

Access and Participation Statement

Activate Learning is an education group whose mission is;

‘Providing talent for business, transforming lives through our learning philosophy’

Our vision is ‘To achieve far reaching, progressive change and impact through learning’

Activate Learning’s Higher Education strategy is focused upon the development and delivery of high quality, vocationally relevant programmes to support internal progression, widen access and participation and meet the needs of employers.

We are committed to promoting the benefits of higher education and continuing lifelong learning for the communities we serve. This means:

- providing fair access to the higher education provision offered by our group of colleges through high quality information and professional support;
- seeking to remove all artificial barriers to students being able to access our programmes and services;
- delivering effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies which meet the needs of students and employers;
- charging tuition fees that are significantly below the university sector;
- the provision of hardship funds for students in financial difficulty.

Recruitment

Activate Learning will seek to remove all barriers to the student to enable appropriate access to its range of higher education programmes and services.

We will support a student’s application by providing:

- clear, accurate and timely information about programmes, qualifications and entry requirements;
- referral to additional advice and guidance services whenever appropriate;
- an opportunity to see the college(s) and the facilities available for the student prior to committing to a programme of study;
- opportunities to attend open events, taster sessions and information events throughout the year so that applicants get the opportunity to attend the college in advance of enrolment and discuss any potential concerns or support needs;
- scheduled interviews for those students resident in the UK who wish to be admitted to a full time or substantial part time programme of study;
- an initial English and/or Maths Assessment whenever appropriate.

The entry criteria for all higher education programmes include ‘non-standard’ options so as to encourage applications from those who have not followed a standard route or may not have UCAS tariff points.

Activate Learning will also ensure that it provides equality of opportunity to admissions and initial guidance services and acknowledges its responsibility to provide positive support to minority groups and students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

In supporting student's access to higher education, Activate Learning also meets the requirements of its awarding bodies as well as UCAS and the UKBA. In addition, practices and procedures also reflect relevant legislation and good practice by higher education organisations, including SPA (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions) and the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B, Chapter B2: *Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education*.

Activate Learning has a dedicated Higher Education Admissions Policy¹ and procedure which provides clear guidance to applicants and staff regarding the process by which applications for entry to higher education at Activate Learning are managed. The policy also includes an appeals and complaints procedure.

Activate Learning is currently working with Oxford Brookes University as part of the Higher Education Funding Council's National Collaborative Outreach Programme which aims to double the number of 'disadvantaged' students progressing to higher education by 2020.

Modes of Delivery

Programmes are designed to facilitate flexible delivery and modes of study vary in order to meet the needs of students, employers and the curriculum. This enables those in work to attend on a part time basis, for example 1 day per week. Full time delivery is also planned concentrate activities so that students are not required to attend across the entire week. This again means that students are able to work and therefore maintain an income whilst studying.

Relatively small class sizes (c. 15-20) also provide enhanced opportunities for personalised learning which supports the individual needs of students.

Induction

To aid retention and progression, and ensure students have a smooth transition into Higher Education, Activate Learning operates a dedicated HE induction programme which introduces students to various aspects of study such as academic regulations, college and university resources, welfare support, and provides the opportunity to identify any specific learning support requirements.

The induction process is also designed to ensure that all new students are successfully integrated into their new study group and that any concerns are addressed at an early stage.

Student Profile

The main focus of all higher education provision at Activate Learning is to meet the needs of industry and students through applied learning which is vocationally focused.

The student profile is diverse, partly due to the range of programmes, location and modes of study. As an example, in September 2016:

- 60% of students were over 21;
- 16% of students self-assessed as having a disability on entry;
- 37% of students had non-tariff qualifications on entry

Following government changes to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) funding in 2015, Activate Learning took the decision to provide an inclusive support service to all higher education students, regardless of whether they have a DSA or not.

¹ Higher Education Admissions Policy

We have a dedicated team of higher education support staff who provide the following support:

- Help with UCAS and Student Finance England (SFE) applications
- Interview preparation (including attendance if specific needs require)
- Pre-entry study skills support for students entering higher education
- Tailored one-to-one support – face to face or online
- Study Skills workshops
- Support for DSA applications

Activate Learning monitors data on enrolment, retention, and success under the criteria of age, ethnicity, gender and disability. This monitoring helps to ensure that no student groups are disadvantaged.

Assessment

Activate Learning also provides resources and opportunities for students with additional learning needs or other protected characteristics to successfully undertake assessment by;

- Providing a separate room if this meets the students' entitlement;
- Allowing additional time to complete assessments, e.g. 25% extra for examinations or one week for coursework;
- Providing alternative assessment methods if this meets the students' entitlement;
- The allocation of a scribe or reader if this meets the students' entitlement;
- If the student is in hospital, special arrangements can be made with the exam board for the student to take the exam at the place where they are receiving the care.
- Providing specialist equipment, for example: Screen enlarger, Dictaphones, Specialised computer hardware and software, Induction loop, Adapted furniture and Laptop computers

Monitoring and Evaluation

Activate Learning is committed to continuously developing its knowledge and understanding about the needs of particular student groups in order to:

- Develop best practice to further enhance access, retention and progression for students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those coming from non-traditional routes into higher education.
- Develop best practice to further enhance our focus on the development of employability skills by working closely with employers and students.

All Annual Programme Monitoring reports require an analysis of student intake, retention, continuation, success, satisfaction and progression which take into account the student profile. The Higher Education Academic Board receives an annual self-evaluation of student outcomes across all programmes and is therefore able to identify areas for improvement in relation to the admission, progression and success of students from particular target groups.

This Access and Participation Statement will also be reviewed annually by the HE Academic Board (which includes student representation), updated by the HE Learning Partnerships office and published by the Marketing department each year on the Group website (<https://www.activatelearning.ac.uk/study/subjects/access-to-higher-education>)
The statement will also be made available to students via their VLE.