

**ACCESS &
PARTICIPATION
STATEMENT**

2024/25

Access & Participation Statement 2024/25

Policy Owner: Board
Date Approved: 17 October 2024
Next Review: June 2025
Responsibility for Review: Vice Principal Quality, Teaching Learning & Learner Support
Policy Review Frequency: Annual

Applicable to staff: Yes/No
 Applicable to students: Yes/No
 Publish on College website: Yes/No

Consultation:

Undertaken with:	Yes/No:	Date:
Committee/Board	Board Quality & Standards	17 October 2024 10 October 2024
ELT	Yes	8 October 2024
SLT		
Unions		
Students		
Employees		
Employers/Stakeholders		

Any Associated Documentation, for Reference:

ELT SIGN-OFF: Marie Haworth - VP Quality, Teaching, Learning & Learner Support



AMIBITION AND STRATEGY

1. Preston College is firmly grounded in its community and plays a significant role in supporting young people and adults in developing their knowledge, skills and education in preparation for employment, career advancement or further study. Preston College provides the culture, environment, facilities, resources and services to enable learners at all career stages to make effective progress and contribute to a thriving local economy. The College is committed to widening access and participation, providing opportunities for all learners to achieve and progress. We strive to create an inclusive learning environment where all students, regardless of background, can fulfil their potential and progress. As a College of Sanctuary, we have a particular commitment to welcoming and supporting asylum seeker and refugee learners.
2. Preston College is proud of the inclusive nature of its intake, which reflects the city's growing diversity and population change. We are committed to the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion, celebrating the diversity of all our learners, apprentices, colleagues and visitors. Our EDI Strategy for 2024-2027 outlines our strategic vision and key objectives to ensure everyone is treated with respect and dignity in a safe, supportive environment. The strategy aligns with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Our EDI objectives cover all protected characteristics as well as additional characteristics pertinent to Preston College. We strive to remove barriers and promote good practice through key themes of social mobility, accessibility, voice and influence, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group supports achievement of our EDI objectives, which are reviewed annually by the Board. The measures outlined here will help ensure EDI principles are embedded across all aspects of college life, creating an inclusive community where everyone can participate fully and achieve their potential.
3. Preston College has a clear mission and is clear in its strategic positioning both within the education and training sector and geographically, in its accountability to its City and region.
4. The College has three main areas of business:
 - Community provision
 - Higher Technical and Professional Skills
 - Apprenticeships and employer-based training.
5. Our Vision is 'to transform lives through education', and our Mission is 'to inspire, educate and support our diverse community to reach its potential'.

Our Key Strategic Objectives:

- Deliver high quality teaching, learning and support to promote high levels of attendance, achievement and positive outcomes for learners
- Provide a high quality technical and vocational curriculum, aligned to regional and local businesses and community needs
- Value our diverse college community, and provide aspirational progression

- pathways for all learners and staff
 - Improve financial surplus and cash generation to provide future investment capacity
 - Fully embed a culture in which all staff deliver outstanding performance that contributes effectively to the learner experience
 - Nurture effective partnerships that benefit learners, staff, the City of Preston and the wider region
6. In working to deliver to our key strategic objectives, we have very much aligned our curriculum offer to regional and local economic needs. We continue to prioritise developing practice in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, in recognition that this is at the core of our provision. Our provision not only supports learners to achieve formal qualifications, but to also develop the skills and personal qualities that employers need and want. Maths and English development is prominent across all areas of the College curriculum and we recognise the importance of these subjects in relation to qualification success, but also in supporting and enhancing the employability of our learners.
7. In-line with our mission, we continue to deliver:
- A high-quality overall learning experience.
 - Quality teaching, learning and assessment at the core of our activities.
 - Exposure to the world of work, professional CPD and enhancing employability skills for our learners, all focussed on clear career pathways.
 - A critical role in the regeneration and forward planning of Preston City and its surrounding areas and the region.
 - A sustainable, effective and financially sound business.
 - A highly responsive approach to markets; where appropriate by operating through focused, separately branded operations, including the creation of effective partnerships.
8. Significant work has been carried out to align the College curriculum to regional demand and priorities, and sector body and employer engagement has supported significant improvements in terms of curriculum design, content, delivery and assessment. Our role as a member of the Lancashire and Cumbria Institute of Technology will further support our access and participation goals, providing progression routes into technical education for underrepresented groups. We will continue to collaborate with employers, our partner university (University of Central Lancashire) and other regional partners to co-create inclusive skills pathways. This enables the College to maximise opportunities for our learners and support and often facilitate progression into employment. The College recognises and understands its key learner groups and will ensure our strategic approaches to growth and development of Higher Education (HE) provision is reflective of this. These key learner groups can be summarised as follows:
- 16-19 learners progressing from full-time level three studies
 - Adult learners who have returned to study and undertaken an Access or HE (or equivalent) qualification
 - Adults in Employment who are wishing to upskill

- Apprentices looking to progress on to Higher or Degree Apprenticeship programmes.
9. Facilitating access for these groups is a key focus and we will continue to work closely with employers and our learning community to raise awareness of the impact of higher level skills development in promoting access to employment and career development. Alongside the proposed growth in full and part-time learner numbers, we aim to grow the provision of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships across key employment sectors including Engineering, Construction and Health and Social Care.
 10. Widening Access and Participation is a fundamental element of the College strategy and we are passionate about ensuring that students from under-represented groups and those from disadvantaged backgrounds have fair access to HE. A key aspect of our strategy is to build aspiration and achievement through our continuing focus on access, participation, student success and progression. The College embraces a responsive approach to student support, intervening early in relation to student challenges to maximise success for all.

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PRIORITIES

11. Following the self-assessment process for HE, the College has identified the following gaps:

A. Access

- Decline in the proportion of students from low HE participation areas.
- Decline in the number of enrolments on HE courses from mature students.

B. Success

- To raise the high-grade achievement for young graduates.

C. Progression

- Emphasis on employability through work placements and professional training, to support local employment needs.

12. The College is committed to increasing access, participation and achievement as outlined below:

- To raise awareness of the HE offer in the local community.
- To raise participation for learners from areas of low HE participation and deprived areas.
- To raise the high-grade achievement for young graduates.

13. In 2024/25, we will focus our access and participation work on the following target groups, identified through analysis of our student data:

- Students from low participation neighbourhoods and deprived areas.

- Mature students.

ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

HE Admissions

14. The HE admissions procedure is regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure it aligns with and supports Preston College's Access and Participation Statement. The HE Quality Manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the admissions procedures, ensuring they remain in line with sector conventions, statutory requirements, and best practices for widening access. The College employs contextual admissions practices as a key strategy to support its access and participation goals. This approach allows the institution to identify and encourage students from underrepresented groups by considering additional information beyond exam results alone, such as personal circumstances, alternative qualifications, or relevant experience. The HE Admissions Group, reviews contextual admissions applications to ensure fair consideration of candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Through these processes, Preston College aims to reduce barriers for prospective learners and enhance opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access HE.

Ongoing advice and guidance

15. The College continues to invest in a dedicated Recruitment, Admissions and Careers Advisor (HE) to enhance support for access and progression in HE. This specialist role is integral to our commitment to widening participation and ensuring student success. The advisor provides tailored guidance throughout the admissions process, helping prospective students from diverse backgrounds navigate application procedures and understand entry requirements. They play a crucial role in implementing contextual admissions practices, working closely with academic staff to identify candidates with potential who may not meet standard entry criteria.

Pastoral and additional support

16. As students are in small tutor groups, the personal tutor is able to build up an effective working relationship and ensure that needs are being met. The College is ensuring that more targeted and specialist support can be provided through central College support systems and has recruited a dedicated co-ordinator for pastoral support for HE students. The increased monitoring and support will also facilitate the identification of students who may not have applied for DSA and who would benefit from doing so. This support is beneficial in ensuring that students have support with respect to their broader needs that could be impacting on completion of the course. Further support is offered to students in a variety of ways through Learning Support Coaches who provide support on a 1:1 basis helping to break down personal, social and economic barriers to learning. Where appropriate the team signpost learners to both internal and external agencies to offer appropriate advice and support when required.

Academic Support

17. The College has an enhanced induction and study skills support so that it

becomes more tailored to the needs of individual students and so that there is improved co-ordination of cross College activities. This commences pre-enrolment to enable students to prepare effectively for their course of study utilising materials on aspects such as academic study skills. The College has an additional support team and a range of assistive technology to enable effective support for any student studying on HE.

Access and Outreach

- Targeted outreach in local schools with low progression rates to FE/HE, delivered in partnership with Lancashire Future U.
- College based events such as taster days and open events to build confidence
- Accessible and inclusive recruitment process including contextual offers and flexible entry requirements.
- Enhanced stakeholder engagement plan to increase transparency around outreach activities and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

Success and Progression

- Transition support including pre-entry engagement and HE induction programme
- Academic and pastoral support services, including a dedicated co-ordinator for pastoral support for HE students.
- University visits and increased access to national events and competitions
- College based progression events to raise awareness and build confidence, particularly in those who may not previously have aspired to HE.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

- Preston College is committed to a data-informed approach to access and participation. We will continue to enhance our monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of our interventions and drive improvement.
- Use of external data and our own student data to identify gaps in performance.
- Outcome-focused evaluation of outreach, success and progression activities, using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Annual review of the Access and Participation Statement and our performance shared with governors and published on our website.
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement to inform our access and participation work, as outlined in our HE Stakeholder Engagement Plan.