

Access and Participation Statement

Document Summary

Date of approval: 13 September 2018

Approved by: Academic Board

Last revision date: 07 September 2018

Next revision date: 07 September 2018

Access and Participation statement

Placing each student at the heart of all that we do, The City College is fully committed to providing the highest quality of service possible to help meet local and national needs and fulfil the expectations of our College community. The College provides a Higher Education (HE) environment that is founded on equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination, and freedom from bullying and harassment. The College values the diversity of its student body and is fully committed to widening access to HE for all potential students, while minimising or removing the barriers that can exclude many from the world of HE.

The City College therefore supports the strategic priority of the UK government to 'improve life chances and opportunity for all, and enhance the competitiveness and productivity of the economy'. Provision is principally vocational, accessible and employment focussed, and provides opportunities in HE for those who may otherwise not have access to HE, many of whom are returning to education.

The College has a history of providing access to students from a variety of backgrounds. We are dedicated to providing the means through which non-traditional learners can experience and succeed in HE. The current student profile includes:

- • 99% of students are over the age of 21
- • The average age of a current City College student is 42 years of age.
- • 64% identify as women
- • 36% identify as men
- • 73% are Black British/Black European
- • 14% are Asian
- • 12% are White British/European
- • 1% are 'other'.

To facilitate this, the College sets transparent entry criteria for access to HE programmes, welcoming applications irrespective of background and valuing the previous work related experience that students may bring. We are careful to ensure that every student we enrol has a reasonable expectation of success on their programme. Applicants aged over 21 years at the start of their course and who have been out of education for at least three years are classed as 'mature students'. The prior qualifications and/ or experience of such applicants is reviewed by the College to consider if their individual profile shows they have the potential to achieve the qualification. If it does and all other requirements of the enrolment process are met, such applicants may be enrolled.

The College is also committed to providing impartial advice and guidance to ensure applicants and students are placed and supported on an appropriate programme from application through to course completion and their future destinations. The framework for this is outlined in the College's Student Recruitment and Admissions policy and Information, Advice and Guidance statement, and in accordance with the Expectation found in Chapter B2 of the UK Quality Code for HE.

The City College uses a range of strategies to stimulate access and participation in HE:

- **Public information**

The College publishes detailed programme information about content, costs, awards and the complaints-handling process to help students make the right choice and informs them of any changes made since application. This supports continuation, success and a good student experience.

- **Students who want to start courses at different times**

The College has flexible entry points which are in January, April and September, allowing students to choose a suitable time to start studying.

- **Students returning to education**

There is a comprehensive Induction programme for all new students. The aim is to make a successful transition into college life and study after possibly a long gap in study.

- **Students without a formal English language qualification**

The College provides Level 2 English classes for students who need extra support prior to starting their course of study. Most students are eligible for free tuition.

- **Teaching and Learning**

High quality teaching, assessment and feedback generates an inclusive learning environment and encourages the best performance possible from students unfamiliar with the expectations of higher education. The monitoring of progress and learning support provided (see below) underpin student retention, help students to overcome barriers, and provides insight into the issues our students experience.

- **Student Retention, attainment and success**

All measures are employed to mitigate any chance of a poor student experience leading to withdrawal from the course. The College takes a case-by-case approach to retention owing to the complex circumstances and needs of our students. The practice of the College is to

continue supporting students experiencing difficulty providing they engage with us. This applies to students without funding too because if a student shows the necessary commitment we will do what we can to help them.

- **Student support**

Support for students is extensive both inside and outside of the classroom and includes personal and welfare support, academic and study skills support and support for those students with additional learning needs. It can be seen as follows, for example:

- At the admissions interview stage, the Admissions Team identify students who require additional support (including the Disabled Students' Allowance provision)
- Study Skills classes are provided to all students including academic referencing, use of IT, communication skills, presentation skills, and academic malpractice
- Formative assessments are set on each programme, enabling staff to identify students who need additional support
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- Students have access to tutorials, reviews and workshops to support their progress
- The Student Welfare Officer provides counselling to students on a confidential basis.

- **Student surveys**

Participation in the National Union of Students' (NSS) and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DHLE) surveys publicly demonstrates the College's performance on student satisfaction, retention and employment to prospective applicants. The most recent data available indicates good levels of student satisfaction and success, with 98% of HE HND students accessing employment or further study on completion of their course.

- **Careers advice**

The College's employability strategy provides guidance on employment, access to external speakers, information about membership of professional bodies, guidance on creating a CV, and other key information. Employability Skills features as a taught unit in all HND programmes. Students acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes valued by employers, thereby enriching their personal and professional lives and are supported to achieve a good qualification and progress into work or further study first.