

## **A2 Access and participation statement**

Coventry College is a large further education college serving the communities of Coventry and Warwickshire. The college was formed on 1 August 2017, following the merger of City College, Coventry with Henley College, Coventry.

The College has two main sites: Henley Campus, located in the north east of Coventry, and the City Campus, located in central Coventry. Courses available at the College include study programmes, adult learning programmes, and courses for learners with high needs, apprenticeships and Higher Education (HE).

The city of Coventry has a population of some 360,000. Service industries provide the main source of employment, including business services, education, public administration, and health services. Engineering and manufacturing companies are also significant employers across the city. The proportion of people in Coventry aged 16 and over with qualifications at NVQ 3 and above is higher than average for the West Midlands, but lower than that reported nationally.

### **Theme 1: Areas to address**

The College has a diverse student population from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds with a varied range of needs. The College actively encourages applications from students from non-traditional HE backgrounds and has created an Admissions policy and process that actively encourages and supports this through raising aspirations. The College has used published and internal data to self-assess areas to further support students to access HE and to achieve to their best potential.

#### **Accessing Higher Education (HE):**

The College offers extensive mechanisms to support students striving to achieve a HE qualification, including small group sizes with a range of support mechanisms <https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/support/>. As a result, the College wishes to expand its provision using the same model, specifically targeting students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. This will be achieved through increased awareness of the HE provision to students at level 2 and 3 in the College and raising their aspirations, through specific postcode marketing, working with National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) in the West Midlands and through the continuation of an affordable, simple and transparent fee structure.

The College has flexible courses that encourage applications from mature and part time students. The College is looking to increase the amount of their current courses that can meet the local needs by providing a flexible supportive model that will be beneficial for students studying whilst working, and, or returning to education after substantial gaps, and providing a lower tuition cost.

#### **Success targets:**

One of the areas key areas from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data shows that students who come from lower socio economic areas, or who study part time whilst working are more likely to withdraw from their studies. The support mechanisms that are in place at the College will be used to further improve the non-continuation rates of students through increased and earlier interventions, and increasing students' awareness of the support available through the supportive tutorial system and a HE dedicated section on the student intranet.

### **Progression target:**

The success of our students in HE is not just about a qualification, our students learn a range of skills including confidence, presenting, working together, collaborating and gaining valuable work experience in some cases. The College exposes students to a range of progression possibilities through working with partners, encouraging students to participate in these to raise their aspirations to continue with their studies to higher levels or supports students to seek out graduate level employment opportunities (see activities below).

### **Theme 2: Ambitions and Strategy**

'Our mission is to serve the Coventry area, improving skills, retaining excellence and enjoying this wonderful city' ([insert website hyperlink](#)). The College believes in the power of improving social mobility through escalating the educational levels of constituents of the locality. Gaining higher level qualifications will increase earning potential, enhancing personal and professional skills and widening access to social networks.

A key strength of the College lies in its close ties with industry and local employers who provide valuable work experience activities, expert mentoring, and guest speakers, all of which will enhance graduate employability activities or progression to further higher studies. We will continue to increase and improve these opportunities and will continue to actively seek out new industry partners to work with.

#### **Strategy:**

- Continue to offer affordable fees £5,500 for full time courses and £2,950 to £4,495 (depending on the amount of credits taken)
- Sustain smaller class sizes than average university groups to ensure more individual support and access to lecturers
- Increase applications to HE through increasing the range of Access courses to widen participation students through targeting in low higher education participation postcodes.
- Engage actively with partner HEIs within the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) Aim Higher West Midlands to further increase widening participation
- To continue to actively seek out new industry partners to further develop the provision and provide industry links for students
- Provide opportunities for seamless progression for students who might otherwise not be able to successfully access higher education due to a range of barriers including social and emotional, cost and financial implications or those needing support.
- Target students at the College with low household income to inspire them to apply to graduate programmes
- Provide early interventions to support students that are at risk of (retention and success)

### **Theme 3: Activities and support for students:**

We work closely with students to ensure access to the help and support available, whether that is personal, educational or financial. We believe that Coventry is a great place to live, work and grow and we celebrate the achievements of our students. A major strength of the College is the strong relationships student develop with staff, this is continuously highlighted in feedback from our students and from our external partners.

Activities include:

- 'Next Steps Fair' as part of our internal progression activities to promote higher education opportunities for internally progressing students and marketing this via social media platforms, internal TV screens, posters and the website, messaging as invitations to join the Next Steps Fair through progression tutorials and text messaging.
- HE dedicated Open Event in December before the UCAS deadline to promote higher education opportunities to students inviting key partners to participate.
- Designed dedicated branding for the higher education product stream and dedicated pages on the web platforms to promote the College's offer to a wider marketplace.
- Promote the HE offer as part of 'cross-selling' in our dedicated FE magazine.
- Promote the HE offer with dedicated stands/HE providers throughout our entire cycle of Open Events Career Planning
- UCAS Registration and Process
- Writing UCAS Personal Statements
- Engagement with NCOP and schools in the areas to promote HE and widen participation
- Raise aspirations by providing opportunities for students to study higher education in a learning environment that is supportive and inclusive through taster sessions
- University visits
- Targeted marketing in lower socio-economic postcodes to raise awareness of the offer at the College including flexibility and lower fees to encourage applications
- Offer of bespoke consultations with prospective students to talk through needs and how the College environment can be supportive of these

**Supporting students:** <https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/support/>

There are a range of support systems and resources to ensure that our students' needs are met. These include the following:

- In-class support
- Hearing impaired support
- Visual Impairment support
- Mobility support – practical assistance
- Social and emotional support through links with key partners
- Assistive technology
- Small class sizes
- Approachable and accessible lecturers
- Fair and effective admissions policy and assistance and support to apply to HE
- Flexible delivery models for some courses
- Early interventions through academic support

Financial Support:

There are also a range of financial support that may be available to students' who qualify in addition to the Student Loan company tuition fees and maintenance loans, these are

<https://www.coventrycollege.ac.uk/support/>

- Childcare Grants
- Parents Learning Allowance
- Adult Dependents Grant
- Bursaries

**Evaluation of the statement and plans:**

A review with individual students inviting feedback was held for the access statement 2019-2020, with subsequent changes made to ensure this meets the needs of students, and is transparent and clear in its intentions. The plan within this statement will be extracted, delivered and measured by curriculum teams, managers and all involved, to measure the effectiveness and impact of this, and to continue to develop future statements and plans. Students will also be welcomed to reviews to give feedback and insight into our current and future HE students' needs.