

#### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed, and progress from higher education. You can see the full access and participation plan for Bedford College at <https://bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk/about/policies-procedures>.

#### Fees we charge

The College charges up to £9000 for Higher Education Programmes.

The College has a Fee Policy that is published annually and is available at <https://bedfordcollegegroup.ac.uk/about/policies-procedures>.

#### Financial help available (Page 18)

**Progression Bursary** -This £500 is provided to the College's FE students who progress onto our HNC/HND. This inclusive cross-cohort policy targets students from low participation HE areas at Kettering and Corby, Students with residual household incomes up to £25,000, and students from other under-represented target groups identified in our assessment of progress.

**Care Leaver Bursary**- This is an additional £500 for care leavers, entering from September 2019 in either full-time or part-time study, and can be received in each year of full-time study.

**Hardship Fund** - This is available for all direct students, assessed case-by-case case basis according to need.

#### Information for students (Page 25)

##### Prospective Students

We provide our prospective students with information on their fees through the 'Student Contract'—this document details information on the student' fees and information on financial support available to them. In addition, we also provide this information at open events and by other email communications. In addition, we also keep our data up to date on relevant sector bodies such as [Propel](#) for details for our Care Leavers.

##### Our current Students

As part of the College's Higher Education induction, students receive information regarding their fees and the financial support available. This information is provided to them via their Course Handbooks, internal communication via our VLE and further email communications.

#### What we are aiming to achieve (Page 9)

Our overall aim for Access and Participation is to develop the number of student opportunities to study Higher Education. These routes provide access to Higher Education through alternative qualifications and increase and meet local market needs. The College creates an inclusive Higher Education environment where we develop students to achieve their potential and meet local employer needs.

Based upon the recent evaluation work of our Access and Participation work, we have identified the following areas to focus on.

1. Students living in areas with low participation in Higher Education - reduce the gap in participation in Higher Education for students to 8pp (FT) and 10pp (PT).
2. Students living in deprived areas - reduce the gap in participation in Higher Education between IMD Q1 and IMD Q5 to 4pp (FT) and 10.5pp (PT).
3. Disabled students on full and part-time courses - reduce the non-continuation gap for disabled students to 4.15pp (FT) and 2.9pp (PT) by 2024.
4. BAME students from areas of low participation in Higher Education - reduce to 8.7pp by 2024.
5. Part-time BAME students - reduce the non-continuation gap for part-time BAME students to 8.1pp by 2024.
6. Young part-time students - reduce the progression gap into professional employment or further study to 7.1pp by 2024.
7. Care leavers - fully determine the proportion of care leavers within our Higher Education provision to replicate the FE Level 3 Care proportion ratio by 2024.
8. LGBT students - To determine the non-continuation gap.

Continue to diversify our product offer by developing more Higher Technical Programmes and Higher Apprenticeships. We will seek new opportunities to build Degree Apprenticeships

**Access for students from underrepresented student groups leads to successful high-quality on high-quality courses and good graduate outcomes.**

*As part of our Access and Participation plan and its activities, we will continue to develop our curriculum that enables strong continuation rates, strong student attainment rates and strong progression to highly skilled work.*

We will continue to increase continuation rates yearly and ensure that this stays above the sector benchmark by 5%. We will continue to improve our student's attainment through curriculum initiatives such as Study Skills and thus continue to increase achievement of top-up degrees by 5%. We will focus on progression to employability and ensure that students are highly skilled and ready for employment by increasing career support through tutorial initiatives.

**What we are doing to achieve our aims**

As part of our Access and Participation Plan, the following activities will be implemented to support the achievement of our Plan; Reduce Gaps in Participation by continuing our work to reduce Gaps by working with local schools and our internal College students; We will target our approach with teaching and learning and will focus on students from Care Leaver backgrounds; Develop new Higher Technical Qualifications that focus on the development of flexible modes of study; We will continue to offer financial support which includes our bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students and increase our support for students applying for Disabled Students Allowance.

**How students can get involved (Page 22)**

As part of our Access and Participation activity, we have actively worked with our Higher Education Student Representative. They have input in the design of our Access and Participation activities. This also includes their involvement in our Access and Participation Committee, which is responsible for implementing and evaluating the plan.

**Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved (Page 22-25)**

Our Evaluation practices are informed by the use of available toolkits from regulators and independent sector bodies. These toolkits are used by the Access and Participation Committee to evaluate progress and provide monitoring at all levels of the organisation. In addition, we collect data and feedback that informs the approach through the following mechanisms such as our programme design of courses at the College, our impact on programme level activity and how we achieve this, our aims (above) and our impact on improving access and inclusive College environment.

The Access and Participation Committee is monitored by the College's Higher Education Steering Group which is monitored by the College Executive and Corporation. The committee is responsible for the implementation of the plan and will closely monitor target groups to ensure our plan is executed and has an impact on our students. Where required this committee is responsible for appropriately adjusting our intervention mechanisms in the best interest of our Student body.

**For further information on this summary or the Access and Participation Plan please contact the Access and Participation Committee at [HE\\_AccessandParticipation@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:HE_AccessandParticipation@bedford.ac.uk)**