

# Access and Participation Statement

## Background and Mission Statement

Wiltshire College and University Centre (WCUC) is a specialist provider of further and higher education programmes. We have a strong reputation for transforming students' lives by providing access to higher education to students from all backgrounds and from across the United Kingdom and beyond.

Our Mission is to be recognised as an outstanding education provider, loved by our students, employees and communities. Our Vision is to build on our strong technical and vocational skills background to create an inclusive, student-centred learning environment where everyone can reach their potential.

Within our university centre we offer franchised degree programmes delivered in partnership with English universities as well as degree-level provision validated by external awarding bodies such as Pearson.

## What Is an Access and Participation Statement?

Our Access and Participation Statement (APS) sets out what we are doing to make sure we meet the expectations of our students. It is an important demonstration of our commitment as a higher education provider registered with the Office for Students (OfS) - the Higher Education Regulator in England.

WCUC is committed to recruiting students from all backgrounds and supporting them to succeed in higher education. We endeavour to promote equal opportunities for all students but especially so for those in disadvantaged and under-represented groups. These include mature students, students with disabilities and students from certain ethnic backgrounds and locations.

Further information and guidance from the OfS is available here: [Access and participation plans - Office for Students](#)

## What Do We Do?

In terms of **Access**, we aim to increase the opportunities for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups of students to enter higher education programmes.

In terms of **Participation**, we aim to maximise student retention and continuation rates of all students. We are working hard to reduce any gaps in performance between students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups and other students.

We do this by fostering a supportive teaching environment based on firm pedagogical principles. This creates a positive higher level learning experience.

## The teaching environment & student experience

We value the practical application of theoretical knowledge; it allows students to develop further skills and their understanding of relevant topics and concepts. As a result of this approach, student retention and progression to the next stage of learning are high.

Other key features of our provision include:

- Smaller class sizes
- A comprehensive induction process to support students settling onto their new programme.
- Dedicated Digital Advisors offering support with digital study skills tools at WCUC.
- Support with navigating our university partners' academic conventions and regulations.
- A higher education progression specialist providing support to underrepresented student groups as part of the Wessex Inspiration Network (WIN) and Uni Connect.
- An early intervention process that proactively identifies challenges and supports students throughout their study or for as long as they need us.
- Learning through a combination of formal lectures and immersive practical workshops, debate and discussions, supported by specialised online delivery and IT-enabled self-study.

Our access objectives are supported by a range of programmes with different entry points. These include:

- Higher professional qualifications with our awarding partners – (Level 4, 5, 7)
- Higher National (HN) qualifications – certificates or diplomas (Level 4 and 5)
- Higher Apprenticeships (Level 4 and 5)
- University foundation degrees – (Level 5)
- University partner full BA (hons) degrees – (Level 6)
- University partner BA and BEng (Hons) top-up qualifications – (Level 6 – 1 year only)

Our strategy is to offer programmes that link to the local employment market or are rooted in our subject specialisms. This ensures that students are equipped for the future. Where-ever possible, our integrated education programmes allow students to attain undergraduate degree qualifications while working in placements or paid employment. This flexible curriculum and programme design allows study to work alongside current lifestyle and family commitments.

## How We Promote Access

### Admissions

Our Admissions teams celebrate the cultural diversity of our applicants. We interview a range of students to learn more about their reasons for choosing to study with us and provide ongoing feedback to support them throughout the application process.

We accept students from all backgrounds and nationalities to our programmes. The programmes are designed to meet the needs of motivated students regardless of disability, gender, race, religion and belief, or sexual orientation.

Applicants are almost always provided with a conditional offer, and admissions teams gather information about student support requirements in advance to ensure the right support can be offered to each applicant prior to acceptance.

We work closely with our University Partners to review our entry requirements so that they are accessible to the emerging needs of students, whilst ensuring that our curriculum design provides them with the best chance of success and progression.

Mature learners who apply for any of our programmes may be interviewed to ensure that the programme matches their experience, aspirational and career goals, thus offering the best chance of success.

## Outreach and Student Engagement Strategies

Our University Partners have comprehensive outreach strategies and policies that include provision to recruit our students. Please see their Access and Participation Plans below for further information.

## Funding and Investment

Our University Partners provide bursaries to encourage students from designated groups to apply to study with them. For more information on the type of bursaries available, please check their Access and Participation Plans. WCUC also offers a hardship fund for our students who experience exceptional circumstances during their study.

## How We Promote Participation

### Participation activities include:

- Operation of a rigorous system of attendance and engagement monitoring designed to identify students who are at risk of failing or withdrawing
- A Focused Study Plan (FSP) intervention programme that complements the attendance monitoring system and supports students who are at risk of academic failure or withdrawal
- Interactive, supportive and engaging teaching environment
- Availability of student support information on study skills, wellbeing and mental health, employability and cross-cultural communication challenges
- Availability of personalised wellbeing and counselling services at WCUC or our University Partners.
- Three dedicated wellbeing tutorials throughout the academic year – up to a maximum of six.
- Representation of the Student Voice through a range of forums including the College Student Alliance, Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), unit evaluations, programme representative meetings and group tutorials.

### Monitoring Our Success

We use a comprehensive data platform to monitor Academic success is measured via our comprehensive data platform. This allows us to generate key reports in an accessible format. KPIs have been identified for Achievement Rates (and grades), Retention and Continuation Rates, Progression Rates and Student Satisfaction, which helps us to monitor student outcomes, satisfaction and drive positive performance. We identify programmes falling below standards and work with Faculties to make improvements.

To keep ourselves on track and continue to raise our high standards we set a number of goals to improve equality of opportunity for all students and especially those from underrepresented groups.

Our goals are aligned to the WCUC Strategic Plan and are reviewed frequently in our HE senior leadership meetings and overall leadership functions. The Higher Education Quality and Performance group have ownership of these goals and are responsible for reporting back to the Governing Body.

## Goals to Improve Access and Participation

Our goals for academic year 2025-26 are:

- To continue to improve methods of collecting, analysing and reporting student data across our College HE offer and link reporting more closely to University Partners throughout the student journey for improved external reporting
- To review and build on the success of the Focused Study Plan (FSP) programme and strengthen the support that is available to students from all backgrounds, making sure that prospective students are aware of the support that is available
- To strengthen employment prospects for all students within colleges by embedding employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship into the curriculum and offering job market orientation.
- To further embrace Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and strengthen staff knowledge, skills and capabilities on inclusivity, interculturalism, supporting SEND students and student wellbeing and mental health.
- To develop initiatives to promote digital fluency so all students are equipped with advanced digital capabilities from utilising innovative Virtual learning environments (VLE) and software systems
- Improve the continuation rate of targeted programmes and student demographics

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year unless there are internal or legislative changes that necessitate an earlier review.

## Annex A - University Partnerships

We have developed our Access and Participation Statement to support the priorities of individual University Partners, collaborating to deliver improved outcomes.

Our University Partner Access and Participation Plans may include specific targets on the percentage of students recruited from the following categories – attendance at state schools, BAME students, disabled students claiming a DSA allowance, mature students and students from disadvantaged areas (Participation of Local Areas, POLAR). Please follow the links below for further information.

Oxford Brookes University: [Access and Participation 2020-25 Plan Summary \(brookes.ac.uk\)](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/access-and-participation-2020-25-plan-summary)

Bournemouth University: [Bournemouth University Access and Participation Plan](https://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plan)

Coventry University: [access-and-participation-plan-2020-2025.pdf \(coventry.ac.uk\)](https://www.coventry.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plan-2020-2025.pdf)