



OFFA Access Agreement 2015-16

v1.1

**Chris Hulme,
Student Support Service**

**Phil Nickisson,
HE Director**



Contents

- 1. Background**
- 2. Fees, student numbers and income**
- 3. Access and student success measures**
- 4. Financial support to students**
- 5. Targets and milestones**
- 6. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**
- 7. Equality & Diversity**
- 8. Information to prospective students**
- 9. Consultation with students**

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, with 42% of young learners and 63% of mature 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 2015/16, the standard fee within the college will be no more than £6,000 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 £9000 for new entrants in 2015/16.
- The FD and BA top-up TV & Film Production courses will also charge higher fees at £8,000 for new entrants.
- The Photography Foundation Degree will also charge higher fees at £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 £6,800.

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 2015/16 will be no more than £4,500 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.

From the 2009/10 benchmark data collated by HEFCE, the college could already be seen to have a high level of young learners from low participation neighbourhoods, with 35.1% of the young entrants to HE coming from this background, as opposed to an adjusted sector norm of 17.7%*.

The college has continued to grow its HE provision and also its students from a widening participation background since this benchmark data, with 42% 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 2011/12, 36% of the HE student population within the college indicated that they had a learning difficulty or disability.

* "Widening participation and non-continuation indicators for further education colleges: Overview of trends" HEFCE, August 2012

**College analysis of HE enrolment data 2012/13

The college also exceeds the sector in terms of retention of students. From the 2008/09 HEFCE benchmark data, the college retained 95.7% of its HE learners against an adjusted sector retention rate of 90.4%.

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 2015/16:

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'.

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.

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.

5. Internal progression bursaries for students from the college

Where college learners progress directly from an FE course onto a HE course the following year, funds are available to offer those from lower income backgrounds a reduction in their tuition fees. This will help remove the barrier of cost of HE for students who would not normally progress into HE.

6. 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.

7. 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.

The total spend for these activities is budgeted at £91,800 for the outreach activities , £55,000 for the activities which help support student success and £25,000 for activities related to post course progression.

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 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 spend more 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.

Financial support to students

All new entrants to the HE provision within the college will be considered for support from college bursaries

The college is budgeting £236,000 to support students from low income backgrounds to attend Higher Education within the college, picking up from the funding schemes previously offered under the National Scholarship Programme.

All successful applicants to the college will be considered for a college bursary, and to be a successful recipient, they will need to demonstrate that they have a household income of below £25,000 per annum (this information will be provided by Student Finance England through the HE Student Finance application system).

In addition to this over-arching criteria, priority will be given to:

- Those students who have previously studied further education with The Manchester College, recognizing the value of end-to-end vocational provision within one quality institution.
- Residents of Greater Manchester, as The Manchester College is primarily a regional provider of higher education and significant areas of Greater Manchester have lower than average educational achievement levels. The NSP awards will help make higher education more accessible to these individuals, thus widening participation.

Where more eligible students meet these criteria than funding is available for, the additional criteria of no family history of HE will also be considered.

The bursaries from the college will have a £2000 value to each recipient, with recipients being given the option of either a tuition fee waiver of this value or direct financial support up to this value.

Targets and milestones

See table 5a and 5b 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.

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 along with the associated direct financial support packages available. In addition, full details will be included on the HE section of the college website.

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

All 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.

Access agreement 2015-16 resource plan (submission 1st May 2014)
(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

Number	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)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Learners with a declared disability or learning difficulty who access the HE provision within the college	No	2010/11	15%	17%	17%	18%	18%	19%	
2	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Students from ethnic minority groups who access the HE provision within the college	No	2010/11	29%	30%	30%	32%	33%	34%	
3	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Students from asian backgrounds who access the HE provision within the college	No	2010/11	9%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%	Increasing accessibility to students from an Asian ethnic background, who traditionally have lower participation rates in HE than other ethnic groups.
4	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	2010/11	56%	58%	58%	59%	59%	60%	
5	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Learners aged over 25 who access the HE provision within the college	No	2010/11	28%	30%	30%	31%	31%	32%	

Notes

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around outreach and student success work (including collaborative work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access, student success and progression. These should be measurable outcomes-based targets and should focus on the number of beneficiaries reached by a particular activity/programme or the number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Number	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)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Working with learners from year 8 in secondary schools in Greater Manchester to raise expectations and widen participation in HE	No	2011/12	15000	17500	18000	18500	18500		

Optional commentary on milestones.

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.