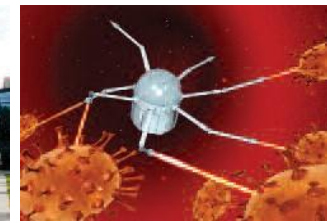


Higher Education Access and Participation Statement

January 2017



REDCAR &
CLEVELAND
COLLEGE



Raising aspirations | Exceeding expectations

Redcar & Cleveland College Access and Participation Statement

Introduction

At Redcar and Cleveland College we are dedicated to providing high quality HE provision to all. We believe that anyone with the necessary ability should be able to progress to Higher Education and as such the College is committed to providing equal access to all regardless of background, gender, age or any other factor. Here, we outline what the College hopes to achieve in terms of access and participation, how the College has approached the need for access and widening participation in higher education, how it has performed in this area and we give some examples of the kind of activities that have been implemented to open up access to our higher education programmes.

The College and its environment

Mission statement:

Raising aspirations, exceeding expectations

Redcar and Cleveland College is a medium-sized further education college located in the seaside town of Redcar. The College delivers FE and HE courses at a purpose built site from where all its provision is delivered. There is a dedicated HE Centre funded by the College, Teesside University and the Sir William Turner's fund that provides high quality accommodation for HE students, including classrooms, computer suites, quiet study area and a lecture theatre. The College is closely linked with the industrial developments in the region and its provision is mainly based in engineering, building, information technology and the service and public sectors.

Along with four other colleges in the region, Redcar and Cleveland College forms part of the Tees Valley Higher Education Business Partnership (TVHEBP) with Teesside University. This is a mature partnership with a clear strategic direction. In 2015-16, the College enrolled 279 higher education students. Until September 2016, all higher education courses were part-time. All programmes are indirectly funded and are validated by Teesside University.

The Borough of Redcar and Cleveland is a part of the Tees Valley conurbation. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2012 Mid-Year Estimates the population of Redcar and Cleveland is 135,000 with 48.7% being Male and 51.3% being female.

Redcar and Cleveland is the least ethnically diverse of the five Boroughs in Tees Valley. It is the highest white British population in the country with a 97.6% White British population. (More recent estimates place this as 98.6%.) There are however 16 ethnic groupings.

The latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation for 2010 suggest that Redcar and Cleveland continues to experience relatively high levels of deprivation across the borough and is ranked the 48th most deprived borough in England. Unemployment rates in Redcar and Cleveland have reduced since 2012, and data provided by Tees Valley Unlimited and the census updates indicate that in December 2014 it was around 5.0% (3337) of the working population. This still leaves it with the third highest unemployment rates in the Tees Valley, behind Middlesbrough and Hartlepool and 2.3% above the national rate.

Youth unemployment has also declined since 2012, but remains high at 8.5% (955) and 5.3% above national rates. This is currently the highest in the Tees Valley. Similarly, in 2014 the number of 16-19 NEETS is 9.5% (454) above the national rates of 5.9%

In 2014 50.8% of school leavers left school achieving 5 or more A*-C Grades including English and maths. This is 10% below the national rate of 60.8% and represents a decline on 2013 of 5.7%. In terms of the achievement of 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C the percentage is 60.1% against a national picture of 80.1%. This means the gap between Redcar and Cleveland and national achievement is widening. The population of Redcar and Cleveland is currently around 135,000 and this has declined since 2001, whilst the north east population is increasing steadily.

The College's approach to access and participation

Redcar and Cleveland College firmly believes that anyone with the aspiration to enter HE should have the opportunity to do so regardless of their background or circumstances. As a college of FE with higher education provision and being situated in one of the most economically challenged areas the college is fully committed to widening participation. Linking to our mission statement, our approach is led by a number of basic principles:

- A belief in the raising of learners' expectations and aspirations

- Providing a high standard of teaching and learning in a high quality setting

- Providing for a diverse student body

- Programme design that lends itself to flexibility and that meets the needs of students, employers and other stakeholders

- Working in partnership with universities, colleges, schools and industry

The College aims its access and participation efforts at particular groups and individuals, and to impact the performance of its higher education programmes:

- Further education learners progressing to higher education

- Mature learners re-entering education

- International students

- Part-time learners in employment

- Previously under-represented groups and non-traditional local learners, including those on low incomes, those living in deprived areas, those whose families have no experience of higher education, people with disabilities and under-represented ethnic groups.

- Improving retention and success on HE programmes

Equality and diversity is fundamental in everything we do as a college and our approach to that is described in the College's *Equality Duty Statement*.

Examples of access activities

In order to promote access and participation based on the principles outlined above, the College carries out a range of activities designed to improve access and progression to higher education.

Activities to improve access and participation

<p>Strategy for improving adult access</p>	<p>Development of pre-Access to HE and Access to HE programmes in key subjects</p> <p>Information, Advice and Guidance for applications to HE programmes, including support for students making UCAS applications and HE funding</p>
<p>Targeted recruitment</p>	<p>College Open evenings, including HE specific Open Evenings</p> <p>Careers events</p> <p>Taster events</p>
<p>Collaboration with partners</p>	<p>Teesside University and other Tees Valley Colleges through the Tees Valley Higher Education Business Partnership (TVHEBP) and the FE+ network, providing a joint approach where appropriate to offer a range of HE courses to accommodate students' needs academically in an easily accessible location</p> <p>Employers, providing a coherent progression route for employees studying part-time, especially HNCs in engineering disciplines</p> <p>International employers</p>

Improving retention and success

<p>Support for transition into HE</p>	<p>Bridging modules</p> <p>Induction processes</p> <p>Provision of information (micro-website for HE, main College website, written information, social media)</p> <p>Summer activities leading up to induction and for progression to second year of programmes</p>
<p>Enhancement of student experience</p>	<p>Dedicated HE Centre providing high quality learning environment</p> <p>Work placement & experience</p> <p>Some HE programmes have incorporated weekend workshops and a student conference</p>

Progression to further study/employment

<p>Curriculum development</p>	<p>Working with university and college partners to improve the curriculum, including course design, assessment design, effective and efficient use of resources and College's range of HE programmes and routes into them.</p>
<p>Enhancement of transferable skills</p>	<p>Improvement of maths and English and study skills at College and in partnership with Teesside University's Learning Hub</p>

Work placement/experience	A number of HE programmes require students to take part in work placement and experience activities in various settings
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Provision of IAG

IAG	<p>Pre-course advice and guidance from College's Student Services department</p> <p>Individual tutorials</p> <p>UCAS application advice and guidance</p> <p>HE funding advice and guidance</p> <p>Information for employers</p>
Support	Disability and technological support in partnership with Teesside University Disability Services

Assessment of College widening participation performance

Many of the activities identified above have been put into place to improve access and participation in HE. There have been a number of successful initiatives, as described below.

Level 3 to HE progression

The College was involved in the HEadstart initiative with Teesside University, now unfortunately discontinued owing to lack of funding. This was aimed at improving progression for young people from Level 3 programmes to HE by allowing students to take a HE module while in the second year of their Level 3 course. The module and related visits to the university gave the students relevant HE experience and credits toward subsequent HE courses. The project ran for several years and all second year students on all Level 3 courses in the College took part leading to improvement in the number of students progressing to full-time HE. Although the HEadstart programme is no longer running, the College continues to participate in the Teesside University Passport scheme which gives support to Level 3 students in choosing HE courses, making applications and preparing for University life.

Currently, the College provides bridging modules to enable students progressing from level 3 to access HNC Engineering programmes, especially enabling them to cope with the mathematical content. More than thirty students have progressed to HNC programmes in a number of engineering disciplines who

would otherwise have had to retake courses and been deterred from progressing to HE.

The College's level 3 vocational programmes have provided an alternative to A-Levels for predominantly younger learners to progress to HE.

Adult participation in HE

The local area has a significant number of adults who have not themselves, nor have their families, participated in HE. The College has put into place a range of Access to HE courses to enable adults to progress to HE. Traditionally these have been in health and humanities with a significant number of students progressing to degree level courses. More recently, they have been supplemented with courses in science, engineering, business and ICT and counselling. The College recognises that not all adults are ready for a full Access to HE course and is offering Pre-Access courses at Level 2 to give students the transferable skills, including English and maths, to ultimately progress to HE.

Some adult learners are deterred from going to university through lack of confidence. By offering part-time courses at their local college and a new full-time HE programme in Adult Social Care the College has given less confident learners who may not have gone to university a route to HE that enables them to stay local to family and support.

The College will monitor the new initiatives to assess their impact on adult progression and success.

Advice, guidance and support

The College has a clear strategy for publishing information on its HE provision and for making this information as clear and accessible as possible for all prospective students. The primary approach is web-based through the College website. The website has undergone an update recently with the College providing focused routes for prospective students to explore the College offering, including a route for HE. The website provides user friendly information and a welcoming image to prospective students. It leads the learner to a range of course information, including web-based material with guidance on student support and financial matters, downloadable course information sheets providing a summary of programme content, entry requirements and key practical facts, and links to the relevant pages of the Teesside University website where students can examine KIS information and make their on-line application.

The College's Student Services department offers advice and guidance to all prospective students on HE applications, enrolment and student finance matters. Specific support is offered to Level 3 students (young people and adults) in making their UCAS applications, improving the student's chances of acceptance to HE by improving the quality of their applications, especially personal statements.

The College has worked closely with Teesside University's Disability Service and has been able to provide a range of support for students with disabilities such as dyslexia, providing them with classroom support and the use of lap top computers and software to aid them in their studies.

Collaboration with partners

The College works closely with TVHEBP college partners to provide a flexible approach to offering courses in locations that are accessible to people across the Tees Valley area. We work with employers to promote the progression of students to part-time HE, especially in the engineering disciplines.

Students on a number of courses are given the opportunity for work placement with local employer partners to improve their skills and improve their prospects for progression to further study or employment. We work with international employers to provide access to HE courses, especially in engineering, for their employees.

The HE Experience

While promoting the College's approach as a local HE provider for local people, we and key partners have invested in a dedicated HE Centre that provides a high quality learning environment specifically for our HE students incorporating classrooms, computer suites, quiet study area and a lecture theatre. From student feedback we know that students like the HE facilities, and are particularly complimentary about the HE Centre. They "*feel special*" and notice a big difference in the maturity of students compared to the main FE College. The HE Centre has a quiet and professional atmosphere that is very conducive to work.

Summary

Redcar and Cleveland College is committed to removing barriers to Higher Education to allow anyone with the necessary ability to take part in an educational experience that will hopefully improve their prospects of employment and promote their own self-worth. Following its Mission Statement and ethos of widening participation the College has implemented a number of activities to improve access and participation. We work closely with students and partners to provide opportunities and give support to our prospective and enrolled HE students so that they can participate in their studies to the fullest.