



## **Nazarene Theological College ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

Nazarene Theological College, as part of its strategic vision, makes the following affirmation:

*To develop our capacity for academic innovation within the context of a learning community we will develop flexible and accessible approaches to education for all, recruiting widely for a diverse student body.<sup>i</sup>*

This is at the heart of the College's Strategic vision: it is articulated by its Governing Board; it is affirmed and implemented by the Leadership Team; it is embodied by the whole College community. It is supported by other College policies (Equal Opportunity Policy; Admissions Policy), and by the strategic decisions the College makes. The College is committed to offering places for study to those who might otherwise be denied the possibility of a university education, including those who – for whatever reason – have been failed by the school system. We believe that anyone with the necessary ability should be able to progress to Higher Education and as such the College is committed to providing equal access to all, regardless of background, gender, age or any other factor. Here, we outline what the College hopes to achieve in terms of access and participation, how the College has approached the need for access and widening participation in higher education, and we give some examples of the kind of activities that have been implemented to open up access to our higher education programmes.

As part of the *admissions process*, the College provides comprehensive information, advice and guidance. The admissions process is overseen by the Admissions Committee, led by the Dean, to ensure a coherent approach to admissions through consideration of students' prior achievement and experience, career aspirations, and individual learning and welfare needs. All full time undergraduate students are interviewed to assess their suitability for higher level studies and their chosen programme of study, as well as to identify students' support needs, including study skills support, a process in which the Learning Support Coordinator is an active participant.

NTC's approach to *learning, teaching and assessment* is articulated in our LTA Policy. This is built around a commitment to providing an inclusive education that allows all students to achieve their potential, and to access the full range of opportunities NTC offers. The strategy is reflected in the 'Faculty Handbook.' Assessment design and processes ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed and to demonstrate their achievements through a range of assessment modes.

The College has a deeply-held commitment to *student support*. NTC is committed to actively promoting equality of opportunity, ensuring that all students reach their learning potential and achieve success on an appropriate course of study. This means that applicants and students who have disabilities or a specific learning difficulty may be entitled to receive support to enable them to participate as fully as possible in college life and to enable them to complete their programme of study successfully.

NTC is committed to develop *scholarships and bursaries*, ensuring that as wide a range of students as possible are able to access our courses, regardless of their financial, social or cultural circumstances. To this end, we have developed a series of awards, scholarships, bursaries and support activities to enable access to our courses. Many of these awards are supported by our wide range of supporters.

NTC is committed to developing a programme of *Careers Education* which meets the individual needs of the students. NTC is a specialist theological college; our careers provision, therefore, is tailored for that purpose: placement learning offers students the opportunity to develop networks within their chosen vocation, and to develop sets of skills that will enhance their employability; Careers events draw employees and organisations to the campus, offering students the chance to explore prospective avenues of employment; the College operates annual careers events, and provides the chance for one-on-one careers advice, using qualified careers staff.

What is the evidence that our commitments and policies are actually enacted within the institution?

- a) Gender balance at NTC is increasingly even (in 2016 57% of new undergraduate students and 48% of new postgraduate students were women), and the permanent staff team is similarly balanced (50% male, 50% female). The ethnicity balance within NTC has been steadily changing: this year, the overall cohort is 78% white, with this year's intake 71% white.
- b) Though NTC admissions policies are rigorous, seeking to ensure that all who enrol on our courses are capable of study at degree level, and the majority of those accepted onto the course have a Level 3 qualification or above, places are offered to those who do not meet the standard entry requirements. In order to assist these students in particular, the timetable builds in regular study skills support and help for those who have English as an additional language, or who have non-traditional entry qualifications.
- c) Even though its resources are limited, NTC operates bursary and scholarship schemes that are designed to assist those students who lack the economic resources needed to study, and in addition provides a 'hardship fund' that offers small grants to students in financial need. Some £30,000 was awarded in 2015-16.
- d) NTC premises have full disabled access to all teaching and library spaces, and several past and present students make regular use of wheelchairs. Deaf students have successfully studied at NTC at undergraduate and postgraduate level (making full use of signing and notetaking), and there are a significant number who have been diagnosed with dyslexia or a related specific learning disability. Help is given in accessing the government's Disabled Students Allowance where appropriate.

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<sup>i</sup> NTC Strategic Framework, 2015-2020.

