

Milton Keynes College Group

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 Milton Keynes College Group at www.mkcollege.ac.uk

Key points (see pages 2-14 of our Approved APP for further information)

The focus of our access and participation plan is on improving outcomes for specific groups of students. Data shows that, compared to their peers at the Milton Keynes College Group, outcomes are lower for certain groups of students.

- Students are less likely to complete their studies if they come from a neighbourhood where not many people go on to higher education.
- The following groups of students are less likely to achieve Higher National high grades:
 - Students from low-income backgrounds
 - White students underrepresented in higher education
 - Ethnic minority students
- The same groups of students are less likely to progress to highly skilled employment or further study.

Overall employability rates for our students have improved. However, we still have further to go.

Fees we charge

At the Milton Keynes College Group, the maximum fees charges are:

- £6,165 for full-time students
- £3,265 for part-time students

The Fee Policy can be found on the MK College Group website.

Financial help available (see pages 27-28 of our Approved APP for further information)

The MK College Group offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups, which allows students to access the higher education provision and reduce barriers to support in continuing their studies. The support includes:

- **Continuing Student Scholarship** – for students have completed their level 3 at MK College and progress on to a HE programme at the College, will receive a bursary of £500 which will be paid in two instalments.
- **Discretionary Crisis Payment** – a cash payment of £600 paid in two instalments or a bus pass/in-college meal allowance.
- **Household Income Bursary** – a cash payment of £600 paid in two instalments.

Information for students (see pages 25-28 of our Approved APP for further information)

- **Prospective students** receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, and by email communications.
- We regularly update our information for **care leavers** on the Propel website.
- **Current students** receive information about fees and the financial support available through our student VLE/portal, internal communications, campaigns and emails.

For our most up to date information, visit www.mkcollege.ac.uk

What we are aiming to achieve (see pages 15-18 of our Approved APP for further information)

Our overall aim is to support students to access higher education. We also want to create an environment where students at the Milton Keynes College Group can achieve their full potential.

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 are working with schools to raise pupil attainment and expectations to study for a higher education qualification. During 2022-23, we will identify other local schools from where fewer pupils access higher education. We will develop a programme of work to start in 2023-24.
- **Diversifying our provision** – We will review our current HE provisions during 2022- 23. We would like to extend these and other opportunities which are informed by the local, regional and national skills need by working closely with our stakeholders.
- **Students from low participation neighbourhoods and low-income backgrounds** – By 2024-25, we will improve:
 - the continuation rate (the proportion of students continuing to the next year of their course) by 10%
 - attainment of Higher National high grades. To close the gap between the attainment of Distinction grades for students from low-income backgrounds and the rest of the student cohort to 5%.
 - progression to highly skilled employment or further study by 10%.
- **Mature students** – By 2024-25, we will:
 - increase the number of mature students accessing higher education by at least 10%
 - improve the continuation rate for mature students (aged over 21 years) by 10%.
 - continue to narrow the gap in relation to student success between mature learners and younger
- **Ethnic minority students** – By 2024-25:
 - there will be no significant difference in relation to student success between BAME students and White British students
 - we will increase the number of BAME students accessing higher education in-line with local populational data.
- **Students declaring mental health issues** – By 2024-25, there will be no significant difference between the achievement of distinction grades for students declaring mental health issues and the remainder of the cohort on Higher National Certificate and Diploma programmes.

What we are doing to achieve our aims (see pages 18-25 and Appendix 4 of our Approved APP for further information)

We have identified seven programmes of activity to support achievement of our aims and targets.

1. Extend our **programme of work with schools** – this supports more pupils from underrepresented groups to attain good grades and progress to study for a higher education qualification.

2. Take a targeted approach to **learning and teaching** – this focuses on our five target groups and is informed by student representatives and HE Learner Voice forums.
3. Establish and embed **flexible modes of learning** to give students a choice in how they learn.
4. Enhance **support for study** throughout the College so all students can access tailored support.
5. **Engage external partners** to collaborate on improving access to higher education, success in the chosen course of study, and progression to employment or further study.
6. **Engage students** in their own development of personal, social and professional skills.
7. Offer **financial support**, including bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students, and practical support for students applying to Student Finance England.

How students can get involved (see page 21 of our Approved APP for further information)

We provide all students with the opportunity to become a course representative which provides an opportunity to attend student representative meetings, where the student voice can be heard, and the academic team can respond to feedback. Also, three times per year, students will receive a HE Voice survey that enables an anonymous response on the student experience.

To provide feedback, students can contact their student representative or their Course Team Leader.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved (see pages 24-25 of our Approved APP for further information)

Our programmes of activity are informed by the best available evidence about what works for students. We will collect data and feedback to evaluate:

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

The Access and Participation Plan Working Group will monitor and report on these processes to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Board of Governors. The ELT and Governors 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. We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website by January 2024.

Contact details for further information

You can contact Alex Warner at alex.warner@mkcollege.ac.uk for further information.