

# Waltham Forest College

## ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT 2018-19



### GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL

|                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Date approved by Group CEO           | August 2018    |
| Scheduled review date                | May 2019       |
| Accountable member of Executive Team | Stella McManus |
| Responsible member of staff          | Colin Johnson  |
| Document author                      | Stella McManus |

## ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

At Waltham Forest College - "We will deliver responsive, outstanding teaching, learning and support to meet the needs of individuals and employers and inspire our students to develop the high quality skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their future lives."

Waltham Forest College has a strong record of providing fair access for all to higher education. We have taken an inclusive approach engaging with individuals and groups with protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). Our Learner Involvement Strategy clearly defines how we will embrace learner views and offer structured opportunities for students to have direct involvement in assessing and shaping their own learning experience in order to develop the College's quality improvement processes, to increase student success and develop as active citizens in the wider community.

We are one of the most diverse colleges in London and are even more diverse than the local community. Our borough is one of the most culturally rich areas in the country - 48 per cent of residents are from a minority ethnic background. There are 97 different languages spoken by students at Waltham Forest College - the top five languages spoken locally other than English are Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Turkish and Lithuanian. Fewer than 10% of our H.E. students describe themselves as "white British".

More than 90% of our H.E. students are over 21 on enrolment on to our H.E. courses. We have subject specialist tutors and members of our Services for Students team are dedicated to supporting adult learners specifically. The team also works hard to support the 66% of our H.E. students who live in the most deprived areas of Waltham Forest - in itself London's 7th most deprived borough. Our students in H.E. take part in a mentoring programme that supports success and develops key employability skills.

The College's H.E. population shows an approximate 75/25% split between females and males. Females tend to dominate Health & Social Care and Fashion and Textile courses in particular and this reflects progression from our successful, and growing, study programme and Access provision in these areas. The introduction of H.E. provision in Public Services in September 2018 may impact on this gender imbalance.

Our extensive new build that includes the Creative Arts building where H.E. courses in Fashion & Textiles are delivered, and our new STEM centre, has been purposely designed to accommodate students with disabilities - 18% of H.E. learners which is higher than the local population average of 15% (2011 census).

The College's strategic approach to its HE provision promotes progression to its courses both by internal FE students, and by the wider community and employers. We work with the 9,200 micro-businesses in the borough to develop pathways from Study Programme to our H.E. curriculum offer and beyond to employment.

At all levels we are committed to providing appropriate resources to enable and encourage access and participation in further and higher education. This takes a number of forms - funding to the Student Association, direct staff support, resources in kind in the form of accommodation and office costs, time off for student representative activities, and a wider staff development commitment to developing and embedding learners in to all decision making, evaluation and quality improvement measures in the College.

Student engagement is constantly being reviewed and developed through the Student's Union, Student Governors, Course Representatives, Student Ambassadors, Student Council and the Senior Leadership Team listening to feedback from regular student surveys and focus groups.

We have adopted and apply Nelson Mandela's words "Education is the best weapon you can use to change the world" to help individuals be the best they can. Using our college values of Fairness, Openness, Respect, Excellence, Success and Teamwork, we aspire to change lives through every aspect of our provision from pre-Entry to Higher Education.

To do this, we aim to

- Deliver consistently outstanding teaching and learning across all areas of the HE curriculum taking full account of the QAA Quality Code of Practice.
- Develop, design and deliver programmes that equip students with the graduate skills required in the world of work and research.
- Expand and develop the HE provision through the recruitment of the best and qualified staff, development of the best facilities and collaboration with the best employers.
- Offer flexible study opportunities through the development of accessible curriculum to widen participation.
- Work with employers to design, deliver and offer progression routes from our high level programmes.
- Support and enhance the 'student experience' throughout the student lifecycle (from first contact through to becoming alumni). The student experience being all aspects of student life (i.e. academic, social, welfare and support) with the academic imperative at the heart of it.

Our values align with our mission and strategy:

- Quality: we strive to constantly improve the quality of our teaching and learning. We are intolerant of poor quality and always aim for Outstanding.
- Innovation: we agitate for new and better ways of doing things. We will look within and beyond the education sector for transformational innovations.
- Accountability: we set clear, reasonable expectations and we expect colleagues to deliver. We do not make excuses.
- Integrity: we have a strong moral compass, and we do the right thing for our customers, for our colleagues, and for the group.
- Sustainability: we take decisions that work for the medium and long-term: socially, economically, and environmentally.

To do this, we aim to

- Further develop our OfS directly funded higher national certificate and diploma programmes
- Deliver consistently outstanding teaching and learning across all areas of the HE curriculum.
- Develop, design and deliver programmes that equip students with the graduate skills required in the world of work and research.
- Expand and develop the HE provision through the recruitment of the best and qualified staff, development of the best facilities and collaboration with employers.
- Develop expertise and content creation using innovative technologies for delivering and tracking learning
- Offer flexible study opportunities through the development of accessible curriculum to widen participation.
- Work with employers to design, deliver and offer progression routes from our high level programmes.
- Support and enhance the 'student experience' throughout the student lifecycle and developing our students graduate capital

## **RECRUITMENT**

Recruitment to HE programmes at the college is supported by a number of activities, which are designed to widen participation.

Programmes are designed to facilitate flexible delivery. This enables those in work to attend on a part time basis for 1 day per week. Full time delivery is also planned so as to cluster activities so that students are not required to attend across a number of days. This again means that students are able to work and therefore maintain an income

The college offers a range of Access to Higher Education Qualifications to support those who are returning to education and need knowledge and skills to facilitate study at a higher level

The entry criteria for all higher education programmes at the college include 'nonstandard' options so as to encourage applications from those who have not followed a standard route and may not have UCAS tariff points.

## **INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (IAG) AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

The College has a comprehensive Student Services department. From their initial enquiry, prospective students who consider joining the college are able to access support and information in the following:

- Accommodation
- Course Information and Enrolment
- Travel and Transport
- Health, Welfare and Funding
- Careers
- Counselling
- Learning support and Accessibility

If any prospective student is looking for assistance or support to help them make that journey into education, then the college support services are able to offer impartial Information, Advice and Guidance on a full range of services, including specialist staff to advise and support prospective HE students. Student Services provide IAG and support to complete application forms for Disabled Students Allowance. The Learning Support Team support both FE and HE students on programme and in transition to other courses and into employment.

Support for students comprising pastoral provision through tutorial programmes, additional learning support for students with LDD, ESOL and/or basic skills needs, central Student Services and the Learning Centre is a strong feature of the College.