

Access and Participation Statement

The progression rate to Higher Education for the young people of Hastings and Rother is one of the lowest in East Sussex. Hastings is ranked as the second most deprived ward in East Sussex and the nineteenth most deprived in the UK. The 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked Hastings overall level of deprivation as one of the worst in the South East and 19th of the 326 Local Authorities for local concentrations of multiple deprivation dropping from 32nd most deprived in 2007. There are also distinct pockets of deprivation across Rother (ranked 139 overall) with areas of Sidley in the top 10% most deprived in the country and further areas of Bexhill and Rye in the top 20% most deprived. 9 out of 12 LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) Castle, Central St Leonards and Gensing wards are ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally.

Our Access Agreement for 2018-19 pays careful consideration to the local demographic in East Sussex. Through this agreement the College seeks to ensure that its vocational provision in HE is maintained at the highest standards.

Higher Education is an integral part of the work of the College and is carried out with the following aims:

- To widen participation so that more students and non-traditional students in the East Sussex area can access Higher Education.
- To provide a supportive progression route to Higher Education for those without the formal entry requirements or who have non-traditional qualifications.
- To offer opportunities for progression from within the college for those learners completing level 3 programmes of study.
- To provide blended and flexible learning including e-learning, off site, part-time and top-up provision to ensure the college engages with local and regional employers.
- To provide flexible HE that is responsive to local employer requirements,

The strategies we put in place to achieve these aims are as follows:

- The College maintains low cost entry points to higher education so that the local community and employers have access to affordable higher education.
- The College provides opportunities for students to enter higher education with lower tariff point scores than would normally gain them access to university.
- Where mature students (aged 25 and over) do not meet conventional tariff requirements, work experience (APL) is considered instead.
- The College operates a fair admissions policy with clear entry criteria for its programmes/ courses.

- The College encourages progression from Level 3 through information sessions about internal courses and support through the admissions process.
- The College employs an HE Mentor who supports students that are struggling on the course and offers students study skills support.
- The College provides a limited number of means-tested cash bursary of up to £500 for students with an income of below £25,000 per year, and up to £250 for those with an income between £25,00 and £42600. This can be applied for once students are enrolled on their course and is allocated on a first-come first-serve basis.
- A Hardship Fund is in place support any student in dire financial need. All eligibility will be based on an assessment of household income and outgoings. Normally to be eligible to apply for hardship award the applicants will have a residual income of under £25,000 per annum.
- The College supports a range of other outreach activities for adults to encourage a greater number of people from NS-SEC and LPN backgrounds to apply and study with us.
- Our team of employer engagement staff provide information on HE progression routes and courses to employees in the local area