

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Leicester College currently sets the tuition fees for its higher education programmes within the Office for Students approved (fee cap) basic amount. In view of this, the College has published an '*Access and Participation Statement*' setting out its commitment to widening participation and fair access. This document can be found on the College website at <https://leicestercollege.ac.uk/about/corporate-information/document-library/download-info/widening-access-and-participation-statement-ofs/>.

We are proud to be located in a city such as Leicester, and value the diversity of all the communities we serve. We acknowledge and celebrate the different backgrounds, cultures, languages, abilities and beliefs of our learners and staff. The College aims to promote community cohesion, and to provide a safe and harmonious learning environment where everyone feels that they belong.

In support of its Mission and Values, Leicester College is committed to widening and increasing participation in Higher Education (HE). The College underwent a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review (HER) in January 2016 which confirmed that the maintenance of academic standards, quality of student learning opportunities and the reliability of its public information meets UK expectations. Since then the College has continued to meet expectations as confirmed through HEFCE's annual provider review process and in 2017 the College was awarded with Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold.

Our Mission is:

To equip people with the skills they need to be successful in education, in work and business and in their personal lives.

Our Values are:

- Ambition
- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Excellence

The College has a strong commitment to widening access as indicated by the profile of its students, the courses offered and the range of strategies, policies and regulations in place including;

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report
- Admissions Policy (Admission Appeals Procedure)
- Learning and Assessment Policy
- Higher Education Academic Regulations
- Leicester College Operating Statement 2020-21

The College is committed to enrolling and retaining students from all backgrounds including those currently underrepresented at the College. The College firmly believes that the diversity of our students brings a range of perspectives that enrich the learning environment and produces graduates better able to contribute to a global society. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report is agreed by Governors and outlines the major developments that have taken place in the College during the academic year in relation to Equality and Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and makes recommendations for future developments. This report provides the framework for continuing to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

In order to widen access and participation:

1. The College will work to ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind in relation to the recruitment and admission of students to courses. Recruitment patterns across curriculum areas for all equality groups will be reviewed and positive action taken to address any under-representation.
2. The College will constantly review its provision using validation, approval and periodic review processes to ensure that it is appropriate for and attractive to students from all backgrounds e.g. representative curriculum, fair assessment, physical access, location and timing of courses and interviews, availability of reflection rooms and childcare support.
3. In relation to any *targeted allocation funding* secured, for example, through the Office for Students, the College will implement institution wide initiatives to provide appropriate support and guidance, within the resources available to it, to current and prospective students. We will monitor such initiatives by equality groups.
4. The College is a formal partner in the Office for Students *Pathways* and will take positive action to increase participation in higher education from communities that are currently under-represented. A variety of interventions from attending community events, taster days, through to links with schools seek to raise the esteem of technical and professional education at Level 3 to Level 6.
5. Publicity material will, where practical, reflect the diversity of all communities, and will be free from bias. Facilities such as the nursery and reflection rooms will be emphasised in publicity materials.
6. The curriculum for all areas will be rich and varied and should be regularly reviewed to ensure it is culturally sensitive, addresses equality issues, and reflects the interests and backgrounds of learners.

7. Curriculum design will be sufficiently flexible, and the curriculum offered sufficiently broad, to take account of the differing needs of all learners, with the objective of providing easy access to the curriculum for non-traditional learners and widening participation.
8. The College's key higher education partner for both franchising and validation arrangements is De Montfort University. Relationships at senior, strategic level as well as at co-ordination and curriculum levels are very well established. The College aligns with the University's initiative on *Universal Design for Learning*, which seeks to design in advance anticipatory adjustments to learning and teaching that addresses the needs of variable learners from the outset.
9. Teaching styles and resources will take account of students' varied backgrounds, abilities and learning styles. This should be regularly monitored through the College's quality assurance processes.

The outcomes of any assessment processes will be regularly monitored to ensure that they do not indirectly discriminate against any particular group of learners.

10. All students will be provided with an effective induction programme that familiarises them with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy and helps them to recognise the rights and responsibilities of themselves and others in relation to these issues.
11. The College will offer learning support in literacy, numeracy and digital skills for all students who are identified as requiring it, support for students whose first language is not English, and appropriate additional support for any disabled students.
12. Students commencing Higher Education programmes at the College will be encouraged and supported in securing GCSE English/GCSE Maths as lifelong qualifications if they do not already hold these at grade C/4.
13. EDI data is increasingly used as a management tool at a college-wide and curriculum area level. All aspects of EDI profiling have been incorporated into the Integrated Data System to allow managers easy access. All Curriculum Directors meet with the Head of Student Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to look at their success, retention, achievement and learner participation and representation by gender, ethnicity, age and disability and agree EDIMs which are monitored by the EDI committee.
14. Each curriculum area will continue to have Diversity representatives in place and this role is regularly reviewed, including purpose and training. EDI is an integral part of the team meetings, appraisal and learning walk feedback.