and may not have UCAS tariff points.
- As part of the admissions process, the College provides comprehensive information, advice and guidance (IAG). The College’s IAG is quality assured through Matrix.
- Programmes are timetabled to cluster activities so that students are not required to attend across a number of days. We also run a number of part-time programmes where students are only required to attend for 1 day per week. This means that students are able to work and therefore maintain an income.
- The college offers a range of Access to Higher Education Qualifications to support those who are returning to education.

Advice, guidance and student support

- To support retention, and to ensure a smooth transition into Higher Education, all students attend a HE induction programme which introduces them to matters such as academic regulations, college resources, welfare support, and gives the opportunity to identify support required
- The College offers students structured study skills support, tutorial support and smaller group sizes in order to create a more personalised approach to learning.
- The Curriculum is aimed at inclusion, responsive and offers a variety of vocational, professional and technical programmes in response to local community and employers' needs to maximise opportunities for progression into employment.
- Teaching and Learning is of high quality, fostering an inclusive learning environment and eliciting the best performance from students unfamiliar with the expectations of higher education. Emphasis is placed on workplace skills, making sure that our graduates leave equipped with the employable skills and attributes to take their place in the world of work.

Student Opportunities Fund

The College is in receipt of HEFCE Grant funding for Enhancing Student Opportunities and Widening Participation. The fund has enabled the College to provide further investment in:

- Equipment such as lap tops, to ensure all students have access to resources which will enable success and help to overcome barriers to retention.
- Financial support and bursaries for general access and childcare support will be available from the College to provide financial help to eligible learners whose access to, or completion of, education or training is inhibited by financial constraints or barriers.
- Study support

(look at Richard's email)

Fees

In line with funding policies this institution will be charging an average fee that is above the £6,165 basic fee for full time students.

5. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

The quality process ensures groups such as staff, students, HE partners and other applicable stakeholders are involved in the process. We believe all our students are co-creators of the student experience and as such, student representation is rooted in all groups and communities - formal and informal within the University Centre. The College has an agreed Quality Cycle to ensure the monitoring of progress against targets and enabling improvements in practice are effective and timely.

The college will review and revise this Access and Participation Statement annually to reflect the current students and address specific minority groups as applicable. The college will continue to value and respect equality, diversity and inclusion and be committed to encouraging applications from prospective students from our diverse communities.