

# Wirral Metropolitan College

## Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

### 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 in and progress from higher education. You can see the full access and participation plan for Wirral Metropolitan College at:

<https://www.wmc.ac.uk/about-us/college-documents>

### Key points

Although the College has small numbers of Higher Education students, we are dedicated to improving outcomes for all students. The focus of our access and participation plan is on improving access and outcomes for specific groups of students in the Wirral area. Data shows that, compared to their peers at Wirral Metropolitan College, access and outcome rates are lower for certain groups of students. These same groups of students are less likely to achieve a 2.1 degree classification, or progress to highly skilled employment or further study. There is also an under representation of the groups of students listed below at Wirral Metropolitan College:

- Ethnic minority students – particularly around access to Higher Education
- Mature students - continuation and progression to graduate employment
- Young students from areas of low participation – access and progression to graduate employment
- Disabled students
- Care Leavers
- Estranged Students

### Fees we charge: *(see page 29 of the full plan)*

At Wirral Metropolitan College, the fees charged in 2022 -23 are:

- £7790 for full-time Degree students
- £3895 for part-time Degree students
- £5990 for full-time HNC/HND students
- £2995 for part-time HNC/HND students.

### Financial help available: *(see page 33 of the full plan)*

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. The support includes:

- The College offers a £500 per annum **Support Bursary** for students with a household income below £25k as well as an '**Access and Progression Bursary**' of £500 per annum for students with a household income between £25,001 and £42,600 and who have studied at the College in the previous two years. This support students from low-income families.
- The College also operates a needs-based **Student Hardship Fund** for UK students in need and experiencing financial hardship during their time at the College.

### Information for students *(see page 40 of full plan)*

**Prospective students** receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, face to face student advisor meetings, and by email

communications. We also inform prospective students through our wider community education projects.

- We regularly update our information on our **website**.
- **Current students** receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student advisors, internal communications campaigns, email, and internal events.

For the most up-to-date information, see our College website.

### **What we are aiming to achieve** (see page 19 of the full plan)

**Our overall aim** is to support students from all backgrounds to access higher education. We also want to create an environment where students at Wirral Metropolitan College can achieve their full potential and succeed with the Skills, Knowledge and Behaviours required for graduate employment.

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

- **Support attainment at school and access to higher education** – We will continue to work with schools, and our Further Education College Students, to raise pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification. During 2022-23, we will identify potential students within our college, where fewer pupils access higher education, and support them to aspire to higher education, by providing additional support. We will focus our work on improving attainment for these students. We will develop a programme of work to start in 2023-24.
- **Diversifying our provision** – We will review our current degree apprenticeships during 2022- 23. We would like to extend these and other opportunities vocational education. We will also review our current pathways into higher education to ensure opportunities from level 1 up to level 4.
- **Young entrants from areas of low participation** – by 2024-25 we will increase the number of participants by 12.8%, as well as improve outcomes for this group to achieve 2.1 degrees.
- **Care experienced students** – By 2024-25, we will increase the number of students with experience of the care system accessing higher education.
- **Mature students** – By 2024-25, we will improve the continuation rate for mature students (aged over 21 years).
- **Ethnic minority students** – By 2024-25, we will increase the number of ethnic minority students by 3%.
- **Disabled students** – By 2024-25, we will improve continuation rates by 9.5% by 2025.
- **Estranged students** – By 2024-25, Increase entrants and improve continuation rates

### **What we are doing to achieve our aims** (see page 31)

We have identified areas of activity to support overall achievement of our aims and targets:

1. The College has recently launched a Community Education Project that is delivered in the most deprived and in-need areas of the Wirral. As part of this project, we are working with all our targeted groups to support progression on to higher education. We are working with 8 voluntary community partners, who support these groups in the community, to deliver a programme of activities related to the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to progress to HE.

2. We will focus our efforts through outreach work, internal progression activities to promote opportunities, and engagement with local schools. The College will support 16-18 year olds within the college, to develop the Skills, Knowledge and Behaviours needed for HE.
3. We will work with 16-18 cohorts to improve attainment levels for progression to HE.
4. Keeping fees lower than the sector average, and not above inflation
5. Small class sizes and greater contact hours, with flexible timetables that enable students with work/caring or family demands to study.
6. The college will focus on improving the implementation of support plans and teaching and learning for disabled students.
7. Pastoral support, every student has access to a dedicated tutor who can support students and signpost further support within the college. A dedicated HE Welfare Officer has been employed who students can contact for additional support to deal with personal issues that are affecting their studies. A HE Finance Officer is also available to support students on an individual bases to help address and finance issues.
8. Continuing to develop resources and activities in schools, ensuring schools and pupils are receiving the support and information they need to progress onto higher education.
9. Developing drop-in sessions and workshops, as well as one-to-one appointments, with a dedicated HE engagement team; student finance advice team; careers team; additional learning support team.
10. Working closely with schools around family and community learning events to raise participation from targeted and under-represented groups.

## **How students can get involved**

We have worked with the Students' Union to gather student input into the design of our access and participation plan. Students are represented on our Access and Participation Group which is responsible for overseeing implementation of the plan. Students are able to contact their student union to give feedback and feedback is actively sought through the HE Quality and Participation Cycle.

## **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved**

The Access and Participation Group will monitor and report on these processes to the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. The Committee will oversee implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against yearly milestones in our access and participation plan. We will monitor impact on our target groups, to ensure we are addressing our aims. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students. Evaluation of progress will also be monitored and actions to improve through our HE Quality and Participation Cycle, (See page 35 of full plan).

Our programmes of activity are informed by the data analysis of local needs, employer and economic drivers and what works for students. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate progress against key performance indicators such as access, continuation and progression targets, which will then inform:

- our programme design, offer and actions to improve
- the impact of the programme of activity we are doing to achieve our aims
- the actions outlined above
- the impact on achieving our overall aim of improved access and an inclusive environment.

## **Contact details for further information**

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