

Vision

Bolton College works with a wide range of public and private sector organisations, including the 'Bolton Family', to meet the education and training needs of Bolton, its geographical, cultural and business

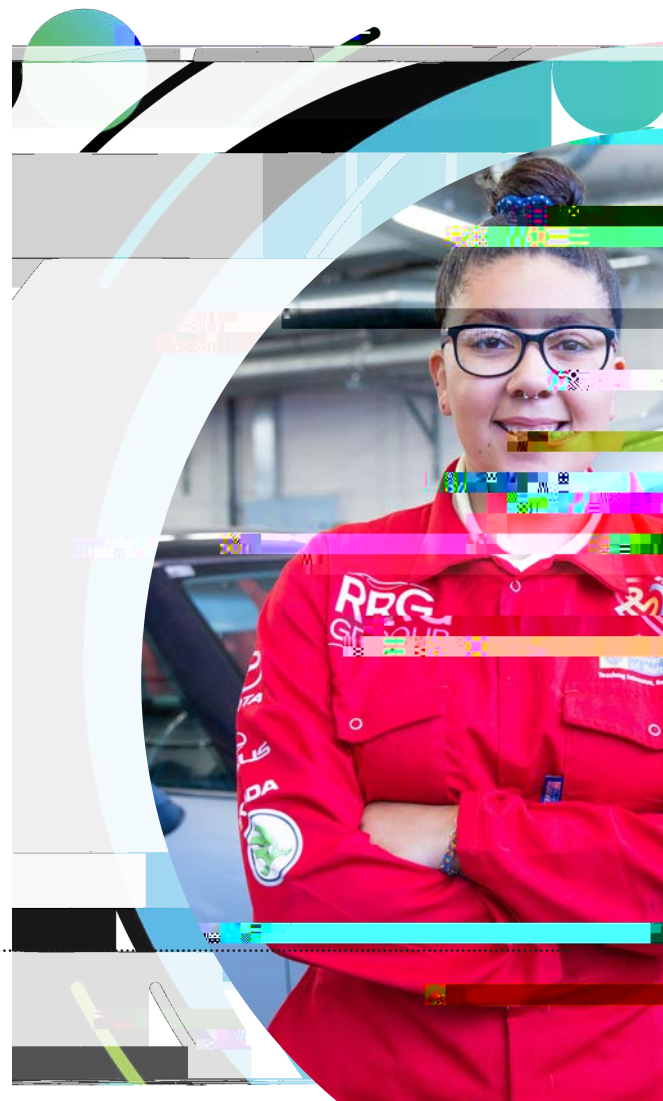
Background

The recent move to 'Designated Institution' status, as part of the University of Bolton group, was a significant achievement. The Department for Education has now approved the model with Bolton College as a designated subsidiary company limited by guarantee (called Bolton College) which is eligible to receive public funding which is a necessary step in order to operate a publicly funded further education college.

The College became a designated institute (being a company limited by guarantee) under the company name 'Bolton College', as set out in the Consultation, and transferred its property, rights and liabilities to the new company all with effect from 1st August 2018. The company will continue to operate the College from its current sites.

The first merger of its type in England will give a high level of security and open new opportunities for the community we serve. The long term goal for a genuine 'cradle to PhD' seamless education route is now a step closer.

An example is that adult students are able to start off on short, non-accredited courses within the community to build up entry level skills and confidence before moving over to qualification based provision in the College. Our younger students are able to access our Foundation curriculum in order to build their skillset and confidence before progressing to higher level courses.



Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Bolton College recognises and values the cultural, social and ethnic diversity reflected in our students and staff. As a result, we treat all with respect and dignity, and seek to create a positive learning and working environment. We provide a safe and supportive environment which values individuals equally, regardless of protected characteristics and socio-economic status.

The College is home to people from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds with diverse beliefs, values and abilities. We aim to meet the needs of all individuals and encourage them to share their experiences and beliefs.

We welcome students with learning difficulties and disabilities and support them according to their needs. We work collaboratively with a range of community organisations and other partners to tackle social exclusion, address discrimination and promote community cohesion.

Work towards the Care Leavers Covenant is in progress and in collaboration with Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Our care leavers progressing to Higher Education provision at the College or University benefit from financial support (£1000) in each academic year.

We want everyone to feel comfortable and secure enough to be themselves; we do not tolerate harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination.

Our Single Equality Scheme incorporates the goals of our College Equality and Diversity Strategy; this document is available online within our Key Policies section and is currently in the process of being updated, along with the action plans, in order to fully reflect Bolton College's Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

The College's commitment to wellbeing has realised the launch of a staff and student Wellbeing Strategy where the College is working to become a trauma informed organisation. Established links with charitable organisations providing guest speakers to cover aspects of wellbeing and mental health. An example is the Civil Engineering and Construction students participating in a discussion with State of Mind in conjunction with leaders and employees from the construction industry as this is currently high on the health, safety and wellbeing agenda for the industry.

There are well designed transition arrangements for all courses and students that ensure all support needs are identified with appropriate arrangements in place before the course starts. When students arrive in College there is a robust induction programme to ensure all students are equipped with the knowledge, support and guidance needed to make them successful and enjoy their time at College.



Widening Participation Priorities

In order to achieve our goal we have identified key widening participation priorities:

- Effective and targeted marketing
- Fair and effective admissions policy and process
- Simple and affordable fee structure; and targeted financial support
- Tutorial and additional support to improve student attainment and continuation rates
- Progression and Growth
- Evaluation of Widening Participation



Effective and targeted marketing

The College has carried out a great deal of targeted marketing to make sure that potential students are fully aware of our Higher Education (HE) offer. The HE section of the College has a presence at all College open days; and works in collaboration with the University of Bolton, and the Greater Manchester Higher Network, to promote our HE courses. The College also promotes internal progression pathways from our range of relevant and appropriate pre-HE courses. We market our HE courses via social media, both locally and nationally, and target local communities with a series of brochures that include our HE provision. The College's Access to HE and HE offer for courses registered with the University of Bolton are also advertised on the University of Bolton's website which gives the provision additional reach.

Employability

We have a strong track record of serving the needs of local employers and businesses by providing high quality Higher Education which develops the right skills

Fair and effective admissions policy and process

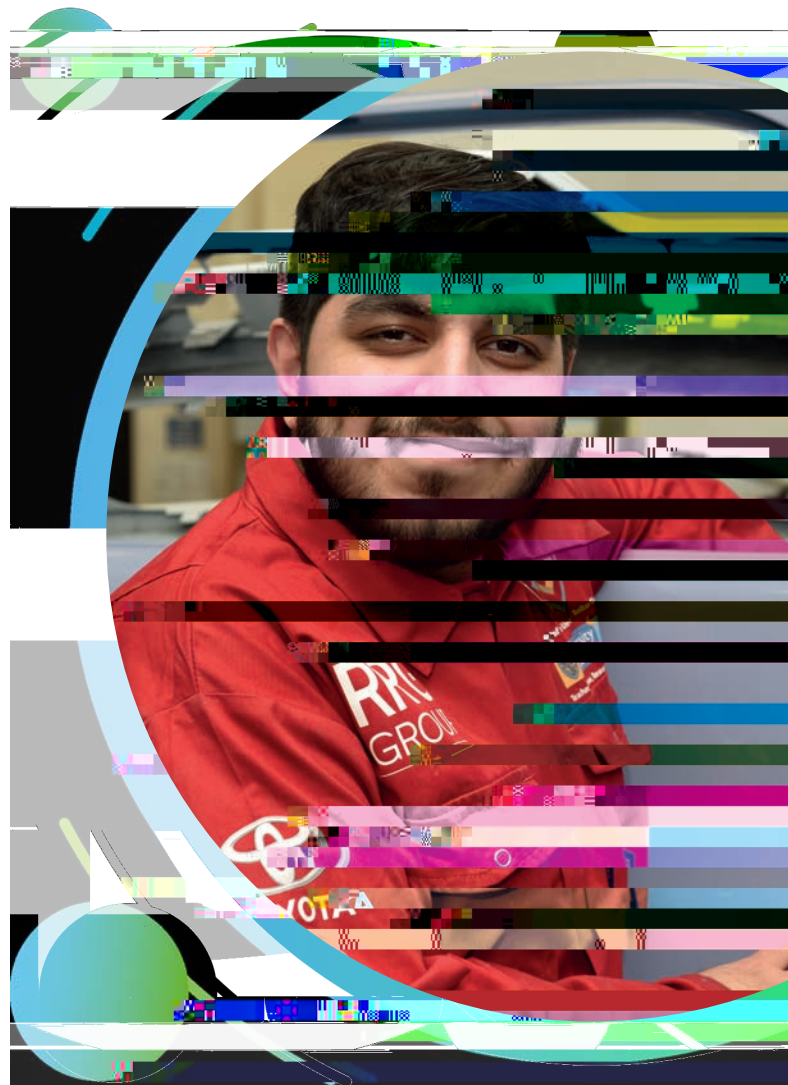
The College operates a fair admissions policy with clear entry criteria for its programmes/courses. When attracting students from a wide range of non-traditional backgrounds, all Prescribed HE applicants are considered via the University of Bolton's Admissions Policy and Non-Prescribed HE applicants are considered via Bolton College's Non-Prescribed HE Admissions Policy.

Applicants under both policies are considered via their individual merits including their qualifications, personal statement, references, experiences, and also includes accreditation of prior learning. We work very closely with the admissions staff at the University of Bolton to adhere to and to ensure applicants are aware of all the stages of the process. Applicants can be supported if they have enquiries about the process by College and/or University of Bolton staff.

Our Programme Areas may also use an interview and/or assessment as part of the decision making process for those who do not meet qualification on entry requirements. Applicants with nonstandard qualifications will also be considered where they have significant professional or vocational experience within their chosen subject area.

If we have potential students for whom a HE qualification is not appropriate when they apply advice is available on how they can gain the appropriate skills/ knowledge or qualifications to enable them to make a successful application in the future. Where students do not meet the entry criteria, the College supports the student in identifying a suitable alternative programme of study that will enable access to Higher Education in the future. As an example we have developed a portfolio of Access to HE courses, and pre-HE courses that can feed into our HE courses.

The College will ensure that students are not discriminated against during the admissions process or during their time at the College.



Simple and affordable fee structure; and targeted financial support

The College aims to provide the best possible service for its students while maintaining the tuition fees at an affordable level. The College is keen to maintain this value for money approach in order not to deter potential students, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds as tuition fees grow in other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). However, we also need to ensure that we can cover the cost of teaching these students, who typically need more support particularly during the first year of the course. The College provides financial support, through the HE Hardship Fund, for those students who are experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. For example, to:

- Meet specific course and living costs which are not already met from other sources;
- Assist if students are in financial hardship;
- Provide emergency payments for unexpected financial crises;
- Help students who may be considering giving up their course because of financial problems.

We also provide financial incentives (Higher Education Progression Award) to our pre-HE level course students, to progress onto a HE course at College.

Tutorial and additional support to improve continuation rates

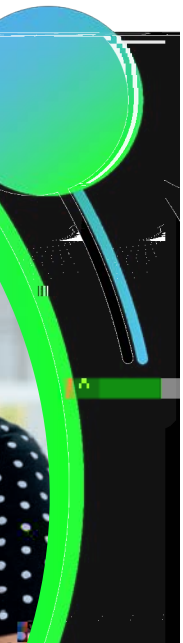
Another key part of our priorities is in the provision of tutorial and 'other' support that students are entitled to. With full-time and part-time students this can be achieved in traditional ways using a timetabled session. For our full-time and particularly part-time students, who often work long hours, and/or are employed and wish to maximise their time at College studying, tutorials can be facilitated via email and through the Virtual Learning Environment, although tutors are available when required for face to face tutorials. We do encourage students to speak with their tutor/s when they need additional support, or are experiencing personal or challenging difficulties. Students are signposted to the College counselling service, careers service, student support service, learning support services, and learning support is available in all our Learning Resource Centres (LRC) and library. In addition, all students enrolled to Prescribed HE take part on the University of Bolton's induction sessions and have full access to all services and facilities there. We employ a 'student at risk' process, where tutors, Curriculum Leaders and Heads of Department monitor absences regularly and implement support strategies as required.



Progression and Growth

We are continuing to develop specific progression routes into the University of Bolton for students to convert their HNC and HND qualifications to full degrees in specific pathways. The College continues to offer internal progression routes for our level 3 and 4 courses onto our HNC and HND provision. Specific events are held throughout the year to inform and offer advice and guidance to our students in terms of our HE offer and how they can progress further once they have completed a HE course at College. We work closely with our marketing department to ensure we have strong HE presence in all marketing literature, including the use of social media. Non-Prescribed provision is extremely responsive to employers and self-employed individuals and offers opportunities for local businesses to engage in meaningful Continuous Professional Development and at the forefront of best practice with technologies and industry standards.

We offer an internal HE progression award of £500 within the College, for students who progress to Prescribed HE taught within the College. Much of the College's FE Access provision is taught at the University of Bolton campus and students are able to access the university's learning resources and facilities. There are regular opportunities for students to enhance their learning experience by attending guest lectures and joining in with student-led activities. There are also opportunities





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