

Leeds City College

UKPRN 10024962

Access Agreement – September 2015 – June 2016

1. Introduction

Leeds City College has approximately 40,000 students. Of these further education and higher education students, 14% are full time and 86% part time students. BME students account for 33% of the total and 10% of this total number are students who have declared disabilities or learning difficulties. Overall, 50% of the students have been identified as meeting widening participation 'ward uplift' criteria.

As a large, diverse organisation, the Leeds City College Group provides benefits to the region, employers, employees, students and the community. Particular advantages for learners are being gained through bringing together higher and further education opportunities in a unique way. The College is well placed to offer a vocational higher education (HE) curriculum that articulates well with its further education (FE) curriculum and in the future this will be a positive attribute in enabling progression from Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships and diplomas for 14-19 year olds and increasing progression through HE. Our widening participation strategy promotes awareness and raises aspirations of all learners to support their progress into and through higher education.

The mission of the College is:

'To be an exceptional College providing life changing education, skills and experiences for individuals, businesses and communities'.

The College's current strategy for HE and its widening participation strategic assessment outline objectives, outcomes and actions relating to widening participation.

Leeds City College has a wholly owned subsidiary, Leeds College of Music (LCoM), which also offers higher and further education courses. LCoM is a progressive Conservatoire, renowned for the quality, distinctiveness and relevance of its provision. LCoM is very specialised and has a different target market from LCC. Due to this difference each component of the Leeds City College group has very different widening participation aims and access measures and targets.

2. Assessment of Performance

Leeds City College has traditionally been very strong regarding widening participation and aims to continue offering flexible delivery and appropriate support to give students from all backgrounds and circumstances the opportunity to succeed at HE level. The table below demonstrates the college's achievements in previously targeted areas:

| | Target 2012/13 | Actual 2012/13 |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Mature students | 50% | 60% |
| Student success | 85% | 91% |

3. Fee Limits

This agreement applies to all courses for which Leeds City College currently receives funding or a student number allocation directly from the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The fee charges for indirectly funded provision offered at the College will be determined by the University providing the funding.

Students included within this agreement:

Full-time students who are eligible to pay EU tuition fees are included within this agreement.

Part time students and non-EU students recruited to provision offered at Leeds City College are subject to fees determined by the College, which are reviewed annually by the College Board of Governors.

This access agreement is reviewed annually by the College Executive Leadership Team.

In 2015-2016, the following charges will apply.

| Component | FT Home/EU undergraduate Fee | PT Home/EU undergraduate Fee |
|-----------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| LCC | £6,500 | £3250 |
| LCoM | £9,000 | n/a |

In future years we anticipate increasing this fee in line with the annual increase set by the Government each year.

The higher level fee will not apply to current students on programmes commencing before 1 September 2015.

For expected student numbers see Annex B

4. Access and Student Success Measures

The additional fee income over the period of the income will be used to:

- Provide a bursary for students with household income levels of less than £25,000
- Provide direct support for students during their study at the College (e.g. study skills such as academic writing, enterprise skills, pastoral)
- Provide support for Level 3 students to prepare them for entering HE by providing tuition in academic skills such as referencing, research, academic writing and independent study) See S5 for more details

- Provide opportunities for those studying an apprenticeship to enter HE to equip the student with the necessary academic skills to succeed in HE
- Develop progression agreements with local schools and other providers to promote access to HE particularly in disadvantaged areas

LCoM specific

- Support FE to HE progression within LCoM, providing free individual instrumental tuition and/or music theory classes to FE students from lower income households who have the potential to reach the required entry standard for HE music.
- Provide an applicants' bursary, refunding audition fees and travel costs for Home applicants who meet specific income-related criteria to ensure that no applicant is deterred on the grounds of cost.
- Enhance employability of our students through enterprise activities and opportunities within and outside the HE curriculum.

| | Proportion of additional fee income | Expenditure 2015/16 |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Financial support for undergraduate students | 30% | £660,500 |
| Outreach activity | 6.6% | £141,500 |
| Total expenditure | 39.4% | £802,000 |

Estimates for 2016/17 onwards are given in Annex B

5. Additional access measures

• **Outreach**

In addition to our current outreach work for HE students, we have developed a 'Progression to HE' course for current Level 3 students. This will be delivered as part of the tutorial programme for L3 students and will focus on developing academic skills in preparation for entry into HE. This will not only benefit students progressing onto LCC HE courses but all students wishing to progress to HE at other institutions. The course will include the development of research skills and independent learning skills as preparation for the HE system. This can also be delivered in local schools by school teaching staff with input from relevant college staff where appropriate. Progression Officers and the School Liaison team will promote LCC HE opportunities to both internal students and prospective students from local schools.

It is acknowledged that the primary and secondary education systems do not always prepare young people for application to a conservatoire, and we recognise that identifying students with potential must begin at a young age. Our outreach activities support a long-term commitment to engaging with young people from a variety of backgrounds to aspire to and reach the standard

required to access HE music courses. Much of our outreach work is collaborative, through local and regional partnerships, both working with young people and providing opportunities for HE students to enhance their employability skills.

Activities and partnerships include:

- Saturday Music School. We provide bursaries for lower-income students to participate in SMS, a two-year programme of musical training to talented musicians aged 10-17, many of whom aspire to HE.
- Leeds Cathedral Choir School partnership, seeking to raise aspiration and attainment amongst children in one of the most underprivileged areas of the city
- National Centre for Early Music partnership, working with music services and schools in the Yorkshire and Humber region to provide free music theory tuition
- Community Music Project; all undergraduate students can elect to study a Community Music module with placement, equipping them with the skills to place their practice in a wider context and delivering longer-term benefits to the wider community. Many projects are focussed on young people.

- **Collaborative Outreach Measures**

Leeds City College is committed to the Higher Education Access Rewarding Transforming (HEART) partnership established by twelve HE providers in West Yorkshire (FE Colleges providing HE, HEIs and Universities).

Our Mission at HEART

We will work in partnership to improve access to, and achievement in, Higher Education to enhance individual and economic development.

During the first year of operation HEART refined the target groups for collaborative activity to focus on four key themes:

- Looked after children (LAC)/care leavers
- Learners with disabilities
- Adult learners and
- Enhanced relationships with Leeds City Region (LCR).

A new approach to engaging with LAC/Care Leavers has been developed with HEART partners working through the intermediaries engaged with this hard to reach group. A HEART led network with all West Yorkshire local authorities LAC/care leaver teams has been established, the first time that such a county wide approach has been taken. HEART will continue to work through this network of intermediaries to support shared understanding, remove silo thinking and support the target group by supporting those individuals that the LAC/care leavers turn to and trust so that they have accurate information on progression and support available and can

signpost learners to key contacts within HEART partners. All stakeholders have agreed to meet twice annually and campus coffee mornings for carers, residential care teams and key workers to learn of the support available to those in their care were delivered during 2013.

During the first year of operation partners supported a series of road shows and a campus event to support D/deaf learners (84 learners engaged). A similar approach to that taken with LAC/care leavers is being developed for working with learners with disabilities, i.e. forming a network with intermediaries: charities, agencies and advocacy services.

Adult learner recruitment is a concern within West Yorkshire as it is nationally. Plans for 2014 include open days for adults at all partners during Adult Learner Week 2014, the first such coordinated series of open days targeted at adults; support from LCR Skills Network and Employment & Skills Board in recruiting a new role of Higher Level Skills Ambassadors from the region's business leaders; enhancing networking activity with business to business networks across the region; and development of shared promotional material directed at businesses presenting the economic case for investing in employee skills at higher level.

These approaches are seen as a new model of collaborative working, aimed at connecting with learners via their trusted intermediaries. In all cases the activities are directed at improving participation in the sector as a whole rather than directly to partner institutions, and qualitative evaluation methods will be developed to monitor effectiveness.

HEART continues to be monitored carefully for effectiveness and impact by the Board (comprised of senior managers from all twelve partners and representatives from HEFCE, LCR and the Local Schools/Children's Services) and strategy and priority activities are informed and agreed by the Board.

Operational activity is overseen and guided by members of HEART planning groups (comprised of senior practitioners working in outreach/widening participation and business engagement). Continuous improvement in partnership practice is one of our four core values and we are planning shared staff development/practice sharing workshops/seminars and have agreement in principle to work collaboratively with neighbouring partnerships in York/North Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. A shared staff development event considered how best to support mature learners, especially Access to HE learners, in understanding the implications of the introduction of the 24+ Advanced Learning Loan. We have also reviewed approaches to engaging learners at an earlier age and in particular key stage 2 and 3.

- **Student retention & success**

We will continue to monitor our retention and success rates with a view to maintaining the current levels. All prospective students will have access to initial assessment & guidance together with diagnostic assessments to ensure that they are on the right course and understand the requirements of the course.

LCoM-specific retention measures

LCoM will replace the discontinued Access to Learning Fund with a hardship fund, funded by the Opportunity funding, in order to provide discretionary assistance in the form of emergency loans

and grants for priority groups, where they are at risk of discontinuing their studies or not progressing, due to hardship.

- **Financial support for students – Bursary**

LCC & LCoM will continue to offer bursaries as outlined in the table below.

| Household income | Total Bursary | Term 1 | Term 2 | Term 3 |
|--------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Less than £25,000 | £1,000 | £250 | £250 | £500 |
| £25,000 to £42,620 | £500 | £125 | £125 | £250 |

- These will be for Home or EU* students and all applicants will be equally eligible. Assessment will be based on need in line with income assessments used for applications to the Student Loan Company. We will also consider other schemes based on assessment of need. The payment of the bursary will also be subject to a minimum attendance and submission of work requirement. **The bursary entitlement is annual.**
*EU students eligible at LCC only

The rationale for the significant investment in financial support for students is in relation to the background of the LCC student population. 48% of the LCC student population come from disadvantaged postcodes. Over the past couple of years LCC has seen an increase in the number of students leaving due to financial problems and therefore feel that investment in financial support is justified. The impact of this investment will be evaluated by monitoring the performance of students in receipt of the support.

6. Targets and Milestones

In line with our current position, we will maintain our current completion rate and, as a minimum, will aim to maintain our levels of mature and part time students as shown in Annex B.

We will continue to review learner feedback and will monitor student profiles as at present.

7. Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

There are arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of this agreement through the College's Academic Board, its Executive Leadership Team and its Board of Governors.

The Dean of HE (LCC) and the Director of Curriculum and Research (LCoM) have responsibility to report and monitor compliance with the commitments made within this agreement.

The following data will be collected and used to inform future planning and any amendments to the Access Agreement:

- Internal progression rates for FE into HE

- Average household income of new entrants and payments of bursaries
- Retention and completion rates of students
- Social background of students to monitor participation by those from deprived backgrounds
- Age & profile of students to monitor WP statistics
- Number of FE students participating in free instrumental and music theory tuition (LCoM only)
- Equality & diversity

8. Provision of Information for Prospective Students

The College uses a number of methods to provide information for students about fees and the associated support. These include:

- Information on fees and support published on the College website
- An insert in all prospectuses
- Information packs prepared for all prospective students
- Information sessions held with prospective students progressing internally
- Information sessions held with prospective students from outside the College.

8. Student consultation

We have a range of measures in place for student consultation. Our student course representatives feed back into curriculum areas on a half termly basis and appropriate actions are then followed through. We operate a number of student surveys throughout the year. An annual student representatives conference is held. The Students' Union elects two members as student governors on the Leeds City College Board, at which student matters are discussed. The Students' Union President attends meetings of the Executive Leadership Team on a regular basis to raise student issues.

9. Responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010

In line with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 we have conducted an impact assessment on this agreement, to determine the potential impact of this on any learner with protected characteristics as defined by the Act.