

Access Participation Statement 21/22

Oxford Business College

Key Message

The College reaches out to students from a diverse range of communities. We focus primarily on those unable to take advantage of opportunities that others take for granted. All students who place their future in our hands are encouraged to see this as a fresh start and to be forward looking. With the right guidance and support, we believe that all our students can overcome the challenges they face and exceed their own expectations. The key message to students therefore is:

“It’s not where you come from, but where you choose to go”.

Vision

OBC aspires to be a private higher education leader in the UK that delivers a world-class business education by providing a top learning environment coupled with university partnerships. The College recruits staff from a wide range of communities, with 48% of staff from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group, who understand the circumstances that prevent many people from applying for higher education. The strong and diverse team is committed to widening access to higher education. They are keen to use their experience and skills to enhance student learning and development, and they are encouraged and inspired by our vision:

“To be a leader in the field of personalised business education by providing each student with the most supportive learning experience in order to achieve a wider societal impact”.

Mission

We have taken steps to transition from a pathway College to a degree providing College with increased student numbers, new university partnerships with a personalised teaching ethos. The academic and administrative teams offer creative solutions with flexible, tailored services that guide and support students from initial contact to eventual academic success. We take our social responsibility seriously and prepare students to make valuable contributions to real business contexts in the local community. The steps we have taken, including the cultivation of key student-centred attributes, set the College on the path to accomplish our overall mission:

“To transform lives by helping students become business leaders with innovative thinking, knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in the real business world”

Values

- **Inclusive** - “Celebrating diversity by respecting and valuing all cultures and backgrounds”
- **Supportive** - “Mindful of the well-being and learning needs of our community through a comprehensive support network.”
- **Empowering** - “Empowering students and staff with the knowledge and skills to transform their lives and the lives of others.”
- **Entrepreneurial** - “Entrepreneurial in our attitude to business and the delivery of our education.”
- **Global** – “international in our outlook, reach and delivery.

ACCESS

Aim: commitment to widening participation and social mobility

- Growth in provision to allow choice and flexibility
- Simple and affordable fee structure
- Fees to remain at the basic level
- Targeted marketing
- Scholarships and bursaries

OBC is committed to widening participation and social mobility by providing access to Higher Education from those coming from non-traditional routes, as highlighted in our values. It is important that Oxford is recognised not only for its affluence but extreme deprivation and disadvantage. Therefore, when considering the 2011 census data relating to levels of education across Oxford, 43% of individuals held a degree compared with the 27% average across England. Yet, these statistics about Oxfordshire obscure several areas of deprivation across Oxford where HE participation levels are low.

It is also important to understand the local population of Oxford, of which 22% is Black, Asian and/ from minority ethnic groups, which declines to 8% when analysing the county of Oxfordshire. This figure can be compared with the diverse intake of entrants at OBC, in Table 1 below. The College is committed to further supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring rigorous support mechanisms, through the delivery of small group tutorials. The College has initiated a scholarship programme, which will offer five scholarships per year to students from a low-socioeconomic background. The scholarship will allow students to complete a Level 4 programme of their choice and continue to complete the degree (Levels 5 and 6) with further financial support. The College will invest in marketing resource to target prospective students who would benefit from these scholarships.

	Oxford City	OBC entrants in 17/18	OBC entrants in 18/19	OBC entrants in 19/20
% of individuals from a Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) background	22	34	40	31

Table 1: ethnicity of entrants

The largest age groups at the College are those over the age of 25, with a national decline in adult/mature learners seeking to study, OBC is bucking the trend. The College will continue to target mature students.

Age Group	All HEIs%	OBC 17/18 %	OBC 18/19 %	OBC 19/20 %
Under 21	46	24	18	27
21- 24	25	35	26	31
25+	29	44	58	55

Table 2: age of entrants

SUCCESS

Aim: to continue to improve student success rates

- Quality assurance and improvement strategy
- Tutorial and additional support to improve retention
- Wellbeing support and mental health
- Financial support

Student support has always been a prominent feature of the College's provision. Historically the College specialised in providing personalised support to every student in relatively small classes with a high tutor to student ratios. As the student population has grown, the College has taken steps to maintain the same ethos, and every student receives individual support according to their needs. Students under-go initial skills assessment as part of the induction process and this information generates their learning plans. The College's teaching is student-centred, specifically designed to meet the diverse needs of students. In addition, the academic teams offer (academic) support clinics and workshops focussing on study skills to facilitate student progress. The impact of student support can be highlighted in student Individual Learning Plans which highlight progress made. The College 'Student Voice' is another opportunity for students to feedback on their learning experience and the College to address areas of improvement.

The College, aware of the needs of our students, offers free English support sessions to all students to support the development of language acquisition alongside the study of their chosen subject. Alternatively, students can engage with the online platform, which contains a wide range of self-study materials at various levels, to meet the needs of the student. OBC is British Council accredited, and the courses offered allow students to gain a certified course if they wish.

The College offers a consultation service with a qualified Counsellor. There is an open-door policy, allowing students to contact any staff member at any time without appointments and only make appointments if staff are not available. The Welfare Officer provides guidance and support to the Student Council to ensure it can represent the needs and interests of students to the Academic Board and Board of Governors. The Welfare Officer also leads on a well-established social programme to facilitate a welcoming and inclusive environment. OBC recognises the need to provide support in the classroom and ensure that students have a healthy balance between studying and taking time out. The College will continue to provide opportunities for development and growth outside of academia in the form of sport and social activities.

PROGRESSION

Aim: to increase opportunities for progression into work

- Develop progression partnerships into further study or employment
- Developing partnerships with employers to facilitate work placement opportunities

The College is engaged with a range of employers and actively working to enhance its network to support work placements. This allows students to gain real-life experience, and an opportunity to apply theoretical concepts learnt in the classroom. Wherever possible, students are given the opportunity to attend employer-led talks on site, whilst part of the welfare team is dedicated to supporting employability skills.

OBC's activities are underpinned by the Equality and Diversity Policy and associated policies, which promote inclusive practices and an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students and staff alike. In providing the best possible opportunities for students to improve their long-term outcomes, the College ensures value for money.