

Summary of Access and Participation Plan 2025/6 to 2028/9

Wirral Met College

Access and Participation plans highlight strategies that a college or University will implement to further improve equality of opportunity for students from underrepresented groups of students to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

You can find Wirral Met College's full Access and Participation Plan [here](#).

Key Points. *(See pages 1-7 of our access and participation plan)*

At the heart of our 2025/6 – 2028/9 Access and Participation Plan is our commitment to continued teaching excellence, inclusivity, and collaboration. Guided by our core values, we aim to provide clear, **ambitious**, pathways to higher education and apprenticeships; equip students with the skills and **resilience** needed for today's workplaces; and ensure our programmes are **inclusive**, accessible, and relevant to the local community. By attracting and retaining students in Wirral and beyond, we're dedicated to **empowering** individuals and driving regional growth; and take **accountability** for student performance and outcomes.

A large proportion of the College's Higher Education students are recruited from areas of deprivation, with 67.2% coming from the most deprived areas in the country. Our plan aims to reduce or eliminate the gaps in performance between different groups of students (or potential students), with the intention of creating equality of opportunity for all students wishing to study Higher Education at Wirral Met College. After undertaking analysis of our data, we have identified the following groups who face risks in continuation and completion:

- Students who have declared a disability are less likely to continue or complete their course, compared to those who do not.
- Male students are less likely to continue or complete their course, compared to females.
- Students from the most deprived communities are less successful in continuing their studies than students from the less deprived communities.

Fees that we charge. *(See page 33 of the access and participation plan).*

In 2025-26, the maximum fees charged are £8500 per year for a full-time degree-level course and £7000 per year for a full-time higher national course. This reflects undertaking a standard year of the course, and the cost may be adjusted based on the intensity of study in the case of retaking specific modules etc. The standard fee of the course will not change from what it initially was for students from the moment they enrol. Any increase in tuition fees will consider matters such as increased staffing costs, the need to renew our facilities and inflation.

Financial Support Information. *(See page 13-16 of the access and participation plan).*

The College provides two bursary options to students: £500 per year for students with a household income below £25,000 or £500 per year for students with a household income between £25,001 and £30,000 and who have studied at Wirral Met College in the previous two years. Eligibility for this is means-tested using information shared by the Student Loans Company, and students are contacted by the student financial support team if they are eligible. Eligible students will automatically receive this bursary and do not need to apply. Payments are made in two instalments – the first in at the end of term 1 in December and the second at the end of term 2 in April. We also provide a flexible hardship fund that all students on student-loanable courses can apply for which is intended to support urgent or

excessive personal needs. The amount and eligibility are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Information for Students. *(See page 22-25 of the access and participation plan).*

The College will publish clear and accessible information on its website for existing and prospective students on the fees that it intends to charge and the financial support available.

What we're aiming to achieve. *(See pages 1-4 of the access and participation plan).*

Our mission is to "Empower success, enrich communities, and support industry," and we're proud to reflect this in our Access and Participation Plan. We are committed to creating a level playing field where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive.

To achieve this, we've identified three key areas where we need to focus to ensure equality of opportunity for everyone:

- 1. Providing Better Academic Support:** Narrowing the gap in student success between those who declare a disability and those who do not. By the end of this plan (2028-29), we aim to reduce the gap in continuation rates (students staying on their courses) to just 1.5% and the gap in completion rates to 2.3%.
- 2. Offering Stronger Personal Support:** Eliminate the difference in continuation rates between male and female full-time students. We plan to close this gap by reducing it by 1.5% each year.
- 3. Improving Financial Advice and Support:** Reduce the gaps in continuation and completion rates between students from the least and most deprived areas by 2% and 3% respectively, ensuring these gaps are virtually eliminated.

What we're doing to address risks to equality of opportunity. *(See pages 8-16 of the access and participation plan).*

For each of our targets we have created a set of activity that will help us to close our gaps. Our activities include:

- **Personal Development Programme:** We will offer a tailored Personal Development Programme designed to support students with declared disabilities. This includes a range of initiatives focusing on welfare, resilience, and mental health, ensuring students have access to both non-academic and wellbeing support.
- **Counselling Services:** We'll make sure students in need of counselling have access to support by providing referrals through our Welfare Officer to trusted external organisations within the local community. Self-referrals are also welcome, and we'll actively promote this service through classroom noticeboards, induction sessions, and tutorials.
- **Pre-Enrolment Support for Students Declaring a Disability:** If you declare a disability during your application or interview, our Welfare Officer will reach out to conduct an initial assessment of your needs. Once you've accepted your place, we'll guide you through the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) application process if appropriate and create a tailored needs plan to ensure everything is in place before you start. Formal DSA assessments can also be arranged as needed.
- **Academic Progress Support:** Every student with additional learning needs or who would benefit from extra academic support will work with an Academic Advisor to develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). These plans will be reviewed once per term to monitor your progress, provide personal development guidance, and set meaningful goals.
- **Study Skills Workshops:** To help you succeed academically, we'll run study skills workshops every two weeks. These sessions will offer tailored support from our

Additional Learning Support staff, helping you build the skills and confidence you need.

- **Support for Male Students:** We are committed to addressing challenges faced by male students through targeted interventions. We will host guest speakers and partner with external organisations to deliver a range of events focused on supporting male students and their wellbeing.
- **Hardship Fund:** If you're experiencing financial difficulties, you can apply for support through our internal hardship fund. We'll ensure all students know about this resource, how to apply, and the importance of maintaining attendance to remain eligible.
- **Bursary Scheme:** All full-time degree students from households earning under £25,000 per year are eligible for a bursary. To qualify, students must maintain attendance above 80% and remain enrolled for at least six weeks before the bursary is awarded. We'll take mitigating circumstances for low attendance into consideration on a case-by-case basis.
- **Community Partnership Hub:** We're creating a community partnership hub at the College, working with local organisations to provide additional support for students facing social and economic challenges. This hub will be a resource for students to access advice and services tailored to their needs.

How it'll be evaluated. *(See pages 8-21 of the access and participation plan).*

We will measure how effective each intervention is and whether the College is achieving the targets set out in the plan through a mixed approach between gathering student feedback, data analysis and internal reviews and audits.

Feedback informs improvements to our services, and we share results with students using a "You said, we did" approach via the student union and class posters. Findings are also summarised in reports that are fed forward to key internal committees and boards.

Student consultation. *(See pages 21-22 of the access and participation plan).*

Wirral Metropolitan College actively engages students to enhance their experience and outcomes through formal feedback mechanisms like surveys, consultation meetings, and representation on committees. Students have influenced the College's Access and Participation Plan (APP), contributing ideas on study spaces, communication, and support services. HE Fellows play a key role in APP development and mentoring while accessing College facilities. APP progress and impact will be shared with students via programme meetings, the Student Council, and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Students who wish to be involved further or wish to become a student representative can email student.union@wmc.ac.uk

Contact Details for Further Information

If you have any further questions about our Access and Participation Plan, we would be happy to answer them. You can contact the HE Team through wmche.secretariat@wmc.ac.uk for further information.