

WIDENING PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

1 Context

Widening Participation is extending and enhancing access to Further and Higher Education to people in under-represented groups and communities, particularly people in lower socio-economic groups.

The College's Widening Participation Strategy should be viewed in the context of the College Mission, and Corporate Strategy 2011-2014, in particular Objective 1:

'Ensure access to, and promote progression within, a range of personalised learning opportunities in a culture that listens to learners, values and celebrates diversity and learner success, and where staff and students feel and are safe'.

This strategy has been developed in the context of current legislation, primarily, The Equality Act (2010) and Public Sector Duties 2011.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the College's Equality and Diversity Action Plan (2011-2014) and its associated Strategies and Policies.

2 Mission Statement

The mission of Doncaster College is:

"Meeting learner needs and aspiring to excellence".

In line with the College's Equality and Diversity Strategy it is important to note that:-

Education promotes social change by combating exclusion and, in this regard all staff are committed to promoting learning amongst those who have traditionally been excluded from education.

3 Rationale

The document sets the strategy for widening participation and informs and continues to be informed by the wider strategic planning process. It is recognised that the Widening Participation Strategy underpins the College's Equality and Diversity Strategy as a key enabling strategy to move the organisation to one that promotes and facilitates social and educational inclusion.

4 Fundamental Principles

The promotion of educational and social inclusion and access is of paramount importance and so we believe that:

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- The College is at the heart of the local community. Therefore we need to understand the diverse nature of the communities we service
- Learning is the common foundation for social, economic and cultural cohesion
- The College has a duty to ensure all learners are protected from bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination
- The College has a responsibility to develop the learners' knowledge and understanding of Equality and Diversity and preparation for living and working in a culturally diverse society
- It is important to be active in the promotion of inclusivity by providing a learning and working environment which actively widens participation and improves the chances of success
- All learners should be given the opportunity to participate including those with learning difficulties/disabilities who should also be given the chance to express their views on provision and services.

5 A College Strategy

The strategy will need to be responsive to the changing profile of the community and will fully embrace national developments.

Within its Equality and Diversity Action Plan the College will set challenging targets for widening participation particularly as it relates to closing the equalities gap. As such targets will be set in the context of the local community profile.

Senior managers will be responsible for setting such targets within the context of closing the gap through curriculum planning.

All College stakeholders will be responsible for promoting a culture and ethos which is socially and educationally inclusive.

The College's commitment to widening participation will be reflected and monitored in all aspects of the College's work, with a particular emphasis on:

- 14-19 learners
- Looked after Young People
- Care Leavers
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Black and minority ethnic learners
- Ex-offenders

The scope of this strategy covers all aspects of College business as it relates to learner activities and should be read in conjunction with The College's HE Widening Participation Strategic Assessment:

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- Curriculum Planning
- Initial Advice and Guidance, recruitment, selection, enrolment , initial and diagnostic assessment of learners
- Teaching and learning methods and resources
- Learner Support Services.

6 Structures and Systems

The College operates this strategy through its Equality and Diversity Action Plan, which is developed and monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Widening participation (demographic) data will be analysed and monitored by the Assistant Principal Learner Support and Inclusion and The Head of Inclusion.

7 Critical Success Factors

- The development of effective partnerships with other agencies that lead to demonstrable benefits for learners such as:
 - Local Schools
 - Special Schools
 - Employers
 - Community Groups
 - Higher Education Institutions
 - Local Authority
 - Children Services
 - NHS
 - Training Providers
 - Probation Service
 - National Apprenticeship Service
 - Job Centre Plus
- Integration of equality objectives in relation to participation and admissions.
- Provision of effective support structures for learners within the context of widening participation and promoting inclusion.
- Visible commitment of senior management and governors to widening participation in particular a culture and ethos of social and educational inclusion.
- Effective labour market intelligence data to ensure that the college understands the community it serves.
- The setting of challenging targets and using data to monitor, analyse and improve engagement and performance by different groups of learners
- Provision of an effective initial assessment and induction process linked to the development of an ILP.

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- Accessibility of learning programmes in relation to timing, location, modes of delivery and duration.
- Additional Learning Support as an enabling resource, so that, where appropriate, an individual gains greater autonomy and decreases dependence on others.
- Individual learners' additional learning support needs are accurately identified early in the programme and are met quickly through the provision of appropriate resources and support throughout a learner's programme.
- Access to inclusive resources that enable all learners to participate fully regardless of their protected characteristics*.

8 Next Steps

The College has strategically linked its Widening Participation Strategy to its equality and diversity key objectives thereby to its Equality and Diversity Action Plan, as follows:

1. To actively promote an ethos and culture that positively reflects the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity thereby advancing educational and social inclusion and equality of opportunity
2. To ensure that all students and potential students are aware of, and comply with, Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedures, in accordance with The Equality Act (2010)/Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)
3. To ensure that all staff and potential staff are aware of, and comply with the College Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedures, including all protected characteristics*, in accordance with The Equality Act (2010)
4. To ensure all external partnerships and employer engagement provision complies with the legislation, including all the protected characteristics *, in accordance with The Equality Act (2010) and thereby close the equalities and achievement gap
5. To provide an accessible and inclusive physical environment and facilities which positively reflect the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity and to ensure that external contractors comply with the requirements of The Equality Act (2010)
6. To take proactive steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation across the protected characteristics* in accordance with The Equality Act (2010) and take proactive steps to promote good relations for and between all social groups
7. To ensure that the College's quality assurance framework, including curriculum content and design, materials and delivery is underpinned by and

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reflects the College's commitment to Equality and Diversity, across all protected characteristics* thereby promoting inclusion

8. To provide learner support services which are inclusive and take proactive steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations among all groups of people.
9. To provide the appropriate financial resources to effectively implement the College's Equality and Diversity Policies and to ensure that the College procurement policy and associated activities are in accordance with The Equality Act (2010)
10. To ensure there is effective monitoring in all aspects of the College's student reporting mechanisms to close the equalities gap and actively promote equality of opportunity across all the protected characteristics*
11. To ensure there is effective monitoring in all aspects of the College's staff reporting mechanisms to close the equalities gap and actively promote equality of opportunity across the protected characteristics*.

*Protected characteristics:

Age
Disability
Race
Sex
Sexual Orientation
Religion or Belief
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Maternity and Pregnancy
Gender Reassignment