

Truro and Penwith College

ACCESS AGREEMENT

Institution: Truro and Penwith College

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Context/Introduction

Truro & Penwith College is a Tertiary College offering a wide range of courses across all levels and all abilities.

Our mission statement is:

The purpose of the College is to provide the best possible learning experience, leading to the highest possible level of achievement by our students.

“Since its opening in 1993, Truro College students have achieved standards which are amongst the best in the country. Their results reflect their own hard work, the efforts of College staff and our high level of investment in new accommodation and resources to support learning”. (Chair of Governors Truro and Penwith College).

In March 2016 the College underwent HER with QAA and met all of the required expectations from the UK Quality Code. In February 2016 the College achieved Outstanding from Ofsted. They were the first College in the country to retain Outstanding since 2011 under the new Ofsted Framework. Both of these excellent results build on the wide range of accolades the College has achieved since its inception in 1993. The College has Investor in People and Investor in Careers status, the Training Quality Standard, and the whole college ‘matrix’ accreditation for advice and guidance which was reaccredited in March 2014. In 2015 the College received reaccreditation for ‘Investors in Diversity’. There are a range of superb new facilities and buildings that offer excellent learning resources and a high quality learning experience for students. Fal opened in 2007 as a HE and adult building and the new build at Penwith has a dedicated HE building for teaching and learning.

Truro and Penwith College draws students from a wide range of academic backgrounds with at least 78% coming from within county. 70% of the overall student body come from HEFCE Quintile areas 1, 2 and 3. In an average year circa 55% of our students are in receipt of the full maintenance grant. In 2015/16 as many as 25% declared that they have additional learning needs and 13% of these receive disabled student support. In 2015/16 Truro and Penwith

College enrolled approximately 800 full-time HE students. In terms of FE the College enrolled over 5,200 16 – 19-year-old students plus approximately 8,000 students on a range of part-time programmes.

In October 2015 449 full time students achieved higher education awards and many attended the graduation ceremony at Truro cathedral.

The co-ordinated growth of Higher Education at the College has been supported by Plymouth University (PU) and the Combined Universities of Cornwall (CUC) and more recently through the development of HN qualifications from Pearson.

Higher Education has developed by building on our strong FE provision. The College is proud of our widening participation activities and the range of students from non-traditional backgrounds and HEFCE identified Cold Spots who achieve higher education qualifications as a result of excellent local provision. In 2012-13 75% of 1st year students from Quintile areas 1, 2 and 3 achieved their HE qualification. Internal progression counts for around 50% of our intake, many of whom progress from level 3 vocational courses. On average 78% of enrolments come from within Cornwall with approximately 50% being over 21 years and 50% aged 18 – 20 years.

Cornwall SCITT provides a full-time, one year postgraduate teacher training programme for those wishing to teach at secondary level. Successful trainees gain QTS and a PGCE qualification (awarded by the University of Cumbria) either at level 6 or 60 credits at level 7 (1/3 of a Masters degree.) It is the main secondary ITE provider for the Cornwall region, recruiting many locals who are unable to travel further afield to train. From September 2016 we will also be offering a primary QTS route. Truro & Penwith College was a founding member of the partnership and has responsibility for the governance, financial management and accreditation of this ITE course. It is also the lead institution for the Cornwall Teaching School's 'school direct' route for which Cornwall SCITT is the accredited provider. Trainees opting for this route will be covered by this Access Agreement. When needed extra support is given to those students who require it via the many college support routes.

Truro and Penwith College provides high levels of learning support and welcomes applicants from all abilities. Learners are assessed and supported to apply for a Disabled Student Allowance via Student Finance England where appropriate. In 2015/16 96 learners applied for and successfully received the Disabled Student Allowance.

An additional 77 learners have identified that they need extra support and although not entitled to DSA support they may need to access further literacy/language/ICT or numeracy support. This support is available via the Learning Resource Team. Study Skills sessions are delivered at the start of the year and are continuously available for students to book in the Learning Resource Centre and are provided to support all learners. In light of the changes to DSA funding the College is currently considering the most appropriate way to continue supporting students within the financial constraints imposed.

The entry requirements for our Foundation Degrees are 1 A' level Pass or Extended Diploma Pass and GCSE Maths and English. Students aged over 21 years and from non-traditional backgrounds are considered on an individual basis and through a stringent interview process that acts as a two-way process. Firstly it enables the student to be fully aware of what will be required of them on a specific course and secondly to allow the College to ensure the student is on the correct course.

Responsibilities relating to the Equalities Act 2010 and the protected characteristics

The College is committed to going over and beyond compliance in relation to the Equality law and is an exponent of good practice in all aspects of equality and diversity. There is a cross College committee chaired by a member of the Senior Management Team. The College creates and maintains an inclusive organisation where students from all backgrounds can work, learn and reach their full potential. Responsibilities to ensure this happens is embedded throughout the College's Single Equality Scheme, which outlines the approach to fulfilling this commitment and makes clear expectations to all. The College has an equality and diversity site on Moodle that is accessible to staff and students and outlines expected behaviour by staff and students.

The contents of the Single Equality Scheme reflects the content and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and identifies the protected characteristics as central to the policy. All Higher Education courses and learning activities have equality and diversity embedded in their content and delivery. Resources, learning materials, case studies, projects and learning activities reflect and promote equality and diversity.

No Higher Education applicant will be discriminated against on the basis of any of the protected characteristics or association with them. The College has an important role in promoting fair participation for all students. The College uses student information for statistical reporting, informing the provision of reasonable adjustments for people with a learning difficulty or disability, analysing equality and action planning for quality improvement. The information is held for no other reason and reporting in a public forum is not individual and recognisable.

Purpose of ACCESS Agreement

The purpose of our Access agreement is to support students from the most deprived areas across the county and in particular the HEFCE quintile areas 1, 2 and 3 to aspire to HE and to the achieve to the best of their ability. Cornwall is still recognised as an area of deprivation and is still eligible for funding from the European Social Fund and ERDF. The College remains an active member of the Combined Universities of Cornwall and works collaboratively with the HEFCE funded outreach project Network Cornwall.

This Access agreement sets out how Truro and Penwith College aim to sustain and improve access and student success among all of our students and in particular those from 'under-represented groups'. Our main focus for this agreement is to inspire students from low participation areas and improve achievement and retention. Many areas across Cornwall

have high levels of unemployment and predominantly seasonal and part-time employment. High levels of deprivation result from low basic household incomes and low aspirations for higher education. The continued development of higher education at Truro and Penwith campuses will continue to provide good access for a wide range of students particularly from the HEFCE identified quintile areas 1, 2 and 3. In recent years the College has been building on their level 4 and 5 provision to enable local students to study to level 6 in a wide range of areas thus adding to the opportunities open to local students and particularly those from deprived backgrounds or with mental health problems who have a preference to study in Cornwall.

Fees:

New entrants commencing a full time Higher Education programme from September 2017 will be subject to differentiated fees for level 4 and 5 programmes and top-up degrees and PGCE/Cert Ed. All foundation degrees, HNCs and HNDs will be £8,224 per year. All top-up degree programmes and the PGCE/Cert Ed/SCITT ITT course will be £9,250 per year.

Access and student success measures:

The College has maintained a low entry requirement of 60 UCAS points or above to encourage as wide an application as possible from students (currently 78% of our students are from within county). The wide entry gate coupled with smaller group sizes enables the College to cater for a wide range of students from very different backgrounds. Evidence collected from first years at induction in September 2015 shows that students appreciate the intimacy of the College learning environment and good support from tutors. The smaller group sizes and interaction with staff allow us to support students from a wide range of backgrounds into and through HE from level 4 to full honours. The College has a rigorous interview process that considers all applicants and particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds without formal level 3 qualifications but with a wide range of relevant work experience (specifically those over 21).

The College monitors student success at course level and at College level to ensure that any weaknesses can be identified and dealt with quickly.

The College have taken a strategic approach to developing a consistent tutorial system to support students from a range of different backgrounds and across each stage of their academic journey. This approach has ensured that those from a widening participation background get good academic and pastoral support to enable good retention, achievement and progression. Over the last six years the College has provided study skills support to new students and over time this has developed into a full week of activities that support higher level study prior to the start of the academic year. Statistics show that those students who attend the voluntary study skills week are more likely to achieve and stay on course than those who don't attend. Study Skills have moved to registration week to ensure it is available to all students. Analysis of students who attend Study Skills showed a positive correlation

between attendance and achievement and retention. Part of the additional fee will enable the College to develop wider support for study skills for an extended period.

The College is conscious that the provision of information to prospective students is accurate and accessible. We have recently been developing the College website with a 'Student Journey' link and social media sites to reach a wider audience and to make information about all aspects of a student life cycle easily available. The 'Student Journey' site is for all students and there will be information around all aspects of the student life cycle from pre entry through to progression to further study and /or employability. There is an HE Applicant day once a year for all prospective students to come and see the College and meet the teaching and support staff. There a number of College Open Days and Open Evenings throughout the year for potential students whether HE or FE.

Truro and Penwith College have a high percentage of students from HEFCE Quintile areas 1, 2 and 3. The College is focusing on providing additional support in a number of different ways to help these students. The College has a Student Support Officer for HE, a careers officer for HE and learning support for HE based in our HE Learning Resource Centre. The College encourages small group teaching to support those less able or confident students and where progression arrangements to a top-up allow, we embed a variety of assessment modes across a programme to ensure students gain a range of academic, vocational and employability graduate skills. The College is currently working with students to identify areas where additional support can best be placed to support better retention, greater success and achievement and employability opportunities.

Consulting with students

The College regularly listens to the student voice and in a survey completed in September 2015 students identified that cost was not a deciding factor when choosing where to study.

The student voice is an important aspect of higher education at the College. Our NSS overall satisfaction scores are consistently well above the national average. We have a student rep system and a student ambassador system. Student reps are part of the annual programme monitoring process for courses but also meet regularly as group to discuss wider College issues. The student rep group are used to consult with about developments at the College which reflect on the student experience both academic and social. This year the students have been actively involved in developing a new Learning, teaching and assessment handbook for all courses.

Our student ambassadors are involved in open days, open evenings and deliver talks to local sixth forms in Cornwall. Additionally, they work with tutor groups in FE at the College to raise aspirations about progression to higher education. Some of our current HE student ambassadors are working with the HEFCE Network Cornwall project and to go into local schools to raise awareness of higher education opportunities.

Assessment of performance

The College has performed well in attracting students from the HEFCE Quintile areas 1, 2 and 3. There are a number of initiatives that support these students and the wider HE population at the College. These include a Study Skills programme during registration week as part of the induction process. Open access Study Skill sessions are available to all students and regularly attract over a 100 students from a range of courses. The College have introduced a set tutorial scheme of work for all higher education programmes that supports students individually to improve their progression opportunities and employability skills. Additional study skills support is available to all students in the higher education Learning Resource Centre. The evaluation of the success of these initiatives is attained through annual programme monitoring and the student rep system that the College operates. By using the programme committee structure to identify student needs and requirements, support can be put in at student level and at programme level.

Feedback on retention and achievement is monitored at the autumn programme committee meetings for individual programmes. Results from these meetings that relate to Plymouth University Programmes feed into a Joint Board of Studies (JBS). The JBS information feeds into the College Board of Studies for Higher Education (CBSHE) along with information from any other awarding body the College works with. This allows the College to quality assure all courses regardless of the awarding body at an institutional level and at a programme level and respond appropriately to resolve identified issues. The CBSHE encourages the sharing of good practice between programmes across different awarding bodies.

The fee levels for 2017/18 are set out in the table below:

For Home and EU students	2017/18 Tuition Fees	
	Continuers	New entrants
Full time – all courses		
HND/Foundation Degree	£7,710	£8,224
Full-time PGCE/Level 6 Degree	N/A	£9,250
Cornwall SCITT and Cornwall Teaching School 'school direct' postgraduate ITT courses	N/A	£9,250
Part time Charged on a pro-rata basis based on the full time fee. The maximum in any one year will depend on the total number of credits studied but would not exceed £5,000.		

Permitted real terms fee rises. The College will increase the fee levels in the table above in line with permitted real terms fee rises as determined by the Government.

Estimated Student numbers.

For Home and EU students	2017/18	
	Continuers	New Entrants
Full time – all courses	260	480
Cornwall SCITT and Cornwall Teaching School ‘school direct’ courses	-	90
Part-time	15	80

Bursaries and other financial support for students

The College is fully committed to widening participation to Higher Education and to ensuring fair access. The bursary arrangements the institution introduced from September 2006 are based on two key considerations:

- 1) The cost of full time higher education to students should not act as an entry barrier to those capable of benefiting from such an education
- 2) Income from tuition revenue should be managed to provide direct financial support for students, to enhance their learning and to encourage their progression and achievement

All undergraduate students, including EU and Overseas students on full-time Higher Education programmes will be eligible to apply for a bursary in year 1 of their study and in subsequent years dependent upon continuation of their study. The College will target in the region of 75% of the bursary expenditure to students from low income households.

For postgraduate students on the Cornwall SCITT and Cornwall Teaching School ‘school direct’ courses a bursary of £300 will be available to all students in receipt of the full maintenance grant. In addition other Cornwall SCITT and Cornwall Teaching School ‘school direct’ trainees who can demonstrate financial hardship may apply for a discretionary hardship bursary of up to £1000. (Subject to satisfactory attendance and progress.)

Bursary payments will be administered in the following way and are subject to attendance and fee payment criteria:

50% of the bursary payment is made in the spring term and the remaining 50% in the summer term, to provide general financial support, and to act as an incentive to assist retention, achievement, and progression between levels of study. Full details and eligibility can be found on the college website: www.truro-penwith.ac.uk

For 2017/18 the bursary for new entrants is set out below:

College Bursary	
Truro and Penwith College Students:	
-Full time undergraduate whose household income is less than £25,000 *	£720
-All other full time students	£320
-Part time students studying full time courses (at least 50%)	£225
Cornwall SCITT and Cornwall Teaching School 'school direct' students	£300

*as assessed by Student Finance England

Outreach activities

- It is anticipated that the current extensive range of outreach activities will continue. Current activities include:
 - Events and promotional materials intended for mature learners and for non-traditional entrants to Higher Education
 - Aspiration-raising activities targeted at pupils aged 16 years and above including roadshows, visits from our HE team and master classes
 - Open days and Open evenings held at the College
 - Participation by College, Cornwall SCITT and Cornwall Teaching School staff at open days held at local, regional and national venues
 - Facebook promotions to targeted demographics, mailshots including promotional materials aimed at encouraging our own Level 3 students to progress onto our higher education provision and alumni undergraduates to progress onto our ITT/PGCE courses
 - Visits to local and regional schools, including secondary and colleges. Also visits to HEI hubs to advise on ITT/PGCE routes
 - A student ambassador scheme aimed at raising aspirations in 16-18 year olds. These activities are aimed predominately at pupils and students studying within local schools across Cornwall and in particular low participation areas as identified via HEFCE quintile areas 1, 2 and 3.
 - Information on financial support available to students

Financial Information

Financial information will be made available to all prospective students considering courses coming under this agreement. Such information will be guided by the principles of accessibility, transparency and clarity.

Information will summarise the annual and aggregate fee for the chosen course, bursary arrangements, and other sources of financial support available to students. It will also identify the sources from which students can obtain advice regarding the general financial framework applying to students undertaking full time higher education studies, so that they can establish the likely level of debt they will incur by the end of their studies. The institution will provide a full range of financial advice to prospective and current students through the production of fact sheets outlining fee charges and the bursaries available to students with worked examples, through individual interviews and in response to queries received in person, by telephone or by email. Student Services will also provide briefing sessions as part of Open Day events and will be available to give individual advice and guidance.

During induction all students will receive a presentation from the Student Services team which will, inter alia, cover issues associated with student finance, student support, careers advice and learning support available. It is the intention of the College that all information relating to costs and means of support for students will be available in the Prospectus and on the college website, on the Student Journey site and accessible via social media.

Cornwall SCITT maintain their own website www.cornwallscitt.org - the website contains a section on finance, including fee and support information and this will be updated regularly.

Cornwall Teaching School maintains an ITT information page along with links to Cornwall SCITT: www.cornwallteachingschool.org.uk.

Support information will include institutional support and support available via the Government through the maintenance loan, grant, tuition fee loan and teaching bursaries.

This information is explained verbally during the interview process, supported by the written leaflet and the Student Journey site to ensure that applicants are fully informed before they make a decision on whether to accept a place with us.

Information will also be provided to UCAS and the Student Loans Company in the format they require and within the appropriate timescale.

Expenditure on access measures

The institution will direct its additional fee revenue to support access measures in the following ways:

- Through bursary payments to students
- Through funding to provide additional learning support for students in the form of additional study skills workshops
- An enriched tutorial system adding to the student experience and supporting progression and employability opportunities

- Institutional milestones linked to success, achievement and retention
- Institutional milestones linked to widening participation from low access areas

The institution has established the following milestones and objectives in relation to its higher education provision falling under this access agreement:

- Retention targets: for 1st year intake from 75% in 2014/15 to 80% in 2020/21
Progression targets: increase internal progression from Truro and Penwith College level 3 programmes to our Higher Education programmes by 2% to 53% in 2020/21
- Improve the annual internal progression rate from foundation degree completers onto articulating honours degree programmes at Truro and Penwith College from 29% in 2013/14 to 32% 2020/21
- Curriculum development: to respond to the identified needs of local employers and students by developing new programmes and offering curriculum flexibility and particularly the development of level 6 programmes that allow students the opportunity to complete a full degree locally
- Where appropriate develop a range of higher level apprenticeships appropriate to local business need
- Cornwall SCITT will have 2 key widening participation criteria with a five year target.

Of our total expenditure on access measures only the proportion relating to under-represented groups will be reflected in our access agreement. 27% of the higher fee income will be spent on OFFA-countable activity. The total amount we have committed to access, student success and progression and financial support measures for 2017/18 for students is £499,600.

Monitoring and Review

The institution will undertake annual monitoring of this access agreement to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement of the milestones it has established. Responsibility for the monitoring report will rest with the Team Leader for Higher Education. The report will be presented to the College Senior Management Team for approval.

The annual monitoring report will be submitted to the Director of OFFA. The report will be presented to the Senior Management Team at such time as to ensure that OFFA will receive the report by its deadline. The report will incorporate the following sections:

Financial data summarising recruitment levels, payment of bursaries, and other financial support made available to students.

Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year and progress made in meeting institutional targets and milestones.

An analysis of students in receipt of support will be carried out in order to assess the impact of OFFA-accountable activity in relation to our targets and milestones.

