

BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT 2024/25

Basingstoke College of Technology Access and Participation Statement

Introduction

Basingstoke College of Technology's (BCoT) primary purpose is Building Careers of Tomorrow - to prepare students for the world of work with skills and attributes that go beyond the mastery of their chosen discipline. We ensure that the curriculum we deliver is clearly linked to skills priorities at national, regional and local level; to give students demonstrable qualities that enhance their value to employers and enable them to be successful in their chosen field.

We have an uncompromising ambition and high expectation for every learner which aims to enrich their lives and transform their future. We aim to give students the best opportunities and hands-on education to enable them to progress in education or employment, whilst also encompassing continued personal development. We are committed to supporting access and participation in higher education by students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups and ensure resources, processes and communications are supportive of ease of access. We take collective responsibility for ensuring the whole learner experience (in and out of the classroom) is excellent.

Our learners and staff share the core values of:

- Respectful – valuing every person as an individual and embracing diversity in our community
- Ready – punctual and prepared to work and learn
- Safe – the environment to work and learn in is safe for everyone

BCoT's Ambition and Strategy

Our overall ambition is to provide a higher education curriculum that focuses on developing the skills, experience and knowledge required for employment to drive growth and widen opportunities.

The strategic aims are set out in the Strategic Plan "Building Careers of Tomorrow". In addition, the strategic direction of HE is guided by the HE strategy 2021 -2025, which is aligned to the College's strategic plan, and sets ambitious targets to develop the College's current higher level offer with an employer led expansion of higher education.

Within our strategic aims, our priorities for higher education are that we:

- provide a curriculum that is responsive to job requirements and skills gaps;

- design higher education courses for, and specifically targeted at, those groups of potential students who do not follow traditional routes into higher education;
- develop impactful relationships with key university partners to develop relevant courses and support progression;
- provide a high-quality learning environment using industry standard equipment;
- ensure that HE provision is of the highest quality and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality thresholds expected of UK Higher Education

We have established a University Centre at our Basingstoke campus in partnership with the University of Portsmouth and the University of Reading. This will provide higher education courses specifically designed to support progression into employment, upskilling within employment, and training and further education at higher levels.

The University Centre will provide higher level study for mature students wishing to retrain, requalify and upskill. It will provide higher education opportunities for those students from low participation in higher education neighbourhoods in and around the Basingstoke area by removing the barriers of significant travel, making education affordable through apprenticeships, employer training and accessible through flexible learning options.

We ensure that not only our buildings are accessible to students with disabilities, learning difficulties and mental health needs but that our use of technology, flexible modes of study and specialist support services enables them to learn effectively.

We have a strong tradition of working with students for whom there are significant challenges to learning such as those that are carers, are care leavers, have complex families and believe that a University Centre at the Basingstoke Campus will provide a higher education offer that is readily accessible to them and fits in with their complex lives.

We are also developing a range of modular HE courses, aligned with national and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) priorities, to increase participation of adult learners in higher education by creating additional flexible learning options.

We are keen to provide higher level education that is accessible to all irrespective of characteristics or background and we expect all of those studying with us to achieve the best they can.

We aim to provide our local and regional employers with the talent they need to improve the local and regional economies with a focus on engineering, health and social care, construction, business and creative technologies.

Improving access, success and progression

Participation in 2023-24

BCoT's higher education student population have the following characteristics and are compared with demographic statistics in the table below:

Characteristic	BCoT	Demographic	Source
White British	91.5%	81.8%	2021 Census Basingstoke and Deane
Other ethnic group	8.5%	18.2%	2021 Census Basingstoke and Deane

Male	58.7%	49.5%	2021 Census Basingstoke and Deane
Female	41.3%	50.5%	2021 Census Basingstoke and Deane
Percentage from low participation neighbourhoods	28.2%	27.6%	HESA 2022/23: England POLAR Quintile 1 and 2
20 and under	8.1%	52.8%	HESA 2022/23: Student Characteristic Populations
21-25 years	14.9%	16.3%	HESA 2022/23: Student Characteristic Populations
26-30 years	16.6%	6.8%	HESA 2022/23: Student Characteristic Populations
31 years and over	60.4%	15.3%	HESA 2022/23: Student Characteristic Populations

Difficulties or disabilities	12.3%	20.7%	HESA 2022/23: Student Characteristic Populations
Pass rates for higher level courses	22/23:91.4% 23/24:Tbc		Internal Data: Strata NB. 23/24 year not finalised yet
Pass rates by ethnicity	Statistical comparison of pass rates by ethnicity is not appropriate given the small numbers of students and hence sensitivity of data		

Pass rates by low participation neighbourhoods	Statistical comparison of pass rates by low participation is not appropriate given the small numbers of students and hence sensitivity of data
Continuation rates	Statistical comparison of continuation rates is not appropriate given the small numbers of students and hence sensitivity of data

The College has a higher proportion of White British students studying at the college compared with the local population demographic. In contrast, the proportion of students from other ethnic groups is significantly lower than the local demographic.

The gender profile of higher education students is skewed towards males, with a large proportion in engineering. The proportion of students from low participation neighbourhoods is higher than the national rate which is supportive of our ambition. The proportion of older students (25 years and over) is significantly higher than the national rate with the proportion of younger students significantly lower. This is part due to the fact that we only offer part-time courses and not full-time degree courses. The proportion of students with declared disabilities or difficulties is also lower.

Pass rates for our students are high. Analysis of performance by metrics such as ethnicity, disability and difficulty and low participation in higher education neighbourhoods is not statistically robust due to small numbers of students.

When our University Centre is fully established we will measure the performance of the different groups described in the bullets above and our targets for recruitment for success and for progression will be that there are no statistically significant gaps in the performance of different groups of students. Our aim is also for these groups of students to succeed and progress at a rate that is better than the national average.

Widening Participation

Our key priority is to increase participation in higher education courses with a particular focus on increasing representation from underrepresented groups.

The College is currently working with the Southern Universities Network (SUN) in support of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) to widen participation in higher education. The SUN has been tasked with increasing HE participation in over 70 wards, working with 101 schools and all further education (FE) colleges in the region.

The NCOP consists of 29 consortia across England, undertaking outreach activity in geographical areas (target wards) where the HE participation of young people is both low overall, and much lower than expected based on GCSE-level attainment. The programme aims to support the Government's goal to increase the participation of those groups which are currently under-represented in HE, in particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The College is also working closely with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, Hampshire County Council along with the secondary schools in the region and universities such as Solent, Reading, Portsmouth and University of the Creative Arts to establish its work-based university centre, to understand the higher education needs of the region, to explore opportunities for higher education study and define pathways to employment, training and further learning.

To widen access to HE, the College also undertakes a range of activities including:

- providing high quality pastoral support to help students to overcome barriers to achievement
- providing a wide range of support services including counselling to help vulnerable students achieve their potential

- maintaining high levels of academic support to enable students to develop the skills needed to progress to higher level study
- providing a virtual learning environment, through Google classroom, to ensure that resources re available outside of classroom study
- working closely with local schools to raise aspirations and promote progression to HE pathways
- progression events and individual support for full time students and apprentices to discuss career pathways and options for further learning with a focus on HE
- working with employers and the local community to promote the benefits of HE to adult students

Our students' voice

Our students' voice is very important to us and as such we are committed to hearing their views and gathering their feedback about what is great at BCoT and what we could make even better. We have an active Student Union, a Learner Parliament and a position of Student Governor on our Governing Body. Through the College's feedback processes and governance structure students have the opportunity to reflect on and review this access and participation statement on an annual basis.

The activities and support we provide to students

BCoT has extensive support available to all students through its student services and corporate functions. From the point of enquiry through to enrolment and study, students are able to access support with:

- Course information and enrolment
- Travel and transport
- Health and wellbeing
- Welfare
- Finance
- Careers
- Counselling
- Learning support
- Accessibility
- Progression
- Employment

The information that the College provides to students is impartial and intended to help students into education, to support students through education and to enable progression to employment, training or further education. Our specialist staff are also able to provide students with help whatever their need or characteristic.

Support for students includes an extensive tutorial programme, specialist staff to help in terms of careers and progression, highly qualified and experienced teams able to help students with specific learning needs, difficulties and disabilities, maths and English specialists along with teachers that have extensive industry as well as teaching experience.

BCoT is Matrix accredited, a Disability Confident committed employer and Disabled Go recognised. The College has also been awarded College of Sanctuary status and has achieved the

Quality in Careers standard which is a testament to the College's strong approach to careers advice and guidance, helping students make informed decisions about their future.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The College reports the performance of students undertaking HE courses both during and at the end of their programme. Key Performance Indicator (KPI) meetings are held termly to monitor in year data such as recruitment, retention, attendance and progress. Quality improvement plans are implemented to secure continual improvement. In addition, achievement gaps are monitored, reviewed and actions taken whereby attainment is disproportionate.

The annual self assessment report (SAR) critically evaluates the performance of the courses and highlights any areas for further improvement, which are included in the College's improvement plans. The College's Governing Board has oversight of this process.