



Higher Education Access and Participation Statement

Herefordshire and Ludlow College is committed to meeting local and regional needs to widen participation in higher education (HE) by under-represented groups. We acknowledge that increasing access to higher education is particularly important given that the percentage of the population with higher qualifications (Level 4 and above) in Herefordshire is below the national average (31.9% versus 38.2%) and we understand this contributes to skills gaps within the 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 out clear criteria for entry to higher education programmes, the college welcomes applications from students with non-traditional backgrounds and values work-related experience.

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. This is supplemented by a higher education prospectus. 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 on the College website where students can examine related information and make their on-line application. Higher education staff are present at all college open days, which is particularly important since potential students require advice about HE opportunities and entry criteria.

As part of the admissions process, the College provides comprehensive information, advice and guidance. The College's Student Hub offers advice and guidance to all prospective students on higher education 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 higher education by enhancing the quality of their applications, especially personal statements. The majority of higher education applicants are interviewed to assess their suitability for higher level studies and the programme of study as well as to identify students' support needs, including study skills support.

The College has an excellent track record of providing fair access to higher education. The POLAR classification considers the likelihood of young people participating in HE across the UK and how this varies by area. POLAR is used to inform targeting, and support

analysis, of widening participation activities. The classification classifies local areas into five groups, based on the proportion of 18 year olds who enter higher education aged 18 or 19. These groups range from quintile 1 areas, with the lowest young participation (most disadvantaged), up to quintile 5 areas with the highest rates (most advantaged). According to POLAR3 2017 data, 14% of Herefordshire and Ludlow's higher education students are domiciled in quintile 1, 29% in quintile 2 and 14% in quintile 3. Therefore 57% of the College's higher education students are from low participation (1-3) neighbourhoods. According to the Teacher Effectiveness Framework (TEF) year three metrics, 26% of all higher education students are male and 74% female. 11% have a declared disability, 38% are over the age of 30 and 71% are recruited locally.

The recently created Hereford University Centre, jointly funded by Herefordshire and Ludlow College and the University of Worcester, aims to promote aspiration locally and improve the participation in higher education. The vision is to:

- Become a vibrant centre for encouraging aspiration and increasing knowledge about higher education.
- Encourage increased participation in higher education, particularly by individuals who previously might otherwise not have considered higher education.
- Contribute to Herefordshire's vibrant educational and cultural hub, centred on Folly Lane.
- Create a highly visible manifestation of the long-established, successful partnership work between Herefordshire and Ludlow College and the University of Worcester, to promote and provide higher education.

Herefordshire and Ludlow College is a participant in the local HEFCE-funded National Collaborative Outreach Programme, aimed at supporting the most disadvantaged young people in England to progress into higher education. Herefordshire and Ludlow College engages in outreach work to engage disadvantaged and under-represented groups at information events, education and training. The college also works closely with other higher education providers through a variety of activities and programmes in targeted local schools to raise aspiration where higher education participation is low and/or lower than expected based on GCSE-level attainment.

The College is committed to removing barriers to allow anyone with the necessary ability to take part in higher education to improve their employment prospects, self-confidence and self-worth. The College works closely with students and external partners to provide opportunities and give support to our prospective and enrolled higher education students so they can participate fully in their studies and achieve success.