



## Widening Participation Strategy

### 1. Introduction

The Widening Participation (WP) Strategy aims to clearly outline the current strategies linked to the WP policy objectives. Enablers, future possibilities and plans are also identified to provide a framework for continuous development.

### 2. Current Strategies

**2.1** Through the evaluation of diversity within the current student body, Norland is focused on encouraging applications from the following groups:

- Lower socio-economic groups
- Male applicants
- Students of ethnicities not typically represented within Norland
- Mature applicants
- Applicants declaring disabilities
- Those taking a vocational or work-based route into Higher Education
- Carers/Care Leavers
- Members of the LGBTQIA+ Community

Students are being trained to work with a very vulnerable sector of society – our most young. We must always bear in mind the qualities, abilities and capabilities of those we accept must be considered within the context of our Fitness to Practise Policy.

**2.2 WP Policy Objective 5.1: Raising aspirations:** overcoming all feasible barriers to HE with special consideration towards barriers which have specificity to Norland.

Norland recognises that barriers exist for some students which might ordinarily prevent them from studying at Norland. The following strategies promote the accessibility of Norland.

**Finance:** The 100% employability of our graduates through the in-house Norland Agency, is used to inspire and promote the benefit of HE investment for lifelong career and learning options.

To support applicants and students, Norland has a range of bursaries to support undergraduate degree applicants with the greatest financial need. Bursaries are means-tested and therefore dependent on the completion of a financial statement, which is presented to the Norland bursary committee. If a student is offered a place, conditional or unconditional, bursary application forms are forwarded as a matter of course. Please refer to the Bursary Policy for more information.

Additional costs will be advertised on the website to outline all non-fee outgoings which students will need to pay to be fully engaged at Norland.



**Marketing:** The Marketing team has continued to successfully develop all marketing materials to represent the accessibility of Norland.

Both the 2023/24 Prospectus and Norland website have been further developed to promote transparency of Bursary information and includes a dedicated WP section for the first time. The development of these two platforms has created an exceptionally visual and student orientated point of reference.

Photography used in all marketing material is designed to represent difference at Norland. Marketing has also taken a proactive role to challenge socio-cultural attitudes towards, for example, men in the Early Years.

Through the help of the marketing team, Norland students and staff actively engage in the community as Norland representatives within a variety of different educational institutions across the country, in order to promote accessibility to Norland across different socio-economic areas.

**Student Ambassadors:** Current students are actively encouraged to return to previous educational institutions to raise aspiration through shared experience. All expenses for this activity are paid by Norland.

**2.3 WP Policy Objective 5.2: Fair recruitment and admissions:** with a balanced approach to practical and academic abilities and capabilities, whilst maintaining procedures outlined in the Fitness to Practise Policy.

**Entry requirements:** Norland recognises that the best practitioners have an expansive set of skills and success in the Early Years sector is not often pre-determined by academic aptitude. With the aim to make application to Norland accessible by the largest number of potential students, applications are advertised and made through the UCAS website. Entry requirements are set reasonably low (3 x Cs at A level) with interviews being offered to all those expected to meet the minimum requirements.

**Interview Process:** The interview process is constructed to discover potential. Questions are designed to explore experiences unique and personal to each applicant. In addition to the interview, applicants are invited to share a particular experience of working with children through individual presentation within a group context. This offers the candidates a different opportunity to show potential through a different skill set. Interview comments on both aspects contribute to acceptance decision.

**Equal opportunities:** Norland's Enhancement Plan aims to expand diversity at Norland by 5%.

Norland recognises and values the contribution of diversity to the sector and it is important to note that no applicant shall be treated more or less favourably than any other on account of his or her gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, marital status, civil partnership status, family responsibilities, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, citizenship, religion, political belief, membership (or non-membership) of a Trades Union (or other representative association of employees or students), disability,



age or socioeconomic background. For further and more specific guidance, please see the Admissions Policy.

**Reports:** Enquiries, applications, offers, progression, achievement and employment across the WP target groups are tracked and reported on during annual monitoring activities. E.g. Admissions report, UCAS Annual Cycle report, Annual Equality and Diversity report.

Norland ensures acceptance decisions are based on the holistic potential of all prospective students.

**2.4 WP Policy Objective 5.3: Sustainability:** Support given to students for their entire student journey; from application to employment.

**Range of support:** Norland invests heavily in the ongoing support on offer for students to enable students to thrive throughout the student journey from application to employment. Whilst studying, there is a range of pastoral and academic support available for students with the intention to foster progress and development.

The Personal Academic Tutor system is intended to provide a stable, holistic and developmental form of support for individual students. Each student has a Personal Tutor who can support students both through key transitions and throughout their study. Students are also entitled to individual, course relevant, support from Module Tutors. Students can book appointments with their Tutors and Module Tutors via email or in person at any time.

Teaching groups are within a range of up to 26 students, which not only enables an interactive learning environment between staff and students but also ensures students individuality and needs are cultivated and developed.

Student support is available to all students. Norland employs two Student Support Officers, who have responsibility for providing academic and pastoral support to all students. DSA funded support is outsourced to an experienced organisation called Randstad who continually provides academic tutoring to students who require it.

Pastoral support is integral to healthy learning and development. A counsellor is employed by Norland and students can be referred to this service by self-referral or through their tutor and Student Support Officers. Norland offers up to six counselling sessions for each student with the option of the extension of offer if required. The counsellor also offers drop-in sessions once a week for those wishing to seek impromptu advice.

**Student Engagement:** Norland's Student Engagement Policy outlines Norland's commitment to working in partnership with its students with the intention to enhance all aspects of the student's experience. The student voice is listened to and taken seriously through student participation in committees and feedback collection which is both institutional and course based. The Student Engagement Facilitator role aims to capture both the voice of the students as a whole population but also support aspects which



individually affect students. Through working with students, Norland is able to create an open, developmental and candid approach to student engagement. Norland will also consider the impact of changes on student minority groups, through the appointment of a Student Jury. This is a group should reflect the diversity of the student body, containing representatives from (but not limited to):

- Male Students
- Students of ethnicities not typically represented within the college
- Students with additional learning needs
- Students who are parents or carers
- Commuter Students
- Mature Students
- Students from a care background
- Students from the LGBTQIA+ community.

The opinions of this group shall be sought where significant changes to the learning and provision are proposed, as the impact of these changes may be lost in a majority voting process but could lead to significant impact on these groups.

There is a Here to Hear system through which student mentors are available to students who wish guidance from a peer. Training for this role is offered through the counsellor. In addition, this opportunity is also going to be offered as soon as students are placed in order to support transition to HE.

Support for minority groups is created through the student voice. Currently there is an LGBTQIA+ group that was started by a member of staff and taken over by Norland's LGBTQIA+ student community. The WP lead has facilitated conversation to promote the creation of any other support groups for minorities in Norland, for example, mature students. Students are empowered to create and lead their own groups.

Norland recognises the value of students being participants in Bath's wider and local community. Norland has created links with Bath Spa University and students can obtain Union Membership which enables them to join different interest groups and clubs.

**Continued support:** The NQN team have created a student tailored approach to support students into the Newly Qualified Nanny year and then into employment. Employment lectures start within the second year of study, which gives students both ambition, direction and support. Throughout the NQN year, staff offer a range of individual student and employer support. This ranges from 24-hour email support, an unspecified number of visits depending on student and employer needs and phone calls typically during office hours, but with some understanding to the students' working hours.

Guaranteed employment opportunities are offered through the unique Norland in-house Agency. Staff on this team have a close and supportive relationship with staff, students and employers. Students are supported in, for example, interview prep and support during placed work. A broad range of continuous CPD training is available to all Norland graduates to continue to promote personal progression and development.



**Financial guidance:** The Financing Your Studies Report aims to identify opportunities to widening participation through the identification of more flexible funding options. The report analyses the views of students, collected via an online survey. From the findings, the following strategies have been put into place:

In the first year, during induction week, Financial Advisors offer impartial advice specifically, for students. In addition to this, students are given the contact details for student financial advice, based at Bath Spa University.

Throughout the year, part time work is advertised through the student's Facebook page and on the students 'Free time' portal. In addition, a yearly jobs fayre aims to support external representatives to promote holiday jobs and part time work outside the College. Norland will provide students with a reference for employment and provide guidance and advice when taking holiday employment.

**2.5 WP Policy Objective 5.4: Professionalism:** Ensuring Norland policies and activities are fair, transparent, ethical and address the WP principles.

Transparency plays an integral role in this objective.

**Marketing and Norland Agency:** The Norland website and prospectus encourages full transparency regarding fees, funding, student satisfaction and future employment opportunities. Open day events are used to inform all potential applicants of all College related matters, this includes academic related advice to admission procedures and finance information. Staff and students are there to represent and offer perspectives and experiences to prospective applicants.

**College:** All polices are created and passed through academic board to ensure the Values of Norland are maintained. Policies are also developed in line with Norland's Enhancement Plan and ensure Staff and Students understand both personal responsibilities and the responsibilities of Norland with some specificity to WP and generally to all Norland activity. All Norland's Policies and activities are transparent and accessible to all staff and students through the shared use of SharePoint.

**2.6 WP Policy Objective 5.5: Collegiality:** Staff across all departments to work together and with students to contribute equally to WP activity.

For the WP strategy to be successful, staff across all departments need to work together, along with students, to contribute equally to WP activity. This partnership work needs to further extend out of the Norland network and into the wider community, which includes seeking advice from experts in the WP field.

All departments play an integral role within WP activity. Open dialogue is used to create strategies, principles and objectives. All staff take an active role in WP, with the WP Lead creating a platform for the collaborative development of Policy and Strategy. Norland's Enhancement plan has created the foundations of the WP policy, for example, Strategic Aim 7: Growth for Sustainability, specifically KPI 24: The student demographic will diversify by at least 5%.

Reporting on WP activity is completed annually across departments, for example the Annual Admissions, Student Engagement and Student Support Reports. Through the use of student engagement outlined above, the student voice is fundamental in the sustainability of WP, for example students leading the LGBTQIA+ group.

The Anti-Discrimination Innovation Team (ADIT) is made up of staff from across departments, current students and alumni. The purpose of this team is to discuss widening participation strategy, review inclusion policies and enhance the curriculum to promote anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices. Membership is open to anyone who forms part of Norland's community and provides opportunity for clear communication across the organisation.

### 3. Enablers

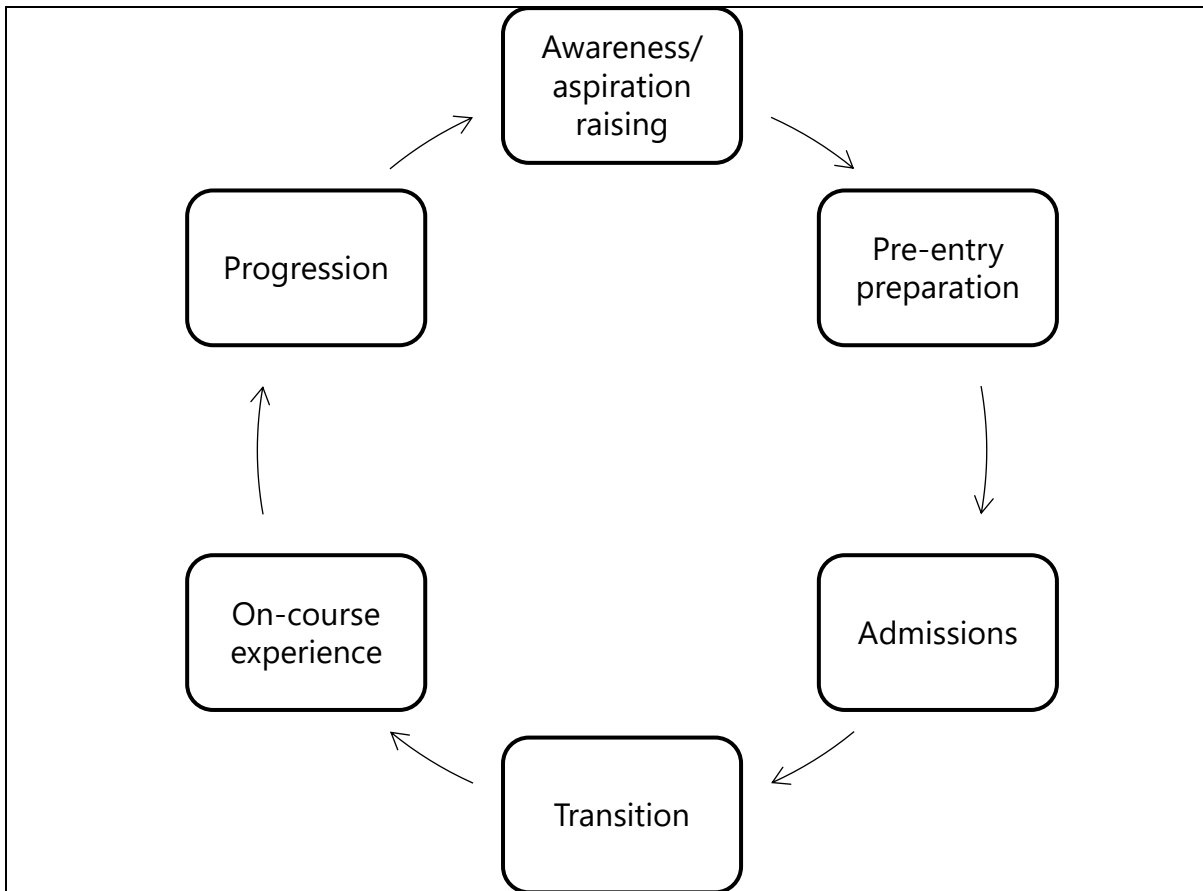
In order to continue to develop and grow the WP strategy there are some key enablers to ensure progression:

**3.1 Research and Development:** Taking an evidence-based approach to future development and to maintain a conduct of continuous improvement.

**3.2 Communication:** Clear communication and understanding is needed to make any WP activity successful. Staff need to be aware of both the WP Policy and Strategy and understand their role within WP activity. Communication also needs to continue outwardly into local and national communities, advertising the culture of acceptance and the celebration of diversity within Norland College.

**3.3 Whole Approach:** When considering how to encourage WP, we must be aware of the following aspects to acknowledge the full life cycle:

*Figure 1: WP life cycle*



#### 4. Future Plans Informed by Applicants

**4.1 Research:** Following the principles outlined in the WP Policy (Principle 4.6), there is a need for a continued evidence-based approach to WP activity, which includes the voice of the student and larger community.

The following research areas are also proposed for investigation:

- the impact working alongside study has on wellbeing and academic achievement;
- evaluation of current community engagement to promote lower participation areas;
- evaluate the outward promotion of minority representation at Norland;
- support available for students pregnant/and or have children/dependants.
- promoting a sense of community within higher education institutions

**4.2 Raising Aspirations Further:** Using current applicant data, the following suggestions are made to further reach target groups and those not yet fully represented at Norland:

- accessibility for students who are parents, pregnant or have dependants, e.g. breastfeeding space, consideration of timetable and changes to timetable;
- accessing lower quintile areas of participation through marketing and external Norland activity;
- Norland to develop and lead a Men in Early Years project;
- parents' information evening about the importance of HE and employment opportunities at Norland;



- creating further interactive platforms for sharing student experiences; Marketing, creating Vlogs/video student experience examples;
- consider further ways to advertise accessibility. For example; Entry requirements; citing CACHE equivalents alongside A levels;
- consider reasonable adjustments of uniform and places of worship.

**4.3 Extended Partnerships:** The expertise of others can contribute to work within Norland in the bid to extend outreach and better understand the wider WP agenda. The following suggestions are made:

- Widening Participation Conferences to explore wider issues at a National level, gain expert advice and create links with other providers and experts;
- relationships created with local and wider WP leads within other educational institutions both at FE and HE level;
- holding WP conversation platforms at Norland for both prospective students, parents and other educational institutions.





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