



Access and Participation Statement

Introduction

London School of Commerce and IT (LSCI) is a dynamic college providing Higher and Further Education in London, located within easy reach of London Zone 1 stations in the Borough of Tower Hamlets. We focus on recruiting students from the local community, which mainly consists of groups which are under-represented within higher education, onto courses at RQF levels 4 and 5. The college has a well-defined management committee structure and an organisational diagram including staff roles and responsibilities.

LSCI has been reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for the last six years and meets UK expectations for the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the awarding organisation, the quality of student learning opportunities, the quality of information about learning opportunities and the enhancement of student learning opportunities. We are also accredited by Matrix Standards for our Information, Advice and Guidance services. We have been working in partnership with Pearson for the last seven years and hold Direct Claim Status for certifications.

This Access and Participation statement is produced in accordance with the Office for Students Regulatory Advice 7 themes and addresses LSCI's approach to the national priorities of student access, success and progression.

Theme 1: The areas we are seeking to address

Access

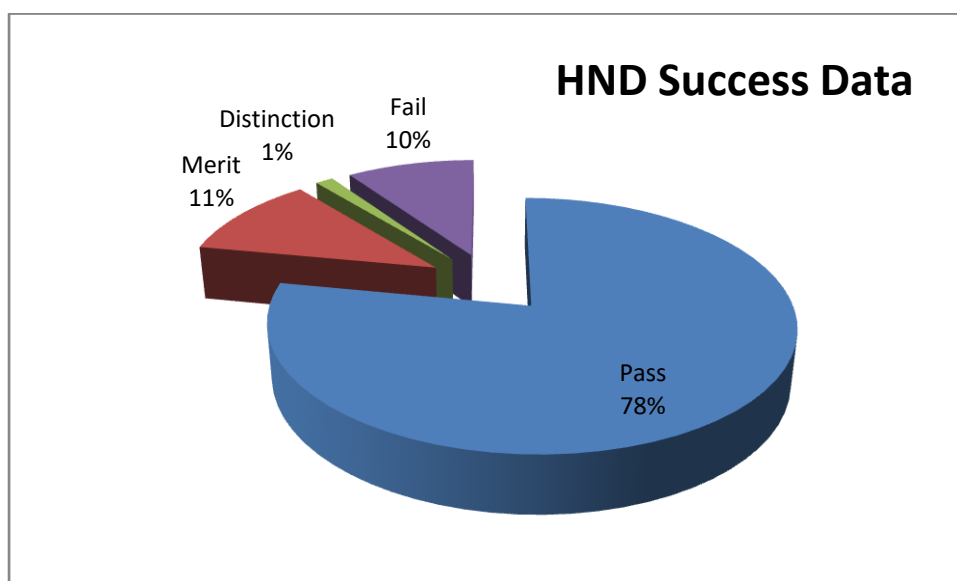
The table below shows our student recruitment data into higher education.

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Ethnicity	Black	9	8	0	40
	Asian	41	37	0	9
	White	0	0	0	0
Background	Employed	30	28	0	1
	Education & Training	2	2	0	42
	Not in Education Employment or Training	18	15	0	6
Age	19 to 30	16	14	0	1
	30 to 50	33	30	0	18
	50 plus	1	1	0	30
Total Students		50	45	0	49

The above table shows our history of providing access to Higher Education for under-represented groups. We are committed to provide continued access to these groups through further marketing within the local community to increase their social status, standard of living, access to job market and their employability skills.

Success

We have achievement (passing) rates of 90 percent with 12 percent higher grades for our last cohort of Level 5 Higher National Diploma students (2014-16). Our current learners are also strategically managed to achieve a target of above 90 percent success rate, by applying appropriate interventions as required.



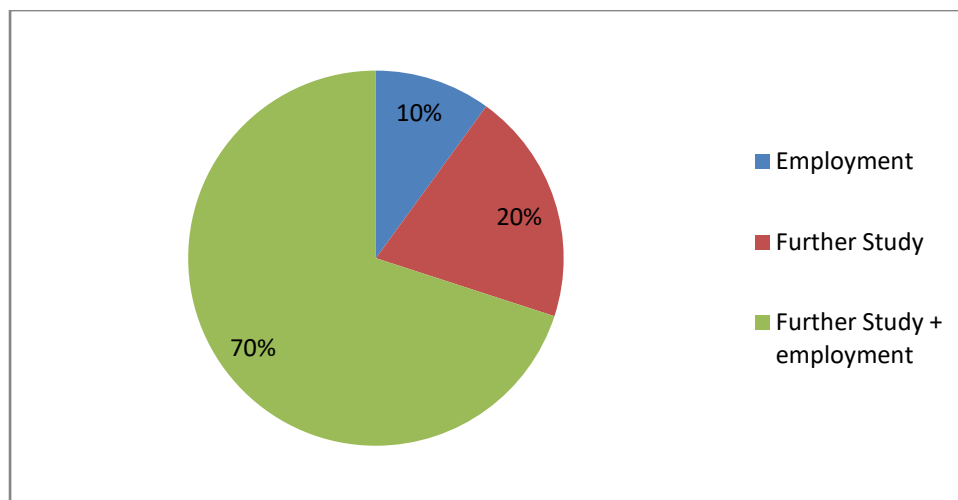
Progression

The educational opportunities that we provide enable the vast majority of our students to progress on to further academic study. This was full-time study in conjunction with some form of employment, with 90% going on to achieve a top-up degree at a recognised university.

From our last cohort 70% of learners progressed into additional higher education and employment, 20 percent solely into further study, and the remaining 10 percent solely into employment.

The below pie chart shows progression of our students to the various destinations.

Progression Data



Population by ethnic group in Tower Hamlets – overview

The new Census (2011) figures provide valuable intelligence about the nature of diversity in the borough and how it is changing. Key findings include: More than two thirds (69 per cent) of the borough’s population belong to minority ethnic groups (i.e. not White British): 55 per cent belong to BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups and a further 14 per cent are from White minority group.

The figure below shows the detailed ethnic composition of the borough’s population according to the 2011 Census classification into 18 different ethnic groups – the chart illustrates the borough’s rich ethnic diversity and its distinct ethnic profile.

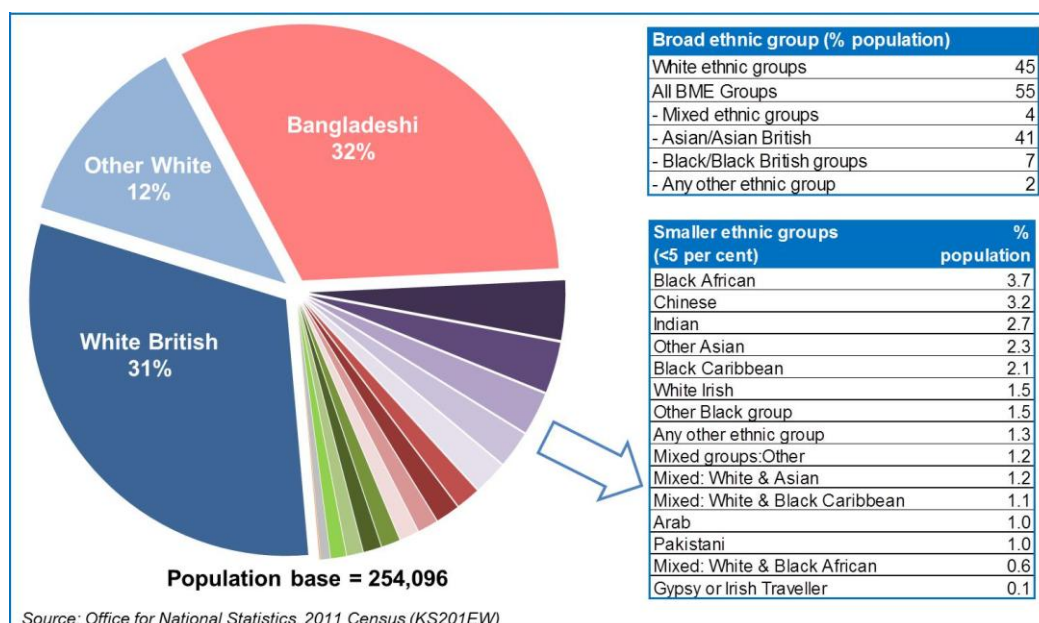


Figure: Population by ethnic group, Tower Hamlets, 2011 Census

Meeting the needs of local areas

The Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2015 shows that Tower Hamlets suffers from more deprivation than any other local authorities across Greater London. Engaging with the local community has been vital in attempting to right this wrong and bring the local community into a state of work readiness. We have established links with community leaders to help raise the aspirations of the local population.

Due to being a relatively small independent learning provider, LSCI is able to adapt quickly to the changing needs of the local community. This has enabled LSCI to swiftly put in place provision that meets the needs of local employers, helping to fulfil their requirements for skills and employees.

LSCI is fully aware of London Local Enterprise Partnership priorities and in particular their focuses on:

- Ensuring Londoners have the skills to compete for and sustain London's jobs;
- Supporting and growing London's businesses;
- Promoting enterprise and innovation;
- Diversifying London's economy.

This helps prioritising our courses to meet the local industry needs.

Widening Participation Strategy

Widening Participation aims to remove the barriers to higher education, from under-represented backgrounds such as

- people from lower socio-economic groups or from neighbourhoods where higher education participation is low
- people from low-income backgrounds
- mature and part-time learners
- people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups
- carers
- refugees

The key strength of the College, and our main objective, is our focus on widening participation in higher education by students from under-represented backgrounds. Our success in this is evidenced by the fact that about 95 percent of our students belong to one or more of the above groups. College staff particularly work hard to attract applications from

mature students and those from minority ethnic groups with the aim of improving their academic success and progression.

LSCI has traditionally recruited a significant proportion of its students from within underrepresented communities resulting in a strong widening participation baseline.

The underlying principles of LSCI highlight the College's focus on access, participation, and diversity:

- **Caring for individuals:** we care about the development, success, and well-being of our students, and believe that a better future means quality education for all;
- **Commitment:** we support our students with the help they need to succeed in their professional aspirations;
- **Academic excellence:** we ensure a high quality of success through our standards of teaching and engaging learning methodologies;
- **Community and diversity:** we promote and encourage diversity within the College and are proud to embrace students from all backgrounds.

Areas for further development

To make provision accessible to the community as a whole, the College is seeking to continue to work even more closely with cultural organisations and community groups with whom we already have long standing relationships. Our intention is to ensure that our provision can be accessed in the community and provide additional assistance to disadvantaged and hard-to-reach individuals. Improving the reputation of the College and our strong links with the local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, local cultural and community groups will help in achieving the College vision.

Theme 2: Our Ambitions and Strategy

Our Vision:

The College's vision is to recruit students mainly from under-represented communities and steer their positive career progression towards employment, higher education and entrepreneurship.

To achieve this vision, LSCI is committed to celebrate diversity, sustainability and success through openness and transparency. We operate a policy of ethical fairness and mutual respect throughout to prevent all forms of unfair discrimination that might occur.

Aims:

Our overall aim is to provide higher and further education to students to enable them to achieve their desired qualifications, skills and entrepreneurial abilities for a positive career progression.

Objectives:

- Provide high quality higher and further education
- Add value to students' current qualifications, skills and experiences
- Increase motivation and self esteem, through provision of appropriate support
- Enhance students' employability and entrepreneurial skills
- Meet the skills gap of the local community
- Continuous improvement of our provision through monitoring and review

The management and leadership of LSCI have a long and sound history of working within the education sector. We are committed to providing high standards of teaching by qualified, experienced tutors for our students within an inclusive and supportive environment.

The College strategy is focused on providing access to higher education to learners from under-represented (e.g. minority ethnic sectors) and socio-economically disadvantaged groups and reversing the decline in higher education participation by mature students from under-represented groups. Our success in achieving this is demonstrated by the table on page 1 showing the breakdown of our student population by ethnicity, background and age.

Theme 3: Our activities and support for students

The college is actively involved in working with community leaders to engage students from underrepresented Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. LSCI actively engages with local businesses to ensure that the provision on offer actually reflects the requirements of the local job market, thus establishing sound progression paths into employment

LSCI's premises are newly refurbished with adequate IT facilities and 15 classrooms. We provide students with "an appropriate range of learning resources, including rooms with information technology provision, a bespoke VLE and a library" (November 2016 Quality Assurance Agency review). Additionally, due to LSCI's close links with Job Centre Plus and the local community and socio-cultural organisations that we collaborate with, we are able to position ourselves in the heart of the community, thus making our provision accessible to all.

We ensure that we maintain robust assessment practices and the delivery of quality provision.

Track Record – Delivering High Quality Education and Skills

The quality of our provision is reflected by the following comments from Pearson's External Verification report of 2 July 2018 :

"It was clear from analysing the structure and roles at this centre that there is a collegiate, collaborative and interactive learning environment, supported by an exchange of information and ideas."

"The Level 5 Diploma Education and Training (DET) is a tightly-managed programme with clear structures, roles and responsibilities of managers, teachers and students. Programme areas are well-monitored and unambiguous i.e. they show clearly who is responsible for which part of teaching and assessment, with regular minuted meetings and subsequent action plans showing planned and feasible future development of this programme..."

"There is evidence of a student-centred philosophy that is focused on students as participants in the decision-making process, including the opportunity for students to initially approach those tasks that they feel most confident in."

"Assessment and IV processes are performed by occupationally competent professionals... who clearly illustrate their experience of the qualification's requirements.... IV feedback shows effective monitoring and effectiveness of provision at this centre."

During the HER (AP) full review in 2016 the QAA review team identified the following features of good practice at London School of Commerce and IT Ltd:

- *“the effective use of independent learning plans to develop the potential of students identified as being at risk of failure;”*
- *“the structured approach to detailed formative feedback on assessed work aligned with grade descriptors, which enhances students' understanding of their potential attainment.”*

Robust policies and procedures are in place, which include Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and Prevent, which are reviewed annually. These aspects are covered in the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC) meetings. Regular CPD is provided to staff to ensure currency of knowledge in these areas as well as within their own technical areas of expertise.

The College has established relationships with the local Jobcentre Plus to ensure they have a sound understanding of the provision offered but also to gain an understanding of any local educational gaps. This has enabled us to adapt our provision to meet the changing needs of the local community which has resulted in excellent progression rates.

Students are supported through a well-managed induction programme, where new students are provided with crucial information about the College and the course. All students are invited to provide feedback through formal processes such as feedback questionnaires and participation in formal committee meetings.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment is regularly observed to assure the quality of provision. Exit reviews with students are conducted at the end of the course to understand their overall experience and provide support for progression and destination.

Student Support

Initial assessment identifies and measures any skills gaps as well as student's current attainment, their understanding the level of English and maths, any barriers they have to learning (including additional learning needs), their employment aspirations and any employability obstacles that need to be overcome providing an understanding of the student's starting point. This ensures that appropriate support is in place to deliver the qualifications and soft skills required to gain sustainable employment.

Students' Individual Learning Plans (ILP) are maintained on a regular basis during tutorial sessions to ensure students are fully supported in their study and stretched to achieve their potential. By recognising the non-educational needs, the ILP supports students with their decision making, teamwork and emotional intelligence to enable them to realise their full potential and gain employment or higher levels of education.

Students are advised to attend jobs fairs to gather information and increase their confidence, gain support with producing CV, cover letters etc. The optional Cultural and Entrepreneurs clubs have proved greatly beneficial to our students in gaining employment. *"The College has arrangements and resources that are effective in enabling students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential The cultural and entrepreneur student clubs, which take place outside the academic timetable, provide an opportunity for students to broaden their interpersonal and organisational skills as well as their employability. In addition to social activities, the clubs' internal and external activities provide students with relevant and useful skills in writing curricula vitae and in interview techniques."* (November 2016 QAA full review).

Standardisation meetings are conducted every semester to ensure consistency in assessment so that the assessors can give fair, unbiased, developmental feedback. This was highlighted by QAA in their full review visit in 2016 as *"Marked assignments demonstrate that feedback to the students is detailed, timely, constructive and developmental, and clearly indicates how a student could have achieved a higher grade."*

Student engagement and involvement is ensured through their representation in academic committee meetings to express their views and action accordingly. Student feedback is collected and analysed every semester to evaluate the teaching and learning experience, student support, IAG services, management and governance etc.

The College provides information and support to past, current and prospective students in the following areas:

- Course Information and Enrolment
- Welfare and Funding
- Careers and progression
- Learning support

The College strongly believes that the benefits of the course offered are not confined to the classroom and supports student learning experience through pastoral care and welfare support. Eligible students are provided with discounted travel cards and maintenance loans through student finance.

This access and participation statement has been produced in consultation with the students, staff, and management of the London School of Commerce and IT.