

## Blackburn College: Summary of 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Access and Participation Plan

### What is an Access and Participation Plan?

Access and Participation Plans set out how Higher Education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from Higher Education.

You can see the full Access and Participation Plan for Blackburn College at [access-and-participation-plan-2020-2021-to-2024-2025-june-2019-blackburn-college.pdf](#)

As we are now entering the post-Pandemic period, having reflected on the original Access and Participation Plan in light of the last two years and the impact of Covid-19, the College is making the following alterations:

#### Key points

The focus of our Access and Participation Plan is improving outcomes for specific groups of students. Data shows that compared to their peers, the following student groups are less likely to attend university:

- Ethnic minority students
- Male students
- Part time students

Similarly, those from a low-income background are less likely to complete their studies.

Overall our employability rates remain good with 9 out of 10 students moving into employment or further study within 18 months of their graduation, but there is still more to do to ensure this remains consistent.

#### Fees we charge

**At Blackburn College the fees for 2022/23 are as follows:**

Full time degree students will be charged £8250 per year. For degrees with a foundation year, these will be charged at £4900 for the entry year only.

Part time students will be charged £6000.

Post Graduate Certificate in Education students will be charged at £6250.

Post Graduate students will be charged £5400 per year.

You can see a full list of fees for courses at Blackburn College here [Fees and Financial Support for University Centre students | Blackburn College](#)

#### Financial help available

We offer financial support to all students through a study bonus and an Access to Success Fund. Information on these can be found here:

[UCBC £500 Study Bonus | Blackburn College](#)

[Access to Success Fund | Blackburn College](#)

#### Information for students

##### What we are aiming to achieve (see page 16 of the Plan)

Our overall aim is to assist students in accessing Higher Education, and then support them to achieve the qualification for which they have enrolled on. We then support transitions into employment or higher-levels of study.

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work:

**Improving the continuation rate of students from low income backgrounds:** we aim to reduce the gap between the continuation rate of students from a low income background by 5 percentage points by 2025.

**Provide easier routes into Higher Education by diversifying the curriculum:** we will ensure the curriculum offer meets the needs of the area, the employers and the needs of the potential students and is reflective of the changes in how education is accessed.

**Support achievement of white economically disadvantaged males:** while the gaps in attainment are broadly in line with the sector, we have made improvement by reducing the gap. Nevertheless, a gap still exists and this will be a focus of our continuous improvement work.

**Support school attainment and access to Higher Education:** we will do this by engaging activities for students in years 8 to 13, aimed at increasing achievement and supporting progression into Apprenticeships, Further and Higher Education. This activity will start in the year of 2022/23.

## **What we are doing to achieve our aims** (see page 20 of the plan)

The following areas detail the activity planned to meet those aims:

**Improving the continuation of students from low income backgrounds:** in order to achieve this, we will design appropriate courses that will allow a student to work alongside their studies. All fee-paying students benefit from enhanced financial support packages such as the bursary and Access to Success fund. Additionally, we offer access to equipment, hardware and software to support students with their studying. The Student Support Network offers a full support service ranging from Academic Coach support to professional mental health and well-being services. This Support Network will be fully in place by 2022. We aim to also improve our overall continuation rates each year.

**Provide easier routes into Higher Education by diversifying the curriculum:** whilst it is accepted that many people will continue to access Higher Education on a traditional three-year degree programme, the University Centre at Blackburn College understand that this will not always meet the needs of students or employers, therefore we will develop a suite of twelve one-year Higher Education programmes by 2024. These will provide a qualification in their own right and allow meaningful progression into a career or progress on to the next level study. Furthermore, we will work with partners to ensure we are offering the module approach with the Life Long Learning Entitlement predicted to be available by 2025.

**Support achievement of white economically disadvantaged males:** by using the Get Ahead Programme (GAP) for all new students from 2022/23, all students will have a diagnostic opportunity which will provide them with a menu of support whilst studying, which will include Access and Participation Officers and the Academic Coaches. High recruitment is often seen on Business, Engineering and Construction qualifications and all of these programmes now have a one-year programme available. This allows a student to 'build' up their qualifications. Additionally, we will be offering a module approach to programmes by 2025.

**Support school attainment and access to Higher Education:** we will do this by introducing targeted work with three schools with below average progress 8 scores and with low progression into education, employment or training post Key Stage 4. Also, introducing targeted work with a school with an above average progress 8 score, but with low progression into education, employment or training post Key Stage 4. We will continue to enhance the relationship with Blackburn Children's University through the introduction of a curriculum specific activity in 2022/23 for Children's University pupils and support collaborative work through FutureU by increasing the number of on-site delivery sessions for NCOP students in 2022/23.

## **How students can get involved** (see page 24 of the plan)

The Student Voice process is an integral part of the College's quality enhancement process to shape and inform further the quality of student education experience. The new Student Engagement Strategy for 2022-2024 aims to further strengthen our current practices to support students to become active in their learning as a student here at the University Centre. The University Centre at Blackburn College will continue to collect student views through internal surveys twice yearly and through the external National Student Survey. The participation target is 80% for all surveys.

A Student Leadership Team will be in place for 2022/23 and these roles will provide a pivotal link between students and College leadership. There will be termly meetings and a yearly Student Conference. The composition of the Student Leadership Team will be representative of the student population demographics. Students will be represented in the Access and Participation Team.

We will continue to have student representation at all levels of academic governance including the monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan.

## **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved** (see page 25 of the plan)

Our Access and Participation work will be informed by the numerical evidence from our reporting dashboard but also, our Student Voice and Student Leadership Team will hold valuable insight and opinions to provide a full picture.

We will collect and report on the programme of activity through the Access and Participation Plan. The targets and milestones are detailed in the Access and Participation Plan and above. This will allow regular tracking and considerations of the intervention success. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students.

The Access and Participation Plan activity will be monitored by the Access and Participation Team which is led by the Assistant Principal for Higher Education. This will then be reported to the Academic Board and the Learning and Quality Committee. This will mean there is oversight from the Principal and Chief Executive, Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality and College Governors, resulting in the Access and Participation Plan receiving the highest level of oversight within the organisation.

## **Contact details for further information**

You can contact [caroline.bracewell@blackburn.ac.uk](mailto:caroline.bracewell@blackburn.ac.uk) for further information.