

ALL NATIONS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

All Nations is committed to widening access to and participation in our high quality teaching programmes to all those who have the capacity to benefit from them regardless of their background and circumstances. The College especially welcomes those who, due to particular life circumstances, might not otherwise have had this opportunity.

This document sets out how we are seeking to remove any barriers which might prevent disadvantaged groups from accessing our programmes and achieving their study aims.

Diversity

As one of the largest centres in Western Europe for the training of missionaries and the teaching of mission studies, we welcome students from all over the world to study together with others in a multi-cultural learning community.

The diversity of this community is not only reflected in the 30 different nationalities and ethnicities represented in our student body, but also in their: ages (ranging from 20 to over 80); marital status (singles, marrieds, and families with children of all ages from the not-yet-born to school-leavers); educational background (some having left school at 16, and others having already completed their post-doctorate before studying with us).

The timetable is planned so that parents can attend lectures while their children are in nursery or school. The College also supports parents who bring carers with them to look after their children while they study. The College also works with expectant mothers to facilitate them being able to complete their studies during and after their pregnancy.

We expect to attract an increasing number of mature students, families and those from diverse nationalities and ethnicities. In the coming year we plan to continue building relationships with multi-cultural churches in the UK and Europe. We anticipate that this will lead to students from different ethnic backgrounds, disadvantaged groups (including refugees) participating in our programmes.

Financial Support

Socio-economic diversity is also a feature of our student body. However, although diversity is reflected in the different ways people fund their training, the way people raise their funds is not necessarily related to their background. Since some missionaries need to raise their own support in order to engage in the mission work that they feel called to, raising these funds and discovering how God wishes to supply their needs and support their studies is often a necessary part of missionary preparation. Some sacrificially sell their homes, others are supported by their savings and/or friends and families and a growing number access government funded student loans (a quarter of students received maximum maintenance support this year). The College bursary scheme is also there to provide extra support for those who need it and this scheme supported 20% of students last year with bursaries of between 7% and 29% of each student's tuition fees. The College is also able to target Trust support to those who might benefit from particular schemes which are available to specific categories of students.

Across the board, our lower than sector average fees also help all those who would not otherwise be able to afford to access higher education. For example, undergraduate and postgraduate (one year) annual fees for 2018 were £6486 (plus £475 Open University fees).

As an International College, our hope would be to continue to sponsor overseas students, in particular, those who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as we recognise the value and importance of education in these countries.

We plan to offer targeted bursaries to churches and individuals from disadvantaged marginalised backgrounds for our shorter courses. We anticipate some of these students progressing to participation on our undergraduate programme.

Example: A church leader and refugee from Sudan was provided with a full bursary and extra support to enable him to access and fully participate in the 2 year BA programme.

Educationally disadvantaged

As stated above, our students come from educationally diverse backgrounds.

Non-accredited short courses are completely open to students regardless of their educational background, although two courses have English proficiency recommendations to enable students to benefit fully from the programme. It is not unusual for attendance at one of these short courses to lead to these students accessing an accredited undergraduate programme.

Our Admissions policy outlines a minimum level of the equivalent of a school-leaver certificate (A levels in the UK) in order to study on the Undergraduate Programme. However, where applicants do not meet the academic requirements due to life circumstances, a written piece of work may be set to assess their academic suitability for the programme for which they have applied. This enables applicants who may not have had the opportunity to obtain any requisite qualifications to access tertiary education with us.

The flexible nature of our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes also means that students may sign up to the Certificate/PG Certificate programme and either leave with a qualification or progress seamlessly to the Diploma/PG Diploma. They may do the same at the end of the second, Diploma, stage and thereby progress to the full degree award. This flexible approach helps many who do not feel confident at the outset of their studies that they can undertake the full degree to exceed their own expectations.

Example 1: An applicant who left school at 16 with very little qualifications due to difficult family circumstances, was able to prove his academic potential by writing an essay to pass the entry requirements and successfully achieved a 2:1 in 2018.

Example 2: Whilst on furlough in the UK, a missionary was able to access Level 6 modules as a vital part of his preparation for starting our online postgraduate degree when he returned to work in Central Asia.

Disabilities and Learning Support

In discussion with an applicant, the Learning Support Team are available to guide those with medical conditions and/or learning disabilities to access the support they need. Reasonable adjustments are put in place by the College wherever practicable in order to facilitate their learning. In addition, the team will work with a mentor if this is provided by a student's Disabled Student Allowance. These measures have enabled such students to achieve qualifications which would not have otherwise been possible.

Study skills classes provide additional support for those who come from non-English speaking countries and those who may not have come directly from an academic background. This support is critical when assisting those from disadvantaged and under-represented groups in their studies.

The effectiveness of such classes is monitored through feedback which is received at the end of the year which allows the College to gauge whether these classes have had a positive impact on student's success in obtaining their degree.

Within the limitations of what is possible with a Grade 2 Listed Building, the College has provided ramp access and disabled toilet facilities to assist wheelchair users. It also readily adjusts the accommodation provided, the location of lecture rooms and the teaching programme when the need arises and wherever practicable to accommodate the physical needs of all students.

We plan to continue upgrading our facilities to make them more accessible by those with physical disabilities. We also constantly review how we may enhance our support for people with long-term medical conditions and/or those with physical and/or learning disabilities. This includes training for staff and students in mental health awareness.

Example 1: A student with bipolar disorder was permitted flexibility with deadlines and other special IT support to enable her to complete her studies despite her fluctuating mood swings which resulted in periods when she was unable to do any work at all.

Example 2: A student from Korea who, despite passing an IELTS academic test at the appropriate level, was given extra support to improve her English skills and therefore her access of the programme.

Student Support

In order to become better equipped for Christian ministry, a students' time at All Nations not only involves knowledge and skill acquisition but also emotional, attitudinal, relational and spiritual development. Students are therefore encouraged to reflect on and seek to resolve personal issues as they become aware of them through interaction with their course material.

The Personal Development Tutor is available to all members of the college community for confidential consultation on any matter. Each student is also assigned to a personal tutor who meets with them regularly or by appointment, to discuss academic issues and progress, personal or pastoral matters, personal development and spiritual growth. Supportive peer support is also the common experience at College. In certain circumstances students may be advised to seek medical assistance and/or professional counselling.

This support has been particularly invaluable to many students who have been estranged from their families or other support networks, in enabling them to achieve their intended award despite challenging life circumstances.

Example: A student from an ethnic minority group in Southern Europe with no support network and facing challenging personal circumstances received extensive pastoral and academic support to enable him to realise his academic potential.

Flexible Delivery and Partnerships

Wider participation is enhanced by our flexible delivery methods.

As well as our undergraduate and postgraduate courses, we also run a variety of short courses from a few days to 10 weeks in length.

Some of our non-accredited courses are accessed by students from all around the world who form an online community, while others access the residential training. In recent years, the College has been able to take this training, often in partnership with other mission agencies, to other locations

in the world, thereby raising the profile of the College and extending our training to those who would not be able to come to the UK or who would struggle to obtain a visa.

Those who have taken our 10-week non-accredited programme often stay on to access modules from the undergraduate programme. Others go on to take the full Level 4 Certificate course. Frequently these students have already been accepted by their future employer (typically a mission agency) and the College works with the mission agency to deliver the training required by them for their future missionaries.

The undergraduate programme is accessed through classroom delivery because experience has demonstrated that this leads to the best student experience and outcomes. This delivery method has also facilitated access for local people (working and retired) to access individual modules as part of the Guided Personal Study programme. This enables them to study while fitting in with their other commitments.

The postgraduate programme is available through online, classroom and blended delivery. (Students from all over the world “Zoom” in to participate in the classes with the students in the classroom). The postgraduate programme can also be accessed part-time, which enables those with other commitments to access the training in a manner which suits them.

Example 1: A couple, who wished to home-school their children whilst studying and living on campus, were able to access the residential programme by one parent while the other took the online programme.

Example 2: A campus-based postgraduate student who normally attends lectures in person, has been able to access the class remotely via “Zoom” when work and family commitments would otherwise prevent this.

Progression and Retention

The College has excellent progression and retention statistics, regardless of a student's background. We attribute this to the provision of tailored study skill sessions, a dedicated learning support team and an academic staff who all consider their role to be vocational rather than simply a job (something which is often noted in student feedback).

In 2018 28% of students on the undergraduate programme completed the requirements for their chosen award and then decided to progress on to a higher level than they had originally intended. However our aim, as far as practicable, is to offer each student the training that will equip them effectively for mission. Therefore, each year, a relatively small number of students take Level 5 studies only because they feel that these modules will best equip them, despite the fact that it will not earn them an award.

Similarly, it is also not unusual for some students to change from an undergraduate award programme to Guided Personal Study since they wish to access modules from all three levels and are more concerned with tailoring their training to their needs than gaining an award. The College supports them in this.

Student Participation in Widening Access and Participation

Finally, the College continuously reviews the way it might remove any further barriers to those from disadvantaged groups being able to access and participate fully in the programmes we offer. We welcome student input into how this might be done. We have therefore included a standing discussion item on this topic on our termly undergraduate and postgraduate committee meetings which are attended by student representatives from each level of the relevant programme.