
WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND FAIR ACCESS STATEMENT

The College has a long-standing commitment to widening participation and fair access. We understand that some students face barriers and obstacles when considering higher education.

We recognise that not all individuals want to undertake the financial commitment of traditional university study whilst other, more mature students may feel they have family and financial commitments that prohibit traditional university study. The college has sought to develop and design degree programmes with affordable fees, which enable such non-traditional students to obtain a degree.

The development of our higher education programmes evolved through skills needs analysis in the geographical area around the College, which showed that due to technological and demographic changes there would not be sufficient traditional graduates aged 21 leaving university in the 2015-20 timeframe to meet the demand for graduate jobs. The College is therefore focussed on providing three-year degree programmes that can be accessed by those already in the workplace, without giving up their employment and providing the means by which these non-traditional students can experience and succeed in higher education.

We achieve this through:

- Designing own degree programmes in a format which enables students to attend once a week and acquire one or two modules at a time
- Providing clear public information about our programmes on our website
- Provision of transparent, clear and fair admissions processes
- Ensuring students are given a clear induction to their programme and progression activities as they move between academic years.
- Working in partnership with our students, listening and acting on their feedback.
- Providing pastoral and academic support along with career guidance to build confidence and unlock potential.

In June 2018 the College was awarded a Silver TEF Award. Our success in supporting widening participation was highlighted by the TEF Panel who noted:

- comprehensive support systems for learners who have been out of education for a significant period of time, and learners from a non-traditional background.
- opportunities presented to students to engage with industry practitioners and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding that are highly valued by employers
- high rates of progression to employment or further study for full-time students.
- strategic initiatives that ensure teaching standards are continuously maintained and developed.