

Kirklees College Access Agreement 2017-18

SUMMARY

This Access Agreement sets out how Kirklees College plans to widen access to Higher Education for students from under-represented groups and support such students during their studies.

Overall monitoring and evaluation of the Access Agreement will be undertaken by the Higher Education Committee which reports to Academic Board.

This Access Agreement and associated support measures aims to widen and increase participation in Higher Education in general, and with particular focus on those individual and groups which continue to be under-represented in Higher Education.

In 2017-18 the College will spend 3% of the tuition fee income above the basic fee on access, 3% on student success, 2% on progression measures and 25% on financial support to underpin its commitment to widening participation.

CONTEXT

The College firmly locates its Higher Education provision at the core of its mission.

Our mission is simple; "Creating Opportunity, Changing Lives". This is underpinned by the following Strategic Objectives.

Strategic Objectives

- To deliver enterprising, responsive and efficient education and training;
- To provide an inclusive, student-centred learning environment focussed on development, success and progression;
- To provide modern, safe, estate and resources;
- To promote effective communications and customer services;
- To attract, nurture and develop a highly skilled, efficient and professional workforce;
- To ensure the solvency of the College and generate resources to continuously invest in learning and staff;
- To deliver creative and effective decision making, learning and risk management.

These translate into the following aims for our Higher Education provision at Kirklees College.

Aims for Higher Education at Kirklees College

- To provide a coherent range of Higher Education and Higher Levels Skills which is both efficient and effective, offers appropriate progression routes, and widens participation.
- To be responsive and flexible in response to employer demands and higher level skills gaps to support the regeneration of Kirklees, with employer satisfaction and employment outcomes high on the criteria for success.
- To engage in partnerships that adds value to the experience of the students and improves their ability to become economically active.
- To offer teaching staff opportunities for research and scholarly activity that directly relates to improvements in teaching and learning and the vocational relevance and currency of the curriculum offer.
- To provide high quality teaching and learning which effectively utilises ILT and provides enterprise opportunities for our students, which will enhance their employability skills.
- To develop the VLE to support "blended learning" and distance learning strategies.
- To strive continuously to improve student satisfaction, retention, pass and overall completion rates.

The College recognises that it has a key role to play (within the communities it serves) in the achievement of national targets for HE participation.

There are significant concentrations of deprivation in Kirklees. One in five young people live in poverty in Kirklees. Youth unemployment (18-24) remains high (24%), with a claimant rate of 12%. 18% of working age adults have Level 1 or no qualifications.¹ Kirklees is a relatively low wage economy (second lowest in the Leeds City Region), 60,000 households are classed as being in poverty (one in three households) with one in four households having an annual income of less than £10,000.² Overall, in Kirklees 9% of the population live within Lower Super Output Areas which rank in the worst 10% in England; lower than the average for England.³

The College has a long history of providing high quality vocationally related Higher Education in North and South Kirklees and seeks to address the need to provide higher level courses and qualifications for the local community and employers. It recognises the advantages to some students of studying near to home, reducing the costs of accommodation and travel, making Higher Education a viable option. In some circumstances there are domestic or cultural reasons for studying locally. Higher Education within a Further Education setting supports vocational progression and access in this context. Within the Leeds City Region 82% of higher education students studying in Further Education Colleges grew up in the area (2012-2013 to 2013-2014).

The nature of HE provision at Kirklees College is distinct from that provided by traditional HEI's in that it raises the aspirations of those who would not normally consider higher education as part of their career path. By making such provision available to aspiring learners, Kirklees College plays an important role in contributing to the economic development of the local community, the widening participation agenda and the achievement of national targets for HE participation. Within Kirklees, the majority of wards fall under Quintile 2 with respect to participation in Higher Education (POLAR3).

Student profile

In 2015-16 there were approximately 385 students studying both full-time and part-time prescribed Higher Education programmes. Our provision ranges from Higher National Certificates and Diplomas to Foundation Degrees and Honours Degrees, including top-up awards. The College is a Partner College with Teesside University for the validation of our Foundation Degree and Honours Degrees. The College also delivers PGCE and Certificates in Education under a franchised arrangement with the University of Huddersfield.

Of entrants to Higher Education programmes at the College in 2015-16:

- **45% were mature (21+); 17% were very mature (30+);**
- **29% were from ethnic minority groups;** (this mirrors our FE student population)
- **15% had a declared disability or identified learning support need;**
- **29% were studying on a part-time basis;**
- **41% of entrants were male.**

Student retention and achievement are consistently good at 95% and 97% respectively, with progression rates between levels at 96%.

66% of students completing their studies at the College were in employment 6 months after graduation, with the remainder continuing to study either full or part-time following graduation (DLHE).

Overall student satisfaction (NSS 2014-15) is 90% (4% above national benchmark), and is amongst the highest in the region.

Internal progression to full-time Higher Education programmes at the College constitutes around **85%** of our student profile.

¹ Kirklees Council (2014) *Kirklees Economic Strategy 2014-20*

² Kirklees Council (2016) *Tackling Poverty in Kirklees: Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2018*

³ Kirklees Council (2015) *Kirklees Social Profile*

FEES, STUDENT NUMBERS AND FEE INCOME

Fees in 2017-18

Kirklees College proposes to charge the following fees for Higher Nationals, Foundation Degree and Honours Degree programmes, and for its Engineering-related subjects.

Annual Fees for full-time programmes:

BTEC Higher Nationals in Process Manufacturing	£9000
BTEC Higher Nationals in Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical)	£8000
Honours Degrees	£6950
BTEC Higher Nationals (all other subjects)	£6950
Foundation Degrees	£6950

All full-time fees will be notified to applicants on the UCAS website and will form part of the Key Information Set. In addition the College will also inform Student Finance England.

The College will display fee information on the College website and prospectus.

Kirklees College intends to charge all part-time students a pro-rata figure (based on the academic credits being studied) of the equivalent full-time fee.

No part-time student will pay more than £6750 (the maximum part-time fee cap) in any academic year.

The College through its Fees Group, will consider on an annual basis, the needs of students on part-time programmes where there are skills shortages, or where provision is particularly price sensitive.

Fees for programmes not at the maximum fee cap may increase annually in line with inflation.

ACCESS, STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESS MEASURES

Kirklees College will direct a proportion of the income generated above the basic fee to promote participation in Higher Education through outreach activity via partnerships (including NNCO) and collaboration with schools, colleges and employers. This will include focus on areas of local strategic importance such as STEM, in particular Process Manufacturing.

The College also works closely with its local networks and is part of the Network for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO), HEART that covers West Yorkshire.

Since this is the first Access Agreement that Kirklees College has produced, the balance of spend between access, student success and progression has been based on the current proportion of Student Opportunity Monitoring funding as a baseline. This will be monitored and evaluated with respect to future Access Agreements produced by the College.

In 2017-18 the College will spend the 3% of the tuition fee income above the basic fee income on outreach activities. These will further focus on the widening participation of under-represented groups:

- Disadvantaged socio-economic localities;
- Looked-after by a local authority or care leavers;
- Those without a family history of Higher Education;
- Mature students (aged 30 years old and above);
- Part-time students;
- Black and Minority (BME) communities.

Kirklees College has a strong performance with internal progressing students from Level 3 vocational programmes (85%) and students with a declared disability or identified learning support need (15%). The College acknowledges it needs to increase participation from appropriate Access to Higher Education programmes, Carers and Care Leavers and also to increase participation from low participant neighbourhoods.

Internal activities will include:

- Working with further education students within the College at all levels to promote progression options to vocational Higher Education programmes including Higher Apprenticeships.
- Providing internal progression events across the College which utilise student curriculum area ambassadors.
- Utilising the College's Early Offer Scheme with internal applicants.
- Providing 1:1 support for students researching HE opportunities, completing UCAS applications and interview preparation (via Progress Coaches as part of the PAD programme).
- Providing 1:1 support for students researching job opportunities, compiling CVs and interview skills (via Progress Coaches as part of the PAD programme).
- Jointly marketing HE programmes, with other providers in the local area with low HE participation.
- Applicants meeting the minimum entry criteria are interviewed, providing an opportunity to discuss programme suitability, individual support needs and associated plans.
- Providing appropriate pre-entry support to both potential students and students progressing to "top up" awards within the College (for example, Summer Schools).
- "Extended induction" and mentoring for late applicants.
- Refinement of our HE dashboard that will monitor student progress and identify those "at risk", with associated intervention strategies.
- Smaller class sizes aiding continuation and completion rates.
- Offering additional study skills support throughout their studies (including Ethics).
- Developing Progression Agreements (where needed) with appropriate institutions to enable progression to level 6 study (for example, Land based provision).
- Offering appropriate advice and support regarding progression to other institutions (for example, APL if needed).
- Providing additional employment-related support to all final year students.

Outreach Activities, Raising Aspirations and Awareness – HEART

Kirklees College is a member of HEART, a partnership of 12 Higher Education providers and HEFCEs recognised Single Point of Contact in West Yorkshire. The single point of contact covers all 11-18 schools, primary schools and businesses.

The HEART partnership has, over the last three years, developed a network of partners who work together to provide bespoke and relevant activities for both young people in care and their carers. The network includes colleagues from each partner institution and representatives from Children's Services and the West Yorkshire Local Authorities. The network has consulted foster children and their families from the outset in order to ensure that the needs of the young people are addressed and the activities developed with these needs in mind. This collaborative approach attracted the backing of local authority partners who work with the network to promote events and signpost service users to the HEART network.

Collaborative Work

HEART has acted as the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) for the West Yorkshire National Network for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO). Since its inception, the NNCO has co-ordinated the delivery of WP outreach activity from the 12 partner institutions, including the provision of Conversation Cafes (aimed at parents and learners), Courses Carousel, Broadening your Horizons, and Flood a School events in schools, as well as Passport to University events on partner campuses. The partnership has also delivered a two day collaborative residential summer school involving five HE partners. Building upon the success of this pilot, a three day collaborative summer school is planned for July 2016, which, in addition to the partner institutions involved last year, will comprise seven HE partners.

In addition, the NNCO has developed an interactive, online CRM with areas designated for schools, businesses and partners. Schools can access information including upcoming collaborative and institutional events, open days, course details and information for care leavers. Businesses can access information on developing work around higher level skills, and the NNCO partnership with Leeds City Region and the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Kirklees College's approach to financial support measures aims to widen access and participation by addressing potential barriers to participation. Financial difficulty is cited as the most common reason for our current students withdrawing or suspending their studies. The College also aims to retain care leavers, carers and those completing Access programmes at the college by offering financial support.

The College intends to contribute 25% of the tuition fee income above the basic fee on financial support and intends to offer the following progression, subject-related and widening access bursaries. These will be offered pro-rata for students studying part-time (based on the number of credits being studied).

Students will only be eligible for one financial bursary under this Access Agreement. These bursaries will not be available to employer-sponsored students.

a) Progression Bursaries

The College will introduce Progression Bursaries to students progressing within the College from a Level 3 programme on to a full-time Higher Education programme. A phased cash payment of £500 is made in the first year of study only.

Students must have successfully completed a Level 3 programme at the College that is appropriate to allow progression to a full-time Higher Education programme. This award will be available to Kirklees College home students in receipt of the full HE maintenance grant or student support grant.

b) Local Student Bursaries

This bursary will target local students accepted on to a Higher Education programme at the College with a permanent home address in the local area (all West Yorkshire postcodes). A phased cash payment of £500 is made in the first year of study only. This award will be available to home students in receipt of the full HE maintenance grant or student support grant.

c) STEM Bursaries

This bursary will be available to any home student on Engineering or Process Manufacturing programmes only. A phased cash payment of £500 will be made during each year of study (excluding any repeat year). This award will be available to home students in receipt of the full HE maintenance grant or student support grant. Students receiving this bursary are not eligible for any other bursary outlined in this Access Agreement.

d) Kirklees College Widening Access Bursaries

The following bursaries will be available to the following student groups:

Care Leaver Bursary – This bursary will offer support to any home student during each year of study (excluding any repeat year) and will be available to students who have left local authority care in the two years prior to enrolment on the first year of study, irrespective of postcode. A phased cash payment of £1000 is made during each year of study. Attendance must be 90% or above during the first the first three months on programme (other than mitigating circumstances).

Full-time Carer Bursary – This bursary will offer support to any home student during each year of study (excluding any repeat year) and will be available to applicants who have full-time carer responsibilities. A phased cash payment of £1000 is made during each year of study. This award will be available to home students in receipt of the full HE maintenance grant or student support grant.

Access to HE Diploma Bursary – This bursary will offer support to students during their first year of study and will be available to students who have successfully completed an Access to HE Diploma programme.

Students must have successfully completed an Access programme that is appropriate to allow progression to a Higher Education programme. A phased cash payment of £1000 is made during the first year of study only. This award will be available to home students in receipt of the full HE maintenance grant or student support grant.

TARGETS AND MILESTONES

- a) To **increase overall progression** from Further Education to Higher Education by **2%** year on year (baseline 342 students progressed to Higher Education in 2016).
- b) To continue to **maintain our full-time participation via internal progression** from Level 3 programmes year on year (at **85%**).
- c) To continue to **maintain the number of students with a declared disability** or identified learning support need at **15%** year on year.
- d) To **increase** the number of students from **ethnic minority groups** by **1%** year on year (baseline 29%).
- e) To **increase participation** from appropriate Access to Higher Education programmes (currently 3), Carers (currently 2) and Care Leavers (currently 0) by 20% year on year overall.
- f) To **increase participation from low participant neighbourhoods** by **2%** year on year. 2012-13 participation from low participant neighbourhoods (POLAR3) was 9.5% (sector adjusted average = 17.9%; location adjusted benchmark 26.2%)⁴. 43% of entrants in 2015-16 fell into the ward uplift category.
- g) **To maintain overall retention at 95%** year on year.
- h) To **improve continuation** rates by **1%** year on year (baseline 87%)⁴.
Non-continuation rates for 2011-12 (nationally 14% for College Higher Education):
 - First degree 11.5% (10.9% sector adjusted average)⁴
 - Other undergraduate programmes 14.9% (16.5% sector adjusted average)⁴
- i) **Improve** employment indicators by **1%** year on year for first degree and other undergraduate programmes.
Employment indicators for 2012-13 (nationally 83.6% for College Higher Education):
 - First degree 87.1% (88.4% sector adjusted average)⁴
 - Other undergraduate programmes 90.6% (93.6% sector adjusted average)⁴

⁴ HEFCE 2016 Higher education indicators for further education colleges.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

The aims and targets for widening access and student success are planned as part of the College's overall Higher Education strategy.

Monitoring of the overall Higher Education strategy, including the implementation of this Access Agreement is undertaken by Academic Board.

The Higher Education Team (Quality, Performance and Standards) are responsible for monitoring and the achievement of student retention, continuers, and completion targets. They are also responsible for producing and monitoring the Higher Education dashboard metrics. Review and evaluation will be through in-year and annual programme and service review activities both at College and curriculum level as part of its Quality Cycle.

Fees and associate bursary arrangements are monitored by the Fees Group. This group will evaluate the effectiveness of each of the named bursaries with respect to access from named under-represented groups at the College, along with reason for student withdrawals.

The Higher Education Student Consultative Committee will also monitor this Access Agreement.

The College will also take part in evaluation activities within the structured NNCO partnership (HEART).

HEART Activities - In late 2015, HEART commissioned a review into the impact of Foster Family Fun Days, a series of interactive, aspiration raising activities aimed at children/young people in care and their carers. Carers and partners in the local education authority and HEIs were surveyed to see whether these events specifically aimed at young people in care, had any impact on their aspirations and confidence. The review found that of those that responded, 100% of the carers believed the children/young people viewed universities positively, 100% thought that the children/young people saw university education as a possible option for them in the future and 83% believed that the events helped to increase the confidence of the children/young people (33% 'very much so'; 50% 'in the main').

The review considered how evaluation of these events might be conducted more effectively in future, and given the very wide age range of the children/young people participating and the problems that those in public care often experience, concluded that it would be difficult to ask children/young people directly about the events. As a result, foster carers will be asked to estimate the impact on their children/young people using a standardised questionnaire, with the questions aligned to the current operational targets in the Access Agreement.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Kirklees College operates in a diverse community. As a college we are committed to the development of a balanced, inclusive and diverse community which is open and accessible to all students, staff, visitors and members of the public. Kirklees College believes that there should be no barriers in the College for students and staff as defined by any equality measure; we aim to celebrate differences, promote equality and diversity and embrace and recognise the talents of all staff and students.

As a college we will:

- Comply with the law in promoting equality and where appropriate go beyond legal requirements.
- Ensure that all learners succeed and can progress in ways that match their abilities and aspirations
- Be an organisation that embraces and recognises the talents of all and does not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.

The College has a Single Equity Scheme and action plan included within its Equality and Diversity Strategy. The scheme covers all nine protected characteristics or strands of diversity: disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, ethnicity, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation. The action plan and scheme form the terms of reference and remit of the Equality and Diversity Strategic Group.

The College has developed a separate quality improvement plan closing the achievement gap to embed equality and diversity within teaching, learning and assessment and to ensure we continue to close any achievement gaps.

The Equality and Diversity Strategy Group, chaired by the Principal, monitors progress against our priorities defined in the Equality and Diversity action plan. Relevant sub-groups (EDI Data and EDI Teaching) also contribute to this monitoring. This includes analysis of participation and success rate trends by gender, ethnicity, learning difficulty and disability; apparent achievement gaps are followed up. The College also produces an Equality and Diversity Annual Report. The Strategic Group meets termly and reports to the Governing Body through the Quality Performance and Standards committee.

This Access Agreement has been developed with consideration of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and has undergone Equality Impact Assessment.

The College publishes an Annual Report detailing the work undertaken during each academic year with respect to equality and diversity and also provides the results of relevant monitoring taken during this period.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Kirklees College will provide clear and accurate information to students and prospective students on the range of access and outreach activities it undertakes along with information on the practical and financial support available to students. This will be compliant in meeting our obligations under the Consumer Protection Law.

The College will continue to engage in collaborative events with partners in West Yorkshire aimed at offering clear and comprehensive information to students, potential students, their families and carers, employers and other stakeholders to promote Higher Education opportunities.

The College will ensure that information on outreach, financial and student support arrangements are provided in a timely manner to partner agencies, HEART (NNCO), UCAS, the Student Loans Company and are presented in a clear and consistent manner in all publications and web-based information.

CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

This Access Agreement has been shared by with the Higher Education Student Consultative Committee. Feedback has been used to shape the bursaries contained in this Agreement. This group meets termly at each of the College's campuses.