



Access and Participation Statement

Mattersey Hall College was founded in 1909. It moved to its current location in the village of Mattersey, in 1973. The College is wholly owned by Assemblies of God Inc. with whom it shares the campus. The denomination has around 600 assemblies served by 1,200 accredited ministers. Around half of our annual undergraduate intake is from within Assemblies of God. This means, too, that a significant proportion has other denominational affiliations. Our admissions policy also has provision for applications from students with non-Church backgrounds who are sympathetic to the ethos of the College.

We currently offer degree programmes validated by the University of Chester. These are: a BA in Biblical Studies and Theology, a one-year Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies, MAs in Missional Leadership, Practical Theology and Biblical Studies, a Doctor of Ministry and an MPhil/PhD programme.

Mattersey Hall College is committed to widening access to, and participation in, Higher Education. This entails making the possibility of involvement in HE more widely known, increasing availability and removing potential barriers to study. We do this by:

- a) Encouraging those who would not otherwise think about, or consider themselves suitably qualified to apply for, study on a HE programme.
- b) Making potential students aware of the time commitment and workload associated with courses of study. This allows them to make informed decisions, and seeking to find solutions to potential problems to learning.
- c) Offering different modes of delivery of programmes to cater to different students' circumstances, and
- d) Offering appropriate support, geared to student needs, to enable them to make the most of their time at College and to realise their potential and achieve the best degree they can.

We encourage wider participation through our involvement with groups and organisations outside the usual HE forum. This includes having staff and faculty members speak to churches and conferences, both within our immediate constituency (AoG) and within other church groups. This raises the profile of pursuing further training and continuing professional development through appropriate academic programmes. A significant number of our current students have come to Mattersey through this means. Most current

students at Mattersey Hall are also involved with churches as part of their course, and this, too, raises the profile of the College and of academic study among a wider audience. Former students also publicise the College and we have recently had serious enquiries about the degree programme from clients who have been helped by homeless projects.

Whilst we encourage excellence in our academic standards, we are willing to admit mature undergraduate students, who may not have formal Level 3 qualifications, but who show, through conversations at interview and the submission of an essay, that they have the potential to complete the programme. In 2016–17, 41% of Level 4 students entered Mattersey Hall on this basis. 73% of them went on to achieve grades of over 50% by the end of Level 4. This represents a significant achievement. The current overall level of students at Mattersey Hall without formal entry-level qualifications is 35%. Several students come with no academic qualifications at all. One recent student was brought up in severe poverty in a very deprived area. He left school at fourteen and became involved with gangs. He came to Mattersey Hall with no academic qualifications, and achieved a second-class degree. A current student, with learning difficulties, felt written off by the educational system. Again, he came to us with no academic qualifications, and is also on course for a second-class degree. Continuation rates among full-time students exceeds 85% according to our most recent TEF metrics. There is no noticeable difference in continuation rates between those with and without Level 3 qualifications on entry. We do not have sufficient historical data to make a statistically valid comparison of final outcomes, particularly in relation to the attainment of ‘good degrees’. We will, however, monitor the current cohorts and provide appropriate outcome data when it is available.

There is also provision for MA applicants without formal qualifications to enrol on the basis of considerable church and leadership experience.

Outcomes for the last three years at BA and MA levels are set out below.

BA	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
First	4	14%	4	16%	2	7%
2.1	19	63%	12	48%	18	60%
2.2	6	20%	7	28%	10	33%
3	1	3%	2	8%	0	0%
2.1 & above	23	77%	16	64%	20	67%

These have not been correlated with entry data, which has only been collected for the last two years. Future statements will include correlations where more entry data is available.

MA	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	
	No.	%	No.		No.	%
Distinction	5	31%	0	0%	3	21%
Merit	8	50%	3	50%	9	64%
Pass	3	19%	3	50%	2	14%
Merit & above	13	81%	3	50%	12	83%

We are committed to widening access and participation across age groups. The proportion of mature students at Mattersey Hall is significant: 67% of our current students were aged over 21 on entry. 36% of current students were aged over 40 on entry, and more than half of those were aged over 50. It is clear that those who have not studied for many years find the programmes more challenging. Nevertheless, an analysis of data for the 2016–17 intake shows that 75% of those aged 40 and above on entry achieved grades of 50%–69%.

We also seek to widen access and participation by keeping our tuition fees at a low level. Fees for our BA programme in 2018–19 are currently set at £6850, and these are among the lowest in the sector. We do not have precise data on the economic background of students. There is, though, a substantial dependence on student finance. All eligible students apply for student finance, and over 50% of full-time on-campus students receive higher levels of maintenance. We also have limited bursaries available to help students who are not in receipt of student finance. In 2016–17, £2400 was distributed among four students.

Amongst current students at Mattersey Hall, 26% are from Black and Ethnic Minority groups, while 74% are White British. We very much appreciate the ethnic and cultural mix of students. There is no noticeable difference in the overall levels of performance of different ethnic groups.

Potential students are made aware of what is involved in pursuing a degree programme. Those who are thinking about taking a HE course with us are invited to a ‘Taster Days, where, over a two-day period, they see the College, talk to current students and sample something of student life, including a sample lecture. The subsequent application process includes a formal interview, in which information about the programmes of study, and practical issues relating to it are discussed, and options for overcoming potential difficulties are considered. There is also a programme of induction that helps students to be aware of the responsibilities of participating in a HE programme.

Most of our students enrol on a full-time, campus-based programme. This includes teaching, but also wider personal and spiritual formation, through campus-based activities. We realise, though, that this is not possible for all students, and we offer several

variations, including a part-time campus-based programme and full- and part-time Distance Learning options. In recent years, numbers on the Distance Learning programmes have grown. This provides access to HE provision to students who would not, otherwise, be able, often for practical reasons, to study for a degree. We are currently working on enhancing our Distance Learning provision, through better access to key resources, audio and video files of on-site teaching, and increased direct engagement with students via VLE.

We also have adapted the delivery of our Level 4 modules and made them available to the wider public as 'short-courses', in which visitors sit in lectures alongside our undergraduate students. These short courses are not validated, but they introduce a wider audience to the possibility of engaging in academic learning, and so, again help to widen access and participation.

Widening access involves, too, offering appropriate student support, in order to secure progression and successful completion of their programme of study. Students receive pastoral support from the Pastoral Team (headed up by the Vice Principal), through mentoring groups led by members of staff, and through the general availability of members of faculty and staff. Academic support takes the form of study skills sessions, substantial help from the Research Centre manager and open-door access to the academic team. We will seek to work with students to resolve issues that may arise with their course and offer a range of options, which may include changing the mode of learning, to enable them to complete their academic programme. In our recent TEF metrics we received a rating for 'Academic Support' of over 92%. Our goal is to enable all students to perform to the best of their ability and to achieve their potential.

There is considerable support, too, for students with learning disabilities, primarily through our dedicated Disability Officer, who applies the College's Disability Policy. Students with learning disabilities are contacted on acceptance, and where necessary helped through the process of post-16 assessments. Through staff training sessions and regular communication, all lecturers are made aware of the importance of taking learning needs into account in their teaching, including their use of appropriately revised learning resources and visual aids. All students with learning disabilities are given extra time to submit assignments. Currently, 10% of our undergraduate student body have diagnosed learning disabilities. Both historically and within the present cohort, the performance of students with learning disabilities is consistent with that of other students who entered College with similar qualifications.

The Disability Officer, working with other staff, will also offer support to students with physical disabilities, to ensure access to teaching and learning. Most teaching areas are on the ground floor, with full wheelchair access. The Chapel and part of the Research Centre is on

the first floor. These are both served by a lift. There are no students with stated physical disabilities amongst current on-campus students.

Our goal is to make the training that we offer, which has the degree programme at its centre, available and accessible to a widening range of students. A significant proportion of our students come to us without formal academic qualifications, and many are unlikely, otherwise, access Higher Education. Given the range of backgrounds from which our students are drawn, and the high proportion of successful outcomes, we believe that our goal is largely being fulfilled. We will, nevertheless, continue to work hard to increase access and improve our provision.

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