

## Information on financial support for students 2019-20: Supplementary Paper to Access and Participation Plan 2019-20

This document is supplementary to the published [Access and Participation Plan 2019-20](#) (APP) for The Trafford College Group, and will be publicly available on the College website within our HE [Wider Information](#) section.

This builds upon the information APP to provide the student with further detail on:

- a. the financial support that will be made available to underrepresented students across TCG;
- b. how the financial support will contribute to our strategy and goals
- c. the criteria that will determine the allocation of that support; and
- d. how and when in 2019-20 TCG shall evaluate the impact of that support in helping to reduce the gaps in access, success and progression among our own students.
- e. how and when the financial support included in the plan will be communicated to students.

### Context

The Trafford College Group is committed to widening access and participation to Higher Education, ensuring individuals with the potential to benefit from higher education have the opportunity to do so. HE is central to our ambitions to act as a catalyst for change and provide a transformative education experience through enabling economic regeneration and social inclusion. A key strand of our higher education strategy is to provide outstanding high-quality and enjoyable teaching, learning and assessment opportunities. 'Unlocking potential and fostering success' across all student groups remains a central theme. Our mission is to provide our students with an outstanding education experience with excellent progression outcomes, the acquisition of industry standard skills and the development of personal attributes and resilience to enable them to achieve their potential and fulfil their career aims by:

- Being bold
- Being ambitious
- Showing respect
- Working collaboratively
- Demonstrating a professional attitude

We celebrate the fact that we have a high proportion of students defined as underrepresented, recruiting high proportions of students who are mature, from low participation neighbourhoods and with a high level of students declaring a disability or learning difficulty. We believe in the importance of an inclusive practice that captures and raises aspiration together with a transformative approach, which is imperative to successful access and participation.

### Financial support that will be made available to underrepresented students across TCG

As reported in the APP 2019-20, the College is committed to the level of total investment in 2019-20 of £90,000 (of which financial support is £50,000) which represents 35.5% as a proportion of higher fee income. The College has a high proportion of students from an underrepresented background and therefore has committed to a financial investment as a percentage of high income above the basic rate above national guidelines. This commitment is based on essential support for underrepresented groups required to ensure that key measures are implemented. The investment as a proportion of higher fees income is distributed as follows:

- **19.7% (£50,000) on direct financial support through bursaries and hardship for students**
- 5.9% (£15,000) on access/outreach activities
- 5.9% (15,000) on success activities
- 3.9% (£10,000) on progression and employability activities

## **How the financial support will contribute to our strategy and goals**

The College intends to further promote equal opportunities to ensure underrepresented students have access and succeed in higher education by creating a series of ambitions, published within our APP 2019-20, which are to:

1. Increase the participation of care leavers
2. Increase the participation of young people aged 18-21 years old from underrepresented groups
3. Increase internal progression from FE Level 3 to Level 4
4. Increase the participation rates of BME students
5. Increase the success of BME students
6. Increase the continuation and achievement rate of students with disabilities
7. Increase the continuation rate of students from low income backgrounds
8. Increase the success of students from low participating neighborhoods
9. Increase the proportion of students progressing to highly skilled employment

The APP outlines how the College intends to achieve these ambitions by setting targets and milestones to address any gaps in our performance by developing activities to increase the level of students from underrepresented groups and promote student success.

The financial support has the aim of supporting all such targets, but with particular focus on 1-3 and, as such, be evaluated against these and aligned to the APP published targets and milestones.

## **Criteria that will determine the allocation of that support, and how the financial support will contribute to our strategy and goals**

### **- Bursaries**

In 2017-18 Stockport College supported 34 (30%) of students in their first year of study with a means tested bursary of £1,000 through the Success@Stockport Scholarship. Following merger in April 2017-18, a similar scholarship programme was extended to The Trafford College Group for 2018-19, investing in over £35,000 towards scholarships and a further £5,000 on hardship funds. The funding is available to all students with a household income of £25,000 or less, and who achieve a merit profile at the two specified census dates.

In addition to this, students who are identified as a care leaver, estranged from families and refugees will automatically be entitled to the bursary payment. The College is committed to continue this level of support in order to meet its strategic objectives.

The following bursaries are available. Each student will only be eligible for a maximum of one bursary in 2019-20. The maximum amount allocated to bursary payments is £40,000 in 2019-20. The amount allocated to each student is a maximum of £500. Should the demand exceed the budget, then the amount of funding per student will be reduced, rather than introduce a further selection criteria. For example, the allocated £40,000 would support £500 maximum payments for 80 Full Time students or less. If the total number that meet the criteria exceeds this (e.g. 100 Full Time students) then the payments will be equally shared (e.g. £400). The amount will be monitored and reviewed through the Student Experience sub-committee.

### **Financial Support Bursary**

In 2019-20 the college will continue to support first year students with a means tested bursary of up to £500. This award will be available to any home student in receipt of a student loan for their tuition fees with a household income of up to £25,000 and that meet all other eligibility criteria. The eligibility of full-time students will be assessed using the information which they have provided to the Student Loans Company, to be assessed for financial support. The eligibility of part-time students will be assessed by the College. It will be awarded as follows:

A cash award of up to £500 in the first year of study at Level 4 only (January and May), which is available to home students on full-time and part-time programmes of study within the scope of this agreement, payable in two equal instalments upon receipt of the first tuition fee loan payment. Part-time students will be paid on a pro-rata basis based on the annual number of academic credits studied. Attendance on the programme of study must be 90% or above (other than for extenuating circumstances) and student performance at Merit profile.

### **Loyalty Bursary**

This award will be available to any student who progresses from a Level 3 programme of study at the College onto a Higher Education programme at Level 4/5 and will be awarded as follows:

A cash award of up to £500 in the first year of study at Level 4 only (January and May), which is available to home students on full-time and part-time programmes of study within the scope of this agreement, payable in two equal instalments upon receipt of the first tuition fee loan payment. Part-time students will be paid on a pro-rata basis based on the annual number of academic credits studied. Attendance on the programme of study must be 90% or above (other than for extenuating circumstances) and student performance at Merit profile.

### **Care Leavers Bursary**

A bursary of up to £500 will be available to students who are care leavers.

This award will be made to any home student who has left local authority care in the 2 years prior to enrolment on the first year of study, irrespective of postcode. This is a non-means tested bursary. It will be awarded as follows:

A cash award of up to £500 in each year of study (excluding any repeat year), which is available to home students on full-time or part-time programmes of study within the scope of this agreement, and which is payable in 2 instalments in September and January. Part-time students will be paid on a pro-rata basis based on the annual number of academic credits studied. Attendance on the programme of study must be 90% or above in December (other than for extenuating circumstances) for the January payment to be made. Students receiving this bursary are ineligible for a financial support bursary.

### **Enhancement Bursary**

A cash award of up to £500 in the first year of study at Level 4 only. This award will be available for any student that is estranged from family (18-25yr olds) or refugee, and follow the same criteria as the Care Leavers Bursary.

## **- Hardship**

### **Financial Hardship**

In addition the College is committed to provide a hardship fund to support students who may face financial difficulties during their time at the College. The College has evaluated the effectiveness of the resource and taking into consideration that the increase of student numbers from the merger and our student population, decided to double the level of the hardship fund from £5,000 in 2018-19 to £10,000 in 2019- 20.

Eligibility and the amount allocated to each student for the fund will be considered on an individual basis by the Dean of HE and Academic Registrar. Due to the confidential nature, these details will not be reported to the Student Experience sub-committee, but will receive an update on expenditure against allocation. A maximum of £10,000 will be allocated for 2019-20. With an aim to ensure there is such funding throughout the student journey, a maximum of £5,000 can be spent within Semester 1 (Sept-Jan), ensuring that at least an equal amount is available for Semester 2 (Feb-June).

## **How and when in 2019-20 TCG shall evaluate the impact of that support in helping to reduce the gaps in access, success and progression among our own students**

The Financial support is monitored and evaluated on an annual basis and discussed at the Higher Education Committee. Analysis undertaken in Autumn 2018 suggest that 74% of students that received the bursary award in 2017-18 progressed into Year 2 of study and 60% of students felt the bursary has supported them with their first year of study at the College and we should continue to offer this.

As published in the APP 2019-20, the emphasis will be on developing improvements on data analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of activities to support student access, success and progression. This will include:

- Recruitment data including access from underrepresented groups
- Equality and Diversity Impact measures
- Retention and continuation data
- Achievement and progression data
- Feedback from students, staff and other stakeholders

The data will enable TCG to also evaluate student performance for those receiving financial support. These will not be identified by individual, but reported on as a collective to evaluate the impact of the support. For example, recruitment data will report on the number of L3-4 progression students; retention data will report on the retention of students receiving financial support.

As reported above, the College will focus the evaluations of financial support against the specific ambitions published within our APP 2019-20.

The overall responsibility of the monitoring and evaluating of the Access and Participation plan lies with the Higher Education Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Principal. The Student Experience group, a subcommittee of the HE Committee will be created in 2019-20. The HE Committee will scrutinise and approve the targets and milestones with operational monitoring and evaluation through the Student Experience Group.

Student representatives hold membership on all of the College's deliberative committees, with involvement and participation in these meetings providing them the opportunity to feedback on the plan, activities, monitoring and evaluation.

## **How and when the financial support included in the plan will be communicated to students.**

The College is committed to ensuring the provision of information to prospective and current students about the College, learning opportunities and support that is available is up-to-date and accessible. We use a range of sources to ensure students have the correct information to make informed choices about their educational opportunities.

Information for prospective students on financial support is available through the College's website ([www.stockport.ac.uk](http://www.stockport.ac.uk) or [www.trafford.ac.uk](http://www.trafford.ac.uk)) and is published within the higher education prospectus. Financial support is provided within open events and guidance sessions prior to enrolment, as well as additional drop in financial support workshops.

Students can access information on financial support through the college's website and VLE. All information regarding the College, learning opportunities and support is embedded within Welcome Week induction sessions.

The College is committed to ensuring the Access and Participation Plan and this supplementary information is available to prospective and current students.

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