

Cheshire College – South & West Access and Participation Statement

The College is a general further education college with three main campuses in Crewe, Ellesmere Port and Chester. Courses are offered from Entry level to level 6 in higher education and level 7 in professional courses. In 2019-20 excess of 11,000 students studied at the College. The student population is predominantly made up of full-time learners aged 16-18 years and apprentices, completing level 2 and level 3 programmes such as NVQ's, BTEC's and A Level's. The College also offers a range of full cost courses and International study opportunities. In 2019-20 there were approximately 328 higher education students (approximately 3.5% of the student population) studying a range of higher education programmes across the three campuses. In 2020-21 this has reduced to 281.

At Cheshire College – South & West, the student cohort is drawn from a wide range of ages and backgrounds. The great majority reside in the immediate local catchment area and, therefore, the College offers a higher-level learning opportunity to those who may otherwise have not considered, or be unable to access, higher education.

Being a HE student at Cheshire College – South & West

Our student cohort is varied and adds richness to the learning experience. We recognise that many of our higher education students prefer to stay and study locally and as such our HE programmes offer a progression route from level 3 study such as vocational level 3, A-level or Access to HE programmes in addition to non-traditional entry routes on some courses such as accreditation of prior learning and work experience, providing opportunities for all to access high quality learning.

For many of our progressing students, being able to access local, high quality HE courses is key to deciding if studying at a higher level is an option. There are many reasons for this such as more mature applicants who have community ties such as work or family commitments which means it is difficult to access higher education outside of the local area. Some of our higher education students have identified the need to be in a familiar learning environment where their needs are recognised and they can feel supported in their learning, perhaps because of physical or mental health conditions, difficulties and / or disabilities or simply because our some of our students recognise they are not yet ready to live independently and study away from home.

The Profile of our HE Students (2019-20 and 2020-21)

Descriptor	2019-20		2020-21	
	Number 328	%age	Number 281	%age
Gender				
Female	167	50.9%	156	55.5%
Male	161	49.1%	125	44.5%
Age Group				



18-24	173	53%	121	43%
24+	155	47%	160	57%
Ethnic Group				
Any other Asian background	1	0.3%		
Any other Mixed/ Multiple Ethnic background	2	0.6%	1	0.35%
Any other White background	3	0.9%	6	2.1%
Arab	1	0.3%	1	0.35%
Bangladeshi	1	0.3%	2	0.7%
Caribbean	1	0.3%	1	0.35%
English/ Welsh Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British	312	95.2%	263	93.7%
Indian			1	0.35%
Irish	3	0.9%	1	0.35%
NULL			1	0.35%
White and Asian	3	0.9%	3	1.05%
White and Black Caribbean	1	0.3%	1	0.35%
Disability				
No information provided	6	1.8%	4	1.4%
Disability	64	19.5%	66	23.5%
No Disability	258	78.7%	211	75.1%
Prior attainment level				
Entry Level			2	0.7%
Full level 2	121	36.9%	100	35.7%
Full level 3	120	36.6%	98	34.9%
Level 1	37	11.3%	39	13.9%
Level 4	24	7.3%	18	6.4%
Level 5	14	4.3%	12	4.2%
Level 6	6	1.8%	8	2.8%
No qualifications	3	0.9%	2	0.7%
Not known	2	0.6%	1	0.35%
Other below Level 1	1	0.3%	1	0.35%

Between 2019-20 and 2020-21 there has been a small shift in the profile of students studying HE at the College. The number of females has increased and now makes up 55% of the student body, there are also more students aged 24+ attending courses compared to the previous

year. The ethnicity of our students continues to reflect the local and regional demographic of the areas the College serves, and there has been a 4% increase in the number of students entering HE study who declare as having a disability.

The College continues to promote widening access, and this is illustrated through the number of students who enter study without traditional qualifications. In 2020-21 48.3% of students began study having previously attained a full level 3 or a level 4, 5 or 6 qualification. The remaining 51.7% bring with them other qualifications and a wealth of life and work experience which enriches the learning experience for all.

The College has built excellent working relationships with our local employers and our higher education provision has been built around meeting the needs of local businesses and commerce. We have a high number of students who work full time and are sponsored by their employer to attend College to achieve a higher-level qualification. Increasingly, our students who are released from industry attend through the higher or degree apprenticeship routes. We are responsive to our students' needs and we endeavour to build our higher education programmes to meet the needs and requirements of our prospective students. We have done this by:

- Responding to student voice and feedback by providing progression routes to higher education for students to enable study at the College beyond level 3
- Building collaborative partnerships with universities to be able to provide validated or accredited higher-level programmes such as full degree programmes or foundation degree and top-up degree programmes which are delivered at Cheshire College – South & West
- Providing opportunities for students to study higher education in a learning environment that is supportive and inclusive
- Timetabling our programmes to best suit the needs of our students, for example offering blended learning courses to enable students to be released from industry to attend and achieve or concentrating the timetable into blocks of study including some evening study to enable those with work and / or family commitments to attend higher education programmes

The National Student Survey

The National Student Survey is managed by the Office for Students on behalf of the UK Higher Education funding and regulatory bodies. The survey, aimed at final year students, provides information for prospective students and for stakeholders to support a high-quality learning experience gathering students' opinions on the quality of their courses which helps to inform prospective students' choices, provide data that supports institutions in improving the student experience and supporting public accountability.

Overall satisfaction of students at the College in 2019-20 is **80%**, and 1.5% below the national average however it should be considered that the survey schedule was within the first COVID 19 Lockdown period.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/get-the-nss-data/>

Enabling our students' success

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central core values of Cheshire College – South & West and we are proud of our higher education students and their successes.

The support services at Cheshire College – South and West contribute to the success of our higher education students - these include excellent support for students with identified disabilities and / or difficulties. Students are supported through personalised support plans, financial advice and guidance, and access to Student Advisers offering specific guidance on student finance awards for Care Leavers and Disabled Students Allowance applicants.

All of our students have access to qualified careers advisers who will provide one to one guidance interviews to assist with career planning.

Based on our student feedback we know that the cost of studying on higher education programmes is a concern for our students and we are committed to keeping our tuition fees below the base level rate. Through the Tuition Fee Policy, the College commits to ensuring that once a student enrolls and registers on a higher education programme, they will not experience a tuition fee increase for the duration of the programme. Many students come from recognised HE 'cold spots' (areas where students tend not to progress into higher education and where there is little or no provision available) and from identified disadvantaged or deprived geographical areas (POLAR quintile 1-2 geographic areas). To encourage participation in HE the college has a strategic aim to ensure fees are accessible.

For clarification:

- Full time fee equals 120 credits
- Part time fees are based on 50%/ 60 credits and may be subject to change dependent upon the credit value delivered within the year of study.

Tuition Fees for 2019-20		
	Full time (per year)	Part-time (per year)
Full time programmes validated or franchised by a partner Higher Education Institute (HEI)*	£5950	£2975
Full time Pearson HNC / HND programmes	£5600	£2800
Tuition Fees for 2020-21		
Full time programmes validated or franchised by a partner Higher Education Institute (HEI)*	£5995	£2997
Full time Pearson HNC / HND programmes	£5700	£2850

*Our partner HEIs include:

- The University of Chester
- The University of Derby

- The University of Wolverhampton

Our students on higher education programmes tell us that they receive excellent support whilst studying and this includes personal tutor support. Students also tell us that they value the teaching and learning strategies on our higher education programmes and the teaching resources provided which include resources available through our Learning Resource Centres and partner universities resource centres.

Some students may not have access to appropriate IT facilities or services at home. Our Crewe and Ellesmere Port campuses offer dedicated HE Hub facilities which are collaborative learning spaces and ensure high – spec IT resources are available to all students.

We recognise that studying at a higher level can be challenging and we seek to prepare students by offering all applicants to our higher education programmes a pre-enrolment interview with the course team leader who can provide a detailed overview of the course and expectations. We also provide a meaningful induction to higher education students including a study skills package to enable a smooth transition to study.

The importance of Student Voice

Our higher education students are our key stakeholders, and we recognise the importance of student feedback; every higher education course and year group is asked to nominate and elect a course representative. Course representatives will receive training to undertake the role and they will meet with the course team on a termly basis to provide feedback to the course team and any collaborative partner university link tutor. Higher Education students are also represented at the Corporate Board level with the annual nomination and election of an HE Student Governor, the governor works with the Student Senate to provide a conduit for the HE student voice on matters relating to the student body.

There is a nominated HE Link Governor who conducts an annual student focus group with higher education students; all HE students are welcome to participate in the focus group.

We welcome student representatives to sit on our higher education boards which meet at regular intervals throughout the year.

Information about Student Voice is available on the College's HE website, we also include information about Student Voice in the student induction and welcome talk. This is followed up in the course introduction sessions led by Course Team Leaders and information is also included in programme handbooks.

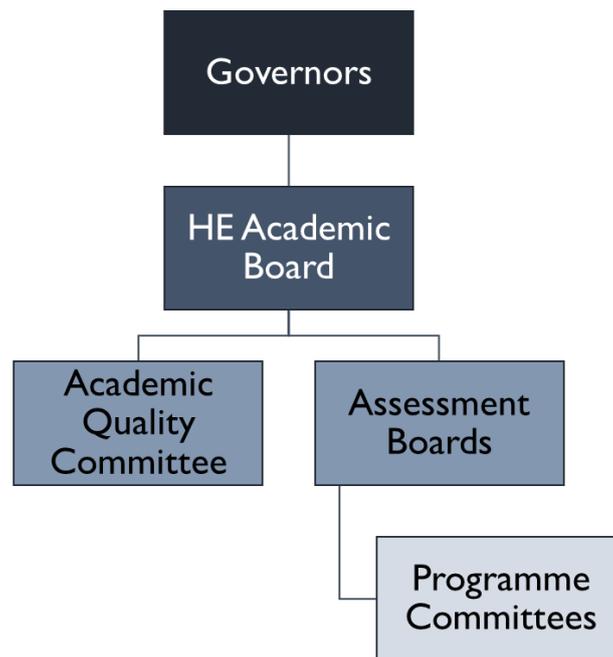
Monitoring and evaluation

Student progress is monitored at programme level by the Course Team Leader and personal tutor. The Dean of Higher Education also has oversight of all the HE programmes and receives regular reports on student progress and attendance and participation.

Students have access to their progress records as teaching staff record progress on internal College systems such as MarkBook available to students through MyDay and ProPortal or if the programme is linked to a partner HEI then progress is recorded through the equivalent

university systems. The College's Assessment Board has formal oversight of student progress. The Assessment Board meets at the end of term one to note progress of all students and at the end of the summer term to formally approve all grades and progression to the next stage of study.

The College has an established deliberative structure for its HE provision ensuring institutional oversight and effective governance. The structure is depicted below.



In addition to the internal monitoring and evaluation described above the College is subject to external quality monitoring processes and engages actively in these. Examples include:

- Meeting the requirements for registration with the Office for Students
- Quality and Standards Review (Monitoring and Intervention) by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
- Partner HEI annual monitoring
- Partner HEI validation and partnership review cycles
- Pearson Annual Review activities
- External moderation and Examiners

The College actively engages in all quality assurance and review processes, the findings of which inform improvement planning.