

PETROC

Summary of 2021-22 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how universities and colleges will improve equality of opportunity for students from underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. You can see our full access and participation plan [here](#).

Key points

Petroc is a large, successful Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) college that has campus sites in Barnstaple, North Devon, and Tiverton, Mid Devon. The main communities served by Petroc are North, Mid and East Devon, Torridge and North Cornwall. As the only provider of FE and HE within a 40-mile radius, Petroc offers a broad and diverse curriculum to suit the requirements of our local communities.

The college has 'big ambitions' for our HE provision and our students. Northern Devon is an area which is characterised by low wages, poor transport links and a population with lower-level qualifications when compared with the national average. Consequently, we work across the college, with our local schools and community to raise aspiration, offering progression pathways and promoting the benefits of higher education and careers.

Petroc recruits the vast majority of our HE students locally with 97 percent of students coming from less than 30 miles away. The demographic of our student cohort is slightly different to a typical university with only a quarter of students aged under 21 years, two thirds of our students identify as female and just over a quarter of our students are studying part-time. We schedule our teaching for part-time students on one or two days each week and our full-time provision is taught over two or three days. This ensures our students can continue in employment and/or maintain their caring responsibilities.

Fees we charge

Our tuition fees for higher education programmes are £9250/year for full time programmes and up to £6,166/year for part-time courses. Usually, you would apply for Higher Education [Student Finance](#) to cover the tuition fees. Our fees are published on our website [here](#).

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Financial help available

If you are studying a full-time course, you may be eligible for maintenance support as well as a tuition fee loan. The maintenance loan helps to cover your day-to-day expenses. You would start repaying those loans through a small monthly contribution, once you have finished your course and after your income is over or £25,375 a year (£487 a week). In addition to the loans, Petroc offers a range of bursaries that do not need to be paid back. These bursaries are designed to support students with 'set up' costs of starting a HE programme, for example, to buy a laptop or bus pass. Support bursaries are available for students from low-income families, for part-time mature students, and students with disabilities. The College also runs a Hardship Fund for any student experiencing emergency or unexpected financial costs. Again, these funds do not need to be paid back.

Information for students

We provide information on fees and financial support to prospective and current students. For more information please email HE@petroc.ac.uk or go to our [website](#).

What we are aiming to achieve

Our plan looks to improve the access to HE and good degree outcomes for part time, mature students and increase the proportion of students from low participation neighbourhoods. Our plan looks to improve the continuation rates, attainment gap and good degree outcomes for mature students with disabilities. Our plan looks to improve the proportion of students who progress to employment or further study from the following backgrounds: mature students, students with disabilities, care-leavers and/or students from low participation neighbourhoods.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

We are welcoming to all students. With half of our students living in the lowest HE participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 quintile 1 and quintile 2) we provide a range of bursaries to support students from low-income families, mature part-time students and students with disabilities. We have a dedicated Academic Skills Adviser to support all students before they begin their studies at Petroc and throughout their course.

The College emphasis for higher education is on entrepreneurship and progression to careers. All our programmes are geared towards the local economy and have modules focused on developing graduate and employability skills. Living in a rural setting, students

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need to be supported in building industry and employer links. We encourage all our students to participate in our internship work experience scheme. This is extremely valuable for our students and is supported by an internship bursary, through the access and participation plan, for students who are mature students, students with disabilities, care-leavers and/or students from low participation neighbourhoods.

We work with the University of Plymouth who validate the majority of our HE programme provision. We offer mainly foundation degrees, higher apprenticeships, HNDs, HNCs and a small number of degree 'top up' courses to BA/BSc (Hons) awards. Students who have a business idea are also encouraged to work with our centre for Innovation (Cotie) to start up a business. Our locality means that entrepreneurship is key in growing the local economy and creating new jobs. This activity is supported by a start-up grant, through the access and participation plan, for students who are mature students, students with disabilities, care-leavers and/or students from low participation neighbourhoods.

How students can get involved

Each programme has nominated student representatives. Students are encouraged to feedback their comments on our access and participation work to their reps, to the Student Union at either Petroc or the University of Plymouth or directly to our HE team (HE@petroc.ac.uk).

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Petroc undertakes annual monitoring and impact evaluation of our access and participation plan with the evaluation including analysis of each of our target groups. We monitor, on a monthly basis, applications to our bursary support and the hardship fund. We get monthly feedback from our Academic Skills Advisor, Programme Managers and our Guidance and Wellbeing teams to enable us to support our students.

Contact details for further information

For further information on our access and participation plan please contact
HE@petroc.ac.uk