



OFFA Access Agreement 2017-18

v1.1

Phil Nickisson,
Assistant Principal – Higher Education



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Background

The Manchester College is the largest FE college in the UK and has developed a range of innovative HE provision to build on this FE offer. This helps provide opportunities for learners who wouldn't normally progress into HE. To this end, the college already has well established widening participation strategies, to make HE accessible to learners locally, regionally and nationally from a diverse range of backgrounds.

The HE provision within college already has a strong widening participation cohort, 56% of its Higher Education students being from low participation neighbourhoods. This makes the college a strong player within the widening participation agenda.

This agreement seeks to build on this reputation and experience to ensure that learners from a widening participation background have access to a high quality, diverse curriculum offer which reflects the needs of both learners and the labour market, whilst providing value for money to learners and enhanced outreach and support.

Fees, student numbers and income

For new entrants entering HE provision in the college in 2017-18, the standard fee within the college will be no more than £7,000 for the academic year for a **full time** course, with the following exceptions:

- For students entering the BA Hons courses within the Arden School of Theatre, the tuition fee will be up to £8900 for new entrants in 2017-18.
- The FD and BA top-up TV & Film Production courses will also charge higher fees up to £8,500 for new entrants.

- The Photography Foundation Degree will also charge higher fees up to £7,500 for new entrants.
- The Make-up Artistry Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) programmes require the students to procure materials to support their programme. This means that new entrants will be charged up to £7,500

The higher fees for these courses are necessitated by the high cost of this provision, including the practical, vocational and academic elements of the provision.

The standard fee for *part time* students who are new entrants to HE provision within the college in 2017-18 will be no more than £4,625 for the academic year.

It is envisaged that the fees for all HE provision within the college will increase year on year, in line with increases in the cost of provision and with Government and funding body guidance, which is based on the RPI-X index.

Access and student success measures

The Manchester College has continually improved widening participation and made higher education more accessible to students from a diverse range of backgrounds. This supports the college's aim of supporting vocationally relevant life-long learning in the City of Manchester, regionally and nationally.

The Manchester College is an active participant in the national network for Collaborative outreach. Members of staff serve on the Steering group and the operational groups to promote higher education to local schools, 6th form colleges and community groups. It is envisaged that this will assist the college in recruiting 'hard to reach' students who would not normally attend higher education.

We are providing excellent student support to our diverse student body to continue to improve our student retention. Our student profile has a much higher than average proportion of students from disadvantage backgrounds. The students are known to require extra support than those of a typical university intake and in 2017-18 the College intends to spend £250,000 on OFFA-countable financial support and access, success and progression activities'

From the 2010-11 benchmark data collated by HEFCE, the college could already be seen to have a high level of young learners from low participation neighbourhoods, with 21.4% of the young entrants to HE coming from this background, as opposed to an adjusted sector norm of 17.8%*.

The college has continued to grow its HE provision and also its students from a widening participation background since this benchmark data, with 25% of young entrants currently being from low participation neighbourhoods**.

For mature students, the profile of entrants coming from low participation backgrounds is more significant, with college data showing 63% of mature HE students within the college being from low participation neighbourhoods.

Other indicators of widening participation also indicate that the college is exceeding its own previously set targets as well as out-performing the sector. For example in 2013-14, 11% of the HE student population within the college indicated that they had a learning difficulty and 10% of the HE student population indicated that they had a disability.

*** "Widening participation and non-continuation indicators for further education colleges: Overview of trends" HEFCE, September 2013**

****College analysis of HE enrolment data 2012-13**

Not only does the college continue to attract students from widening participation backgrounds, but it also retains these students and supports them to achieve their aspirations of a higher education qualification. This in turn contributes to the up-skilling of primarily the City of Manchester and wider Greater Manchester geographical areas.

Through engaging with local schools and promoting further and higher education from year 8 onwards within these schools, the college has successfully embedded a culture of aspiration and achievement in a generation of young learners within the Greater Manchester area. The higher education curriculum offer within the college builds upon the success of the associated further education vocational education on offer

within the institution and provides pathways for vocational learners into higher education from entry level and level 1 through to level 5 and 6 within the QCF.

Whilst the college is already in a strong position with regards to widening participation and an inclusive offer, this is something which has been worked at for a number of years and cannot be taken for granted. To this end, the college is committed to the following activities in 2017-18:

1. Work with Manchester secondary schools

Through working partnerships with Manchester secondary schools, the college will raise awareness and expectations of young people within the city about progression into the college and how this can lead to progression onto HE courses within the college **and** elsewhere, encouraging young people to 'aim higher'. The Schools liaison team have regular meeting with Manchester Schools and attend assemblies to promote Higher Education. Schools are also invited in to attend Open Days and the 'Manchester College Skills Event' held in Central Manchester showcases all of the Colleges curriculum areas and the many skills and attributes that students can gain whilst studying a HE programme at the college. In particular there has been more promotional activity to support an increase the number of males entering into Higher Education.

The Manchester College is committed to working in partnership with other HE providers to raise aspirations to HE. The Manchester College is part of Greater Manchester Higher, one of the HEFCE-funded National Networks for Collaborative Outreach, which we have sustained beyond the lifetime of the HEFEC funding. Through this Network we will continue to promote our existing outreach activities and contribute to the development of a collaborative programme of HE awareness-

raising activities for state schools in Greater Manchester. We will use the Network as an opportunity to share best practice, grow the evidence base for what works and identify and reduce cold spots within our region.

2. Targeted promotion campaigns

Alongside the general college marketing campaigns, there will be focused campaigns for the college's HE provision in areas of the city that traditionally have low participation rates in HE. These will show the benefits of studying to HE level within the college, including increased employability, and use examples of students from those communities who have succeeded with their HE qualifications through TMC. Schools and all applicants to college are invited to attend the annual 'Manchester College Skills Event' held in Central Manchester. The Skills Event showcases all of the Colleges' curriculum areas, giving access to HE Staff and allowing students to have hands on experiences of the many skills and attributes they can gain whilst studying a HE programme at the college.

3. Life-long learning within the college

The college offers a wide range of further education courses, and work is taking place to make sure the HE provision links to this (wherever possible) to allow students to continue studying in an environment they are familiar with and to encourage "life-long learning" within the college. Also, work is taking place to ensure the FE offer matches the HE offer and there is strong progression from FE to HE within the college.

4. Internal progression activities within the college

Activities will take place with FE learners to ensure they are aware of the HE options available within the college as well as elsewhere within

the area-nationally, to encourage FE learners to progress to HE and to see the college's HE provision as a viable option, where this is appropriate. Higher Education tutors visit all of their relevant FE feeder courses to demonstrate the exciting range of courses students can progress on to. Personal Tutors hold specific tutorial sessions that promote Higher Education and promote the benefits of studying Higher Education.

5. Enhanced on-programme academic, pastoral and study support

The college offers all HE learners strong support, both academically and pastorally, but it is recognized that students from widening participation backgrounds may require higher level support. The college is committed to offering enhanced support to students from a WP background to help 'level the playing field' and give them an equal chance of academic success.

6. Tailored exit guidance for students on completion of their HE qualifications

Progression from the HE course into either a top-up degree or into employment increases the benefit of study to our HE students. Tailored progression information, advice and guidance will be available to help HE students make the transition into either employment or further study.

Many areas of Manchester have low participation rates in HE, as demonstrated in POLAR2 and POLAR3 analysis. As the nature of HE participation is changing, the college wants to encourage more local students who would not naturally consider HE as an option that they can progress into highly vocational HE within the college and access HE provision that is more

relevant to their career aspirations. This in turn will help reduce the barriers to progression many local residents face

In addition, students from a WP background are financially risk averse, and therefore the increase in tuition fees across the sector and within the college would prevent these students from considering Higher Education as a viable option. Consequently, we have taken the decision to continue the spend on outreach to communicate the benefits of studying Higher Education and reduce the impact of the nationwide change in fees to students in the Greater Manchester area.

Student success has been at the forefront of college priorities with staff, student mentors and personal tutors all working hard to ensure students achieve. In 14-15 the college had an overall retention rate of 82% and an achievement rate of 84%.

Maximising success is a key college priority for HE and analysis of achievement has shown that there was a fall in achievement of over 20% in one Curriculum area. Analysis illustrated that this was due to a change in 4 out of the 5 members of staff in this area and strategies have been put in place to address this.

As an FE College, we take a whole institution and learner journey approach. Therefore we will increase our analysis of our FE students to ensure early, appropriate advice and guidance is provided to support HE progression at The Manchester College.

The Manchester College is committed to working in partnership with other HE providers to raise aspirations to HE. The college is part of Greater Manchester Higher, one of the HEFCE-funded National Networks for Collaborative Outreach, which we have sustained beyond the lifetime of the HEFEC funding.

Through this Network we will continue to promote our existing outreach activities and contribute to the development of a collaborative programme of HE awareness-raising activities for state schools in Greater Manchester. We will use the Network as an opportunity to share best practice, grow the evidence base for what works and identify and reduce cold spots within our region.

Financial support to students

The Manchester College will provide £25,000 to support students via hardship funds. Where students suffer unforeseen hardship the college will support students whilst hardship funds are available. Subject to the availability of hardship funds students will apply to the fund for support with the necessary evidence required to support the claim.

The Hardship Fund is monitored and reviewed annually to ensure it is providing the support that students require. The recent review of the fund introduced a mechanism of, where possible, paying the funds directly to third parties or providing vouchers/passes to ensure students received the support they required.

Targets and milestones

See table 7a and 7b of Annex B

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

The compliance to this agreement will be monitored through the monthly HE Management meetings, where all appropriate curriculum and support areas are represented, along with the HE curriculum teams and quality

assurance managers. Student representatives will also be invited to attend part of the HE Management meetings, including this agenda item.

A review of outreach activities, the HE student profile, retention data and spend on these essential parts of the OFFA agreement will form a standard agenda item at these meetings.

During the on-going management reviews of HE within each curriculum area, outreach activities, widening participation, the student profile and retention will be embedded parts of the review, which each curriculum area will be expected to provide on-going data and analysis about. Should individual curriculum areas be identified as not meeting the requirements and targets as identified under this agreement, remedial action will be taken under the management review process.

Fee arrangements are approved by the Governing Body and HE Committee have oversight on behalf of Governors. We have HE student representation on the Governing Body.

The associated costs of this monitoring are built into existing structures. Fees, bursaries and resources are evaluated each year by the principalship team informed by recruitment, market research and student feedback and this shapes policy decisions. This is then approved by the Governing Body and is incorporated into operation plans through the business planning process.

Equality & Diversity

The main emphasis of this agreement is to encourage participation in Higher Education from vocational students from a background where HE is not the expected progression route. This should serve to have a positive

impact on the Equality & Diversity of the HE cohort at The Manchester College and within Manchester as a whole.

For many students targeted by this agreement, this is the only realistic opportunity to progress on to a HE level study and these students represent the diverse range of the population of Greater Manchester. Analysis of performance of students to date has shown a 4% higher achievement rate amongst students who have internal progressed from FE to HE within the college than amongst other students, proving the value of the current widening participation and Access strategy.

The college as a whole has a well-established Equality & Diversity Strategy, which encourages inclusiveness in all that we do and which eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

The general profile of all students within the college is one of diversity and the college actively seeks to promote and celebrate such diversity and to encourage those students and staff who share a protected characteristic to work with those who don't and foster an environment of tolerance and understanding.

Information to prospective students

Detailed fee and support information will be provided to SLC and UCAS, which gives details of all full time HE fees at The Manchester College. In addition, full details will be included on the HE section of the college website.

The HE Hardship fund is provided to support students financially that have unforeseen circumstances that could prevent them from studying.

Students need to apply to the fund and support can only be provided where Hardship Funds are available.

This information will be provided in a timely manner and meet the targets for publication of such data set by SLC and UCAS.

As the college will be in regular contact with applicants prior to them commencing their HE studies with the college, details of the support packages available in the college will also be included in these communications.

A student focus group will be drawn together to help develop and quality check these materials.

Consultation with students

Current HE students have been consulted on this agreement, through the staff and student boards which are an on-going process within the HE provision college. The draft proposals were presented at these boards and the students were asked for their input into the agreement as part of these meetings. Full feedback and input from students is recorded in the minutes of these meetings, and full consideration has been given to the input and feedback received from the students in this way.

The progress against the agreement will be discussed at future staff and student board meetings, with feedback and input again encouraged from all students.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: The Manchester College

Institution UKPRN: 10023139

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16a_01	Access	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Students with a declared disability or learning difficulty who access the HE provision within the college	No	2011-12	15%	19%	21%	23%	25%		
T16a_02	Access	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Students from ethnic minority groups who access the HE provision within the college	No	2011-12	29%	34%	35%	36%	37%		
T16a_03	Access	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Students from asian backgrounds who access the HE provision within the college	No	2011-12	10%	12%	13%	14%	16%		Increasing accessibility to students from an Asian ethnic background, who traditionally have lower participation rates in HE than other ethnic groups.
T16a_04	Access	Other statistic - Low-income backgrounds (please give details in the next column)	Students from neighbourhoods and wards that are recognized as being areas of low income	No	2011-12	56%	59%	59%	60%	61%		
T16a_05	Access	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Students aged over 25 who access the HE provision within the college	No	2011-12	28%	31%	31%	32%	33%		
T16a_06	Student success	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Student retention	No	2011-12	85%	87%	88%	89	90		
T16a_07	Student success	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Student Achievement	No	2011-12	79%	82%	83%	84	85		

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16b_01	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Greater Manchester Higher is a collaboration of universities and further education colleges from Greater Manchester working together to provide high quality outreach activities for local schools and colleges.	Yes	2014-15	87 secondary schools engaged with	98 secondary schools	106 secondary schools	114 secondary schools	122 secondary schools	130 secondary schools	