



WAVERLEY ABBEY COLLEGE

Access and Participation Statement

Waverley Abbey College is one of the leading providers of Christian counselling training in the UK offering Higher Education programmes that are underpinned by a Christian worldview. Building on its reputation for excellence, the College has recently developed a new suite of programmes offering training in Spiritual Formation.

Recognising and developing the potential of its students has always been at the heart of vision and mission of the College: as the Mission and Vision Statement says, 'Our aspiration is to provide a learning environment where people can explore their faith and see growth, development and maturity and, in turn, share their experiences with others ... our invitation is to people who wish to develop, both personally and professionally, and relate to each other modelling our unity in our diversity.'

The College seeks to achieve a wide and diverse student community with all the cultural and educational benefits that this brings to the College and its student body. It offers a non-discriminatory policy towards applicants irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity, culture, class, sexuality, disability, religion or belief. The College actively encourages applications from underrepresented groups. For example, the College recently introduced a new website specifically developed to be more attractive to underrepresented groups. The effectiveness of this policy is continually monitored within the College through analysis of admissions data, retention and attainment statistics.

PRE-ENTRY ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The College regularly evaluates its admissions and recruitment processes to ensure fair and wide access. The admissions team are able to offer information, advice and guidance in the selection of the most appropriate programme for each applicant. The College can advise applicants without formal qualifications about alternative undergraduate pathways of study that prepare them for their Higher Education programmes.

The admissions process is supported by regular Open Days where prospective applicants can meet the tutors and admissions staff and view the campus facilities.

RECRUITMENT

The College programmes attract a significant number of mature applicants who do not have formal qualifications. Such applicants are encouraged to apply on the basis of their informal related learning and prior achievement and aspirations. Every applicant is interviewed by an academic member of staff to assess their suitability and potential for higher level study and to identify their welfare and support needs.

The College offers a Study Skills day for those who do not have formal qualifications or who need a refresher. Study skills training is also offered as general support to all students during the first year of study.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As part of the commitment to widening access, the college sets its fees significantly below the sector norms and applies for designation each year to enable students to access student loans. Another route offered for finance is through the Careers and Professional Development Loans company. The College also promotes and offers a scholarship which is awarded on the basis of merit and bursaries which are offered on the basis of financial need. Payment plans are available which enable students to spread their payments over the academic year.

MOVING THROUGH THE PROGRAMME

The College recognises the challenge that can arise from widening access particularly with the retention of some students. To give students the best opportunity for success all students are offered regular tutorials with their Personal Tutor where they may receive support for their study and general welfare. A student may be referred to a study skills tutor for specific one-to-one study skills support if the need becomes evident or if the student requests it. Students are also offered one-to-one support to enable them to get the best from the online library facilities and further study skills resources are available through the College Portal.

The College welcomes students with learning difficulties and encourages them to identify their specific learning needs during the application process. The Disability Tutor works with the student to draw up an agreed personal statement that outlines their support needs and provision. This ensures that academic staff are aware of the additional support that students require. The support offered is monitored during the student's progress through the College to ensure its adequacy and appropriateness. A programme of training is in place to enhance the skills of tutors and to enable them to effectively support this group of students.

Waverley Abbey College is committed to supporting the needs of students with physical disabilities. In accordance with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) and within the constraints of the grade II* listed status of Waverley Abbey House, all reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students to allow equal access to learning opportunities. Adjustments are made to aspects of programmes in anticipation of the needs of disabled students to ensure that they are not substantially disadvantaged as a result of their disability.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our programmes have a number of self-reflective assignments which help the student towards personal growth and development and enables the tutors to monitor each student's personal development alongside their academic development. Academic freedom is important to the College and students are supported and encouraged to develop and express their own thinking and ideas. For example, the counselling programme encourages development of a student's personal philosophy of counselling. The student community is trained to be alert to issues of difference and diversity in others, so that they are able to utilise their learning and skills in a non-discriminatory manner.

EMPLOYMENT

All the tutors on the college programme are practising within their fields of expertise and can offer a wide range of advice and support to students moving into employment. Many of the counselling students choose to set up in private practice, therefore the programme includes sessions on setting up in private practice, the legal requirements and navigating the accreditation process with the professional bodies. A very high percentage of our graduates are employed within the counselling profession, are in private practice or are members of pastoral teams within local churches. The Spiritual Formation programme leads to a range of employment opportunities for example, working within a variety of institutions as Chaplains, as members of pastoral care teams within churches and schools and in private practice as mentors or coaches.