# **Increasing widening participation in the PgCE/ProfCE**

Students on the PgCE/ProfCE are representative of the staff teaching in FE colleges. The majority of the students are categorised as ‘White British’, in the current cohort of 35 students there are 2 [6%] students from ethnic minorities. The cohort is fairly balanced in terms of gender with 16 male students and 19 female students, there are no students who identify outside of this range. There are no students who are from a care/Gypsy/Romany background. Information regarding postcodes and disability are not disclosed to the teaching team as many of the students are also staff at the college. Through informal discussion and support provided to students whilst on the course it is apparent that students who are the first to study at a higher education level do enrol on the course and would benefit from additional support.

A report compiled by ICE and Arad (2019) into the PCET workforce found that upon registering for the EWC:

“ Very few registrants who have provided this information identify as non-White or having a disability although the proportions are higher than for the schools’ workforce. For example, just over 1% of school teachers who provided this information identified as non-White, compared with 4% of FE teachers, 5% of FE support staff and 2% of WBL practitioners. Three per cent of the post-16 sector workforce declared a disability compared with 0.5% of school teachers.” (P. 9).

In order to increase diversity in the cohort and then possibly in staffing at the college a range of strategies are being suggested. Case studies of non-traditional learners are being utilised wherever possible and for marketing purposes is an example of this. This proposal focusses on three strategies aimed at widening participation in the following groups.

Underrepresented groups in teaching include individuals with one or more of these identifiers:

* You have a recognised disability, under [the Equality Act 2010](https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010).
* You come from a looked after/care background as defined by the Welsh Government as being [Children looked after by local authorities](https://gov.wales/children-looked-after-local-authorities).
* You are from an ethnic minority group under [the Equality Act 2010](https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010) and in line with the [Initial teacher education Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic recruitment plan](https://gov.wales/initial-teacher-education-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-recruitment-plan-html).
* You identify as a gender other than male/female
* You are from a family of Gypsy or Romany travellers, under [the Equality Act 2010](https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010).
* The first in their families to study in Higher Education
* From an area of deprivation as set by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). Swansea has 11 wards ranked in the lowest 10% and these students will be eligible. Students can find out if their postcode matches by visiting [Data Unit Wales](https://apps.dataunitwales.gov.uk/welshindexofmultipledeprivation/).
* You have caring responsibility and are aged 25 or younger as defined under the [College Young Adult Carers Policy](https://www.gcs.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Young%20Adult%20Carers%20Policy.pdf)

Students would need to complete an application form online to access the widening participation strategies. They would then need to provide evidence to support their claim. [See appendices 1]

## **Focussed support strategies to increase diversity**

## **Extended induction**

Programme Leader to have a designated two days in the week prior to students starting to provide an introduction to the course, college and workload. Introductions to the support staff available to the students will made during this time and will include: Library, HE Team and SSO. Time will be taken to ensure the students feel settled and supported. The process will be reviewed with the students at the end and the induction will be altered for following years based on their feedback.

## **Access to a Widening Participation [WP] mentor**

This is a new proposal and would entail working with an identified SSO to support their knowledge and understanding of HE and the PgCE/ProfCE requirements. SSO already support WP and have vast links with external organisations, however, many are FE focussed and the services are often aimed at young people. Extending these links to services and strategies for HE would enhance the provision and provide a service to students that is already available in universities but not in FE settings specifically.

## **£250 bursary**

Students who meet the threshold criteria in the six categories listed above will receive a bursary of £250 per year. WP bursaries are often paid at the start of the year to enable students to purchase items that they would need for the course. Two payments will be made – £125 at the start of the year and £125 at the end of semester 1.

## **Appendices 1:**

Examples of documents that can be used as evidence for a Widening Participation Application.

* Evidence of benefits or a benefits assessment for a disability
* A letter from a consultant/GP
* A letter from a recognised source [Council, benefits, bill] with your name and address
* A letter from the Local Authority in relation to previous care/Gypsy/Romany status
* Evidence from a student finance application e.g. Student Finance Wales

### *Updated April 2024*