

Leeds College of Building Higher Education Access and Participation Statement

Background and Context

Leeds College of Building (LCB) is a General Further Education College (GFEC) specialising in Construction and the Built Environment. The College was formed in 1960 as a Craft College and over the last 15 years has steadily grown its Higher Education (HE) provision to provide career progression and development for primarily, part-time students working within the construction industry. The College holds the following standards and accreditations: IAG Matrix Standard and Health & Safety ISO 45001. The College accommodated 6,296 students (2018/19) and in 2019/20 5381, including HE. Approximately 48% of the College's recruitment is from the Leeds area, 25% from surrounding areas in West Yorkshire such as Bradford, Wakefield, and Huddersfield and 27% covering all other areas across England.

Leeds College of Building has substantial experience of delivering high quality and supportive higher education provision which meets local employer and community needs, as well as responding to and attracting recruitment from further afield. Significant steps have been made to ensure support is provided to attract under-represented applicants, aid student's progression ability, and increase widening participation in higher education.

One of the aims within the 2020/21 strategic framework is to ensure there are no significant differences (within 4%) between performance of different groups of students, e.g. all ages / gender / BAME / LLDD / disadvantaged.

The mission of Leeds College of Building is "Inspiring lives and building futures" and we have a common set of values across everything we do, which we expect all staff and students to embrace:

- Respectful: to value diversity, care for and support each other and the environment
- Aspirational: to achieve excellence in all we do
- Accountable: to be responsible for our actions
- Inspirational: to be creative and innovative in all we do
- Enjoyable: to have fun and succeed

Transparency of fee structure and marketing

LCB offers outstanding value for money for full time level 4 and 5 undergraduates with fees less than half those at Higher Education Institutions with comparable degree level study (2020-21 Full Time Level 4 HNC year 1 fee = £ 4480).

No awarding body (BTEC Pearson) fees are charged to full time students accessing student loans through the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Clear information about HE fees at LCB, and the financial assistance available to students is widely available. This is accessible via the following methods:

- The College HE Prospectus
- Student Services (student welfare and financial support)
- Office for Student (OfS) activities and events
- College "Open Days" and promotional events
- The College website

Objectives

To strengthen and extend support with widening participation and access to higher education LCB has set out the following objectives:

- Increase and widen participation rates in HE, Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships including:
 - Students with vocational learning experiences and qualifications
 - Female students and students from ethnic groups
 - Students with disabilities or learning difficulties
 - Students requiring full-time HE provision
 - Broadening the offer of HE provision to meet employer / student demand
 - Students from deprived wards (nationally)
 - Utilising the OfS Student Monitoring/Opportunity Funding and National Scholarship Funds to effectively engage and support disadvantaged students, retention strategies and widening participation
- Sustain and extend partnerships with schools, employers, professional bodies, local authorities, and awarding bodies thereby enabling additional opportunities, enhanced retention, completions and further progression in HE and success in the workplace.
- Develop existing outreach programmes and partnerships with schools to further explore ways of collaboratively delivering extensive career advice and guidance across the spectrum of built environment and engineering professions.
- Provide comprehensive and robust data to enable a full analysis of retention, progression, completion, and destination of underrepresented groups.
- Further extend clear communications through marketing and students services within the admissions and on-programme stages relating to the support offered to full time students and any disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

Access and Participation

Students have access to information, advice and guidance on application and have the opportunity to come and discuss the course offer with a tutor. A fair and effective admissions process ensures clear opportunities for students from all backgrounds and this is acknowledged with the recent certification for Matrix accreditation reinforcing the quality of the Student Services Department, which supports students through recruitment, admissions, finance, enrichment, information, advice, and guidance. Tutorial practice has now been consistently adopted across higher education, building upon the good practice of one to one tutorials and students value these opportunities to check progress and obtain valuable formative feedback.

A whole College approach can be seen through the Higher Education Strategic Forum with Student representatives form part of this forum and are at the heart of the agenda at all meetings. Managers from LCB support teams across the College report each term to confirm how they are making an impact on the student experience and how their services within the College are clearly fulfilling the needs of students. These areas include Equality and Inclusion, Examinations, Quality Management, Marketing, Library and Learning Resources, Finance for assistance with student loans and Student Services for admissions, pastoral care and support, with HE teaching staff also included in the attendees.

Employability

Skills development, presentations, team working, problem solving and hands-on practical elements of the course are all developed through a series of assessment activities and classroom, workshop, and field sessions. These are all intrinsic within a variety of sessions at college applied to real working tasks linked to industry situations and scenarios. Outstanding partnership working and employer engagement has continued to flourish enabling significant progression in employment for LCB HE students with the flagship Technician Apprenticeship Consortium having two significant employer advisory boards chaired by employer

representatives with student representation on both advisory boards. Professional body inclusion and collaboration from the built environment institutions is particularly strong with CIHT, ICE, RICS, CIBSE, CIOB, CABE, CICES and BIFM all enhancing the student experience through professional support, ethics, and industry links together with additional awards, scholarships and membership.

Across the sustainable built environment higher level programmes as an example there are at least thirteen career progression and degree pathways identified for students. These opportunities include architectural technology, health and safety management, building services engineering, project management, digital engineering, building surveying, quantity surveying, civil engineering, site management, contracts management, site engineering, environment management, structural engineering and estimating with several of these being relevant to each selected pathway. This offers versatility and flexibility for students and opportunities to link with potential employers and universities in their recruitment where students do not need to be immediately pigeon-holed to one career route.

Employment opportunities are publicised within the College with tutors supporting students with a host of employability skills to help them present professionally to prospective companies and enabling them to achieve their goals.

Collaboration

Leeds College of Building (LCB) is committed to the Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) partnership, an established consortium of twelve HE providers in West Yorkshire (comprising FE colleges with HE provision, and universities). The partner members represent a diverse range of institutions offering a vast array of different courses, subjects, qualifications and modes of study. We are also committed to the Uni-Connect programme (previously NCOP) secured by Go Higher West Yorkshire.

Through Uni-Connect, the College is expanding its offer of support to students from these schools,

and is exploring bespoke initiatives to ensure access, progression, and retention, such as:

- A bespoke programme of activities for school's Engineering, Design & Technology and Construction departments to aid progression to LCB
- Support from a Personal Advisor for students identified by the school as needing additional help and support
- Mentoring from a current LCB student to aid transition from school to college
- Talks from current Student Ambassadors
- Taster days and workshops
- An intensive week of taster activities
- Assemblies and school visits
- Site visits
- Debating challenges
- Competitions