



Newbattle Abbey College

Access and Inclusion Strategy

2018-20

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Newbattle Abbey College was established in 1937 and is set within an historic 16th century building and 125 acre heritage estate. We are Scotland's national adult education residential college, offering extensive support to adults and to young people at points of transition.
- 1.2 As a national college, we work in partnership with a range of national agencies to promote adult learning and adult guidance services. Newbattle plays a strategic national role in adult learning and is the national accreditation centre for two innovative developments to extend access and inclusion: Adult Achievement Awards (AAAs) and Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLAs).
- 1.3 The college also plays a significant regional role in partnership with local authorities and schools. We offer transition programmes to pupils in primary and high schools and to a range of adults facing multiple barriers to learning. Newbattle plays a strategic local role in developing access and inclusion through its active engagement in CPP groups, including Employment and Learning Midlothian (ELM).
- 1.4 Newbattle's curriculum reflects its strong commitment to access and inclusion. We offer:
- Access to HE Courses at SCQF Level 6; social sciences, Celtic studies and primary education
 - NC Rural Skills course at SCQF Level 4
 - Preparation for FE course at SCQF Level 4, jointly delivered with Community Learning and Development partners in Midlothian Council
 - HNC in Social Science – an Associate Student Scheme with Queen Margaret University
 - NC Celtic Studies at SCQF level 6, offering progression from community-based Gaelic programmes
 - AAAs SCQF levels 2, 3, 4 and 6
 - FOLAs at SCQF levels 2-6 and 8

The above curriculum demonstrates extensive planning with local and national partners to promote access and progression in an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

2. Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision	Scotland's Life-Changing College
Mission	To be a national residential learning centre that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promotes lifelong learning• raises aspirations• supports learners in transition• enables learners to change their lives
Values	empower individuals enhance quality act with integrity and mutual respect

3. **Our Strategic Priorities**

Our 6 strategic priorities are:

- developing the curriculum
- developing sustainable partnerships
- strengthening financial sustainability
- exploring estate preservation and potential
- recruiting, retaining and developing staff
- improving processes and performance

4. **Our Commitment to Access and Inclusion**

Newbattle is committed to strengthening its role as an inclusive local and national college, which promotes access and progression for learners, particularly those facing multiple barriers to learning. We recognise that our staff, our facilities, our curriculum and our strategic partnerships are vital in achieving our college mission.

4.1 **Our Curriculum**

- Our 3 Access to HE Courses (Arts & Social Sciences, Celtic Studies and Primary Education) are based on developing supportive access routes for adults returning to learning. Our Access students range from 19 to 60+. Over 75% of our Access students progress to HE annually. In 2017-18, 65% were over 25. Most have few or no qualifications.
- Our Preparation for FE Course is planned and delivered with Midlothian Community Learning and Development as a progression route from community-based programmes for adults facing barriers to learning. The majority of students on this course progress to our Access courses or to other FE options.
- Our Rural Skills programme reflects extensive partnerships with local and national providers to offer accredited options to adults and young people facing multiple barriers to learning. These include behavioural problems, mental health issues and a variety of additional support needs. To promote access and inclusion, our Rural Skills programme includes:
 - introductory courses for adult offenders, developed in partnership with Midlothian Social Work Department
 - transition programmes for P7 – S1 pupils in local primary schools
 - transition programmes for S2-4 pupils outwith mainstream education in local high schools
 - ‘taster’ courses for adults with mental health issues.
- Our Adult Achievement Awards offer accreditation and progression to adults for whom full-time courses are not an option. The AAAs may be undertaken at home, in the workplace, in the community, in voluntary programmes, in prison education programmes and in college for core skill courses. To enhance access, learners may

submit assessments online, with scribe support or by using visual/audio recordings. These awards are unique in Europe.

- Our HNC Social Sciences is an Associated Student Scheme with Queen Margaret University and is designed to accelerate progression to Year 2 of specified undergraduate courses at the university. This facilitates access to HE for many students.
- Our new Forest and Outdoor Learning Awards (FOLAs) are designed to extend access to nationally accredited courses to young people and adults, particularly those facing multiple barriers to learning. Offered at SCQF levels 2-6 and 8, they are accessible to primary and high school pupils, adults of all ages and people with learning difficulties. We successfully piloted the FOLAs with S3 pupils outwith mainstream education.

5. Support for Learning

5.1 Newbattle is one of Scotland's smallest colleges and offers an inclusive, supportive learning environment. In 2017-18, 36% of our students had additional support needs with 3.5% accessing ESOL support. Additional support needs included dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental health issues and neurological disabilities. Many also required sustained support with core skills.

5.2 Student support is offered to students in a variety of ways:

- Each student is allocated a guidance tutor who offers support with academic skills and career guidance and refers students to the Support for Learning staff.
- Support for Learning staff assist students with a range of learning difficulties and offer initial screening for dyslexia. They can also assist students with health and mental health issues to develop their academic skills.
- Counselling support is available via referral from the Support for Learning Tutor to an independent counsellor who supports the college weekly during term time.
- Resources are produced in a variety of formats to support academic study.

5.3 From 2018-19, we plan to enhance our Support for Learning provision in several ways:

- Enhancing the interview process to identify student needs prior to offer; a second interview with the Support for Learning Tutor is offered, if required.
- Timetabled sessions for guidance and drop-in sessions with Support for Learning staff will be integrated into the timetables.
- More extra curricular activities, such as Mindfulness and clubs, will be available to students with mental health issues.
- A formal academic and non-academic induction timetable will be instigated.

6. Student Recruitment and Admissions

6.1 In recent years, Newbattle has reviewed and enhanced its recruitment and admissions procedures to improve access and inclusion:

- Our extensive community partnerships enable us to offer visits and taster sessions to vulnerable learners.

- Our part-time Rural Skills courses have offered a supportive environment to vulnerable learners and enhanced access to full-time courses at Newbattle and SRUC Oatridge Campus.

7. ICT and Assistive Technology

7.1 We have made considerable progress in enhancing ICT support to all learners to improve access and inclusion:

- All learners have college email addresses and can access learning materials and college information via SharePoint, a web based platform which can be easily accessed outwith college.
- Specialist speech recognition software is available to create text documents.
- Digital voice recorders are available for learners to support class work and assessments.
- Key academic texts have been created as audio files.

8. Student Association

8.1 Newbattle's Student Association is elected annually and represents students in all courses:

- advocates for individual students in relation to all aspects of college experience
- works with staff to develop activities and student support groups to promote inclusiveness and encouragement
- promotes equality and diversity.

8.2 Our residential Sub-Wardens, who are former students at Newbattle, enhance the work of the Student Association and provide additional support for residential students.

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

9.1 Our EDI Committee represents students, staff and external partners and meets regularly to:

- Agree EDI outcomes and make sure those are achieved
- Produce related plans
- Monitor EDI in relation to recruitment, achievement, marketing and publicity.

9.2 As a Corporate Parent, Newbattle ensures that additional support is available to care leavers prior to starting college, throughout their studies and before progressing to other opportunities. We work well with a range of external partners to achieve this.

9.3 Students whose first language is not English receive substantial support and advice from Support for Learning staff and teaching staff.