

HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS & PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Responsible for Implementation: Head of Quality and Compliance

Latest Review Date: September 2023

Next Review Date: September 2024

Authorised By: Chief Operating Officer

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About Us

Access Further Education Limited ('The College') has subsidiary companies, trading names and trading partnerships through which it operates. The trading names and partnerships might have their own names or brands, but the legal entity for the purpose of this policy is Access Further Education Limited. Trading subsidiaries, trading names and trading partnerships include Access Creative College ('ACC'), National College for Creative Industries ('NCCI'), and Access Sport.

Higher Education Access and Participation Statement

POLICY STATEMENT

Access Creative College is committed to providing an environment for students that actively offers equality of opportunity, freedom from discrimination and values the diversity of all students and prospective students.

The college seeks to broaden the pool of potential applicants by raising awareness and expectations in line with its commitments to widening participation. By combining knowledge of Higher Education and career routes, with insight into industry gained from our network of employers, we aim to challenge preconceptions, raise attainment and help people to develop the skills and knowledge to meet their aspirations.

Access Creative College values highly the diversity and range of experience that prospective students contribute to college life. Applications are welcome from all candidates irrespective of background. Recruitment and admissions processes aim to match the abilities, aptitude, and aspirations of the candidate to the programme of study and accepts a range of appropriate Level 3 qualifications. We also welcome applications from candidates who may have non standard qualifications but have acquired relevant technical/academic experience in the subject area of the qualification..

The college is committed to recruitment and admissions processes which are fair, explicit and implemented consistently across the higher education provision.

ACC ensures will not be excluded from entry to any course as a result of discrimination, which includes, but is not limited to: age, race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, health, disability, socioeconomic background, religion or belief. We will continue our work to improve the rates of access, success and progression amongst target groups where participation in higher education is low. Success in this work depends on continuation of our successful partnerships and collaboration with schools, colleges, local authorities, other HE institutions and charitable organisations.

ACC provides a network of opportunity and support for life. This level of support is particularly relevant for under-represented groups who need extra access and support.

Our Strategy

As a values-driven institution we strive to ensure that every individual matters and commit to closing the gaps in students' access and participation, with a key focus on the persistent gaps in student degree outcomes. Our strategic vision acknowledges our collective responsibility to ensure 'quality education' and 'reduce inequality'. Access Creative College commits to monitoring and evaluating the impact of its widening participation activities on the access, success and progression of students from backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education. This enables us to evidence our commitments to ensuring fairness of access and participation in higher education. While we continue to attract students from diverse backgrounds in line with national benchmarks, we recognise that there is room for improvement in increasing the diversity of our student body.

- We aim to target student recruitment activity at sixth forms and colleges with higher proportions of students from

low-participation neighbourhoods, BAME backgrounds and female students.

We will continue to:

- Encourage applications from students from under-represented groups through our marketing and through our partnerships with relevant groups
- Design Programmes to facilitate flexible delivery. Offer many choices in required attendance days and times. This gives those in work the option to choose the best days for them to attend. Full time delivery is also planned 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
- ACC 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
- Taster sessions are offered to applicants throughout the year so that they get the opportunity to attend the college in advance of enrolment and discuss any potential concerns or support needs. Applicants are also able to experience the welcoming environment and small class sizes
- Personal tutors and support staff introduce the concept of Higher Education during FE presentations, college progression days and taster activities for all ages

Admissions

Access Creative College supports continuous development with regard to equality and diversity is reflected in our Admissions Procedures, where impartial advice and guidance is given to ensure all applicants are supported and placed on courses appropriate to their demonstrated ability to achieve. ACC provides courses from Level 2 through to Level 7 and places students according to their own progress. It means students can develop and learn at their own pace and not be pushed beyond their present situation. ACC ensures this is achievable by continuously reviewing and evaluating:

- Admissions Data
- Progression and Retention Data
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment
- Induction
- Student Support
- Staff development
- The process of Programme Development and Review

Student Support

ACC has a comprehensive Student Services department. From initial enquiry, prospective students are able to access support with:

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

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

College.

Additional Learning Support Policy

The Additional Learning Support Policy communicates a framework of student support as a key theme to supporting individuals of all backgrounds, abilities and aspirations in order to fulfil their potential through learning, achievement and progression.

Success & Progression

We are proud of our progress in reducing gaps in continuation for students from under-represented backgrounds.

- We will seek to continue ensuring students from low participation backgrounds are as likely to continue their studies as their peers from high participation backgrounds.

We recognise that there are large gaps in degree outcomes for students from backgrounds traditionally under-represented in higher education and that this is a social injustice that needs to be addressed. We are particularly aware of the stark gap in outcomes for those from areas of deprivation; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, and acknowledge there is a new and growing attainment gap for the increasing number of students with mental health difficulties. Tackling these gaps will be an institutional priority.

- We will close the gap in degree outcomes for students from the most deprived backgrounds (as measured by English IMD), BAME students and those with a mental health difficulty to zero by 2030.

We will:

- Continue to work towards providing fully inclusive centres where all of our students are able to flourish; reviewing and developing our learning environment, learning curriculum and learning technology to be more inclusive and accessible.
- Develop initiatives that support under-represented students to engage in life at Access Creative College and develop 'a sense of belonging', thus increasing their potential to achieve and progress. Examples of these initiatives include (but are not limited to) Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) and other forms of peer mentoring/learning
- Improve and expand the provision of mental health support.
- Increase employability and progression opportunities for students from under-represented backgrounds with an emphasis on supporting students to access volunteering and work experience. This will include an increased focus on progression initiatives into higher levels of graduate employment through increased volunteering and work placement opportunities across the curriculum.
- Research and explore the differential outcomes of students from under-represented groups whilst studying to inform how we develop future widening participation initiatives to address this.

Employability is a key institutional priority for all our students; however we must ensure that as we seek to improve progression outcomes for all, we continue to narrow the gaps in progression for students from backgrounds shown as less likely to progress into graduate employment or further study.

- We will seek to close gaps in progression to graduate level employment or further study between males and females, with a view to closing the gap in progression outcomes by 2025.

We are strongly committed to the value of student consultation and engagement in improving higher education for all students. We regularly consult with students to develop your approach. We consider our students as key partners in

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our activity to widen access and participation. Student engagement is a priority in the institutional strategy to ensure innovation in the educational experience and we consult with students on the development of all our strategic plans and policies.