

Derby College Access Agreement 2018-19

The college description and HE mission

Derby College is a general further education college (GFE) located in Derbyshire. Its main campus next to Derby railway station moved to its present site in 2003 following an ambitious and innovative capital strategy which has totally transformed the majority of its estate. The College has four main campuses with Higher Education provision delivered at its flagship main Roundhouse campus and its landbased campus at Broomfield Hall, approximately 6 miles away.

HE represents about 5% of the College's current turnover and it is growing. The ambition is to continue to grow it. The majority of the College's HE students study part-time and are employed. The College works in partnership with four validating bodies - the University of Derby (UoD), Nottingham Trent University (NTU), Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) and Pearson Edexcel on a mixture of franchised and validated arrangements.

The College's ambitious growth targets in HE have been developed because of a recognised local need to grow Higher Level Skills to serve the community and the economy. This is especially true in LEP priority areas. These include a range of STEM based subject areas such as manufacturing, food technology and Life Sciences, along with a desire to ensure that Graduates are retained within the region.

To fulfil this new demand new students need to enter HE, current pathways need to grow and new pathways need to develop. This needs adequate resourcing. Over 50% of the College's potential recruitment into these areas is from areas of very low participation in Polar 3 data. Indeed, over 50% of the potential student body comes from the bottom 2 quintiles of HE participation at 18.

It is in this context that the College has developed its HE strategy. The HE mission is to:

- Ensure that we build and maintain an ethos of enquiry
- Ensure excellent assessment is used to allow meaningful and good progress to be made by students
- Ensure we fulfil a wider participation agenda
- Ensure that we achieve sustainable development for the future of HE at the College and to ensure our graduates fulfil their life chances.

We will do this by:

- Growing the size of provision to better align with FE programmes to provide positive progression for learners who are not yet progressing to Higher Level skills in the College;
- Growing provision with a broader range of employers in a broader range of employment areas so that local demand for higher level skills can be met;
- Fulfilling a widening participation agenda for the area by working with partners to offer routes and pathways into Higher Education that they do not offer such as part-time routes;
- Building internal capacity of College support services to understand higher

education so that planning for growth is easily accommodated;

- Developing a broader HE community within the College to better understand the data about HE to make better systematic College-wide decisions about the College's HE provision.

The College was heavily involved in its local NNCO and more recently has taken a very active approach in the regional NCOP (known as DANCOP), with the Head of Higher Education chairing one of the committees. Currently the College is bidding for DANCOP funds to undertake additional activity over the next 2 years as over a fifth of the College's 16-18 ESFA funded and apprenticeship learners live in gap wards.

In order to fulfil these agendas, we recognise that we will need to be able to invest in better technology to ensure we can provide meaningful vocational pathways for FE students into HE. We will need to develop information campaigns in low participation areas, specifically targeting the creation of a stronger labour force in shortage sectors, and we need to be able to build understanding of how students' progress both professionally and personally in order to develop a sustainable curriculum.

Level of Fees

We propose to charge the following tuition fees for full time students who are receiving tuition and support for more than 12 hours a week:

All full time programmes (regardless of level and awarding partner) subjects will have a maximum fee of £7500 per annum. The higher fee will not apply to all courses but they will apply to those where we are working with LEPs and other bodies to support the higher level skills agenda in priority sectors and need to increase recruitment for the survival of the sector. This will typically be in STEM and associated areas. The programmes are almost exclusively manufacture and engineering based.

In charging the higher fee we will be looking to target individuals to have demonstrated a flair for these subjects who are from one of our target WP backgrounds. We do not intend to increase fees for other courses in other circumstances beyond the minimum fee level. We are not proposing to attach inflationary increases to fees above the minimum fee level in 18/19.

We do not intend to increase the fees for any part time students to more than £4500.

Expenditure on additional access measures

We intend to spend funding on widening participation activity in roughly the following ways:

- 20% on Access activity to support growth in the student population from under- represented groups.
- 50% on Student Success and Progression to support the retention of students and ensure that they get adequate support to progress through the levels of higher education
- 30% on bursaries and scholarships

This expenditure will be spent on the following ways:

Spending around 50% of this income on promoting Higher Education to the non-traditional groups in the communities we serve. We have spent time working collectively and with external experts to identify these individuals as:

- Those from low participation backgrounds
- Those who will be first in family to undertake higher education
- Those who have been on free school meals
- Those living in lower quintile IMD wards
- Those with a weaker GCSE profile
- Adults
- Those from BME communities
- White Males

Activity to support progression will include (but is not limited to): developing WP recruitment plans within the curriculum through centrally funded resources; investing in additional marketing support; one to one support and coaching of learners.

Part of the expenditure will include staff development. This will ensure that new programmes continue to be developed to support the growing demand and open up new subject areas for people to progress on to in the City and County to support the higher level skills economy and graduate retention in the area. Over time this expenditure has a significant increase as we aim to recruit increasingly disadvantaged students.

We will continue to support the success of students by increasing our study support coaching activity to ensure students from non-traditional backgrounds have the relevant help and coaching needed at the right time to ensure that they remain active in their learning. In 16/17 we will have 2FTE study support coaches and will seek to grow this to at least 2.5FTE in 18/19.

30% of the income will go on bursary activity in 18/19. This level has increased from 16/17 and has been established to:

- support Derby College FE students from our identified WP backgrounds to progress onto appropriate HE courses and raise aspirations;
- support individuals with low household income to access and remain in HE;
- support those from other targeted groups listed above to remain in HE at the College.

The College will maintain its outreach work with schools and community groups. We will continue to run at least 3 events a year targeted at demonstrating the power of College HE to under-represented groups. Additionally, the College will continue its work with DANCOP both as a member of the steering committee as offering a manager to chair the Innovations and Projects Steering Group. We will commit to undertaking access activities (a minimum of 3 per year) with schools in DANCOP's target top 10 list to discuss the opportunities that College HE will offer them. We will record this activity through the agreed mechanisms of DANCOP.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The College's HE Academic Board will consider progress against targets by receiving termly reports on student intake and retention, and widening participation activities against the identified cohorts. This committee has student representation. Additionally, progress against targets will be reported at Executive, Academic Quality and Standards Committee and at the College's Curriculum Leadership Group. The latter is responsible for the College's strategy enactment so any shortfall of the WP strategy will be picked up here and action plans to respond to any shortfall drawn up.

Targets and Milestones

We are keen to focus on recruiting, retaining and supporting the Learning Gain of students from low participation backgrounds (both adults and young people). We continue to appoint and develop staff to target individuals from Polar 3 backgrounds to encourage progression and support in breaking down any barriers people have. We will continue our partnership with EMWREP to explore data on how we can best support these students and we have devised robust tracking processes to support their success.

Equality and Diversity

Each year students in receipt of support, and from these backgrounds, will be asked, through the College's Learner Voice team, to evaluate the impact of the support they have received. This will be done through focus groups. Plans and actions will then be drawn up by the College's HE Management team and presented to HE Curriculum Development Quality and Enhancement Committee for approval based on this feedback.

The targets set in the Access Agreement Resource Plan will be monitored annually to ascertain whether we have recruited additional students from the targeted areas and continued to retain students. The College's HE Curriculum Development Quality and Enhancement Committee will have ultimate responsibility for monitoring the resource plan.

The College has an Equality and Diversity committee where senior managers discuss the themes of access, widening participation and student progression. This committee produces the annual Equality and Diversity Report and ensures that the College's Equality and Diversity policies and procedures are followed. This committee will ensure that this Access Agreement and associated activity is in line with the College's policies and procedures.

Publication of Information

The College will place all information about fees, financial information and support on its website. Information will be included in any letters offering places sent to applicants, and after students have enrolled they will be sent information on financial support. All of this will be done within the structure of the College's Information Processes for Higher Education. Part of this structure are teams that link with UCAS and the SLC amongst others. These teams will ensure that the information within Access Agreement and fee information is accurately recorded and updated.

We write to all students at the start of their course to inform them about the bursaries available.

Consultation

This Access Agreement has been devised after a range of training and development events which have taken place, as well as talking to students and by considering intelligence coming from the College HE sector generally. The level of the fees being charged have been discussed with them. Additionally, we have talked to employers about the fees as they will often send students onto courses and this is a key way by which we widen participation.