

Gloucestershire College 10002696

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29] access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Gloucestershire College at https://www.gloscol.ac.uk/media/kkwyj1unn/access-and-participation-plan-2025_2029.pdf

Key points

Our Access and Participation Plan underpins our strategy to support all our HE learners to access and succeed in higher education. Our course entry criteria and approach to HE in FE encourages those with lower grades, mature learners without traditional qualifications and those who may not consider a university experience as being 'for them'.

The college has a significant proportion of HE learners who are from underrepresented groups/ disadvantaged backgrounds, but we aim to increase the number of learners who have been entitled to free school meals enrolling onto HE courses.

Whilst our continuation (retention) rates are good the following students are less likely to be retained; a) those eligible for free school meals, b) those from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds (using the Index of Multiple Deprivation measure¹), c) learners with a declared disability and d) young learners (under 21)

Whilst our achievement rates are good, they are slightly lower for; a) learners from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds (using the IMD measure) and b) mature learners (aged 21 or over at outset of their course)

See pages 1-4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

See page 59 of the access and participation plan for more information.

At Gloucestershire College the maximum fees charged are:

- £7700 for full time foundation degrees and postgraduate teacher training
- £7400 for full time students
- £3850 for part time postgraduate teacher training students
- £3700 for part time students

You can see the fees by course on the Gloucestershire College Website:

<https://www.gloscol.ac.uk/university-level/he-courses/>

Financial help available

Eligible learners can apply for:

Gloucestershire low-income household bursary

£500 non-repayable annual bursary where eligibility is a household income is below £25k

¹ The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) datasets are small area measures of relative deprivation across each of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom. Areas are ranked from the most deprived area (rank 1) to the least deprived area.

Care leaver bursary

£1000 non-repayable annual bursary for care leavers (eligibility: care leavers)

The Student Opportunities Fund: Learners from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds can apply for support where they are experiencing additional hardship.

See pages 13-14 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Prospective and current students receive information on fees and financial support at open evenings, by email communications and from the student services team on each campus. All current HE students have information shared via the HE Learner Community Team site.

See pages 40 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas on which to focus our work.

1. Access: In terms of access to our HE provision we aim:

- To increase the percentage of learners eligible for free school meals (FSM) enrolling on fulltime HE courses from 14% to 19% by 2029.

2. Continuation: The college has high retention (continuation) rates for all HE courses, however we aim:

- To increase continuation rates of Free School Meal (FSM) learners by increasing rates from 75% to 88% by 2029.
- To eliminate the continuation gap between the most and least deprived socio-economic groups from 12ppt to 0ppt by 2029.
- To eliminate the continuation gap between those with a disability and those without from 29ppt to 0ppt by 2029.
- To increase continuation rates of young learners from 79% to 92% by 2029.

3. Completion: The college has high completion (achievement) rates for all HE courses, however we aim:

- To eliminate the completion gap between the most and least deprived socio-economic groups learners by 2029 from 3.7ppt to 0ppt.
- To eliminate the completion gap between mature and young FT learners by 2029 from 6.8ppt to 0ppt

See pages 2-4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

ACCESS: What we do/plan to do to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

The college continues to develop a range of activities that specifically target those from traditionally low participation areas and those who are eligible for free school meals, particularly by working to encourage internal progression from our further education learners.

This will be achieved through working in partnership with targeted schools, through our Uniconnect² collaboration, provision of targeted 'why HE' tutorials with our FE cohorts, financial support, parent/carers engagement and HE taster events.

CONTINUATION AND COMPLETION: This will be achieved through:

- financial support/interventions
- increased pastoral support
- enhanced study support.
- individualised support plans
- signposting to mental wellbeing support
- access to specialised support
- access to 'tech-ability'.

See pages 5-34 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

- Engage in student focus groups and via the HE Learner Community Team site
- Volunteer as a Student Representative and/or feed into your representative.
- Become an HE Student Governor
- Complete the Internal HE survey
- HE students can also provide feedback through the college's Talkback procedures.

See pages 37-38 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Our activities that support the achievement of our aims and targets are informed by research and evidence about what works for students (this research is referenced throughout the plan). The college utilises an ongoing cycle of review, evaluate/identify root causes and adapt in order to learn. We collect data and feedback to evaluate progress against our aims and targets outlined in the plan.

See pages 38-40 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

ANY IDEAS/FEEDBACK/COMMENTS RELATING TO THE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN (good practice/ things that could be improved/ ideas of things that you would like to see that would support in fulfilling our objectives) can be emailed to:

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² Uni Connect partnerships deliver collaborative approaches to support young people from underrepresented groups in Attainment raising, Strategic outreach, Targeted outreach and Signposting to higher education