

Access and Participation Statement – Macclesfield College

Macclesfield College is committed to meeting local and regional needs to widen participation in Higher Education (HE) from under-represented groups. The College acknowledges that increasing access to HE is particularly important given that the percentage of the population with higher level qualifications (Level 4 or above) in Macclesfield and the surrounding area is below the national average, contributing to a skills gap within local and regional economies.

The College's strategies and policies set out clearly our commitment to fair access, including the minimising of barriers for applicants. In addition to setting transparent criteria for entry to programmes, the College welcomes applications from students from non-traditional backgrounds and values work related experience to encourage mature students into higher education.

As part of the admissions process, the College provides comprehensive information, advice and guidance (IAG). The College's IAG is quality assured through Matrix. The admissions process is administered by the Learning Experience Team. The Head of Student Services and Support ensures a cohesive approach to admissions through consideration of students' prior achievement and experience, career aspirations, individual learning and welfare needs. The Head of Higher Education oversees the HE admission process and liaises with the Learner Experience Team and Programme tutors to ensure smooth implementation of the admission process.

Prospective HE students are interviewed to assess their suitability for higher level studies and their chosen programme of study and to identify students' support needs. The College actively encourages applications from disadvantaged groups and closely monitors recruitment and enrolment from these groups as well as success rates. Data on performance for equality and diversity indicators is reported in the College's HE Self Evaluation Document. The College engages in outreach work to engage disadvantaged and under-represented groups in education and training, including participation into Higher Education (HE).

Macclesfield College has developed various HE pathways to encourage young people in particular, and their parents, carers or guardians, to consider HE as a progression route. The College focuses on developing our existing and prospective students' study skills to provide the firm grounding needed for success. Working with schools, community groups and employers we raise awareness of the benefits of HE to individuals, industry and the local economy.

Examples of activities undertaken by the College to widen access to HE includes:

- Promoting progression to HE for the College's Level 2 and Level 3 students through targeted careers sessions, an annual College based HE Road Show and Fair, visits to and talks by universities and support with UCAS applications
- Providing study skills support on Level 3 and HE programmes through online resources, tutorials, and specific sessions
- Established Access to HE programmes which provide opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds and levels of education to progress to university level study
- Professional development programmes which provide support to teachers on developing teaching and learning strategies that meet the needs of individual students
- Working closely with schools and colleges to raise aspirations and promote lifelong learning, targeting progression to HE courses and attending school careers events to promote advice and guidance on progression opportunities and offer careers advice
- Employers network events to promote HE for upskilling their existing workforce.