

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
**FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS**

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wnc.ac.uk/access

COURSE COST AND FINANCE QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
Will I have to pay for the Access to University course?	The course is free for 18-to-23-year-olds who DO NOT have a full Level 3 course (e.g. 2 A Levels, Level 3 BTEC etc.). If you are 18-to-23-years-old WITH a full Level 3, or aged 24+, you can apply for an Advanced Learner Loan which will cover your tuition fees. If in the future, you successfully pass both the Access course and your university degree, this particular loan is written off by the government.
Will I get help with the cost of the Access course?	In terms of the cost of the course, yes you will get help (see above).
Is there any financial support to help with living costs?	You may be eligible for a bursary to help e.g. travel costs, bursary payment. You could be eligible for both the 19+ Student Support Fund and the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Fund.
Is there any financial help with childcare costs?	Depending on your personal circumstances, you may be entitled to help with childcare costs.
How do I apply for financial help in college?	The best thing to do is talk directly to the Student Finance Team – our team of experts can discuss your individual circumstances with you, and identify what you may be entitled to and explain how to apply for it. You can contact the Student Finance Team directly at 01623 900455 , via email at studentfinance@wnc.ac.uk or visit the website wnc.ac.uk/finance

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
What are the entry requirements?	You will need GCSE Maths and GCSE English at grade C (4) or higher as a minimum. For some university degrees you may also need additional qualifications or higher GCSE grades, for example, for Teacher Training you will require GCSE Science or equivalent. It is important you check. A small number of universities also request higher GCSE grades and/or additional GCSEs, for example a B in GCSE Maths and GCSE Science for some midwifery and psychology degrees etc. It is important you check all the universities you wish to apply to before joining the Access course.
I do not have both my GCSEs; can I still join the Access course and study my GCSEs alongside?	We don't allow students to study GCSEs alongside the Access course as in our experience it is too much work and as a result students do not achieve. You might want to consider taking your GCSEs on our course - GCSEs for Access to HE courses.

Question	Answer
I have lost my certificate. What should I do? I studied my GCSEs over 10 years ago but do not have the certificates. What do I do?	Start tracking them down now. You may need to request the exam board details from your old school/college. That school/college may no longer exist, in which case, if you do not know which exam board it was, it is time to catch up with those old school friends.
I have got GCSE English Language, but not maths. However, I have got Functional Skills Maths at Level 2. Can I still join the Access programme? Can I study GCSE Maths alongside my Access course?	We don't allow students to study GCSEs alongside the Access course as in our experience it is too much work and as a result students do not achieve. We do, however, have a Preparation for Study course which will allow you to not only take the GCSE you have missing, but also to upskill in readiness for the Access course.
Are my Functional Skills English and Maths acceptable, instead of GCSE?	Functional skills are especially useful qualifications to have, but unfortunately, for our course, they are not considered to be equal to GCSE. You might want to consider taking your GCSEs on our course - GCSEs for Access to HE courses.
I'm an international student, will my qualifications be accepted?	UK ENIC is the UK National Information Centre and provides information about international qualifications and identifies which UK qualifications they compare to. There are staff who can help with your UK ENIC. You can find out more information at enic.org.uk When considering GCSE English Language, international qualifications are often not comparable. Therefore, you could study GCSE English language alongside our Preparation for Access course to secure your missing qualification. For further information contact the Careers Advice Team on 01623 627191 ex 8173, email careers@wnc.ac.uk or website iag.wnc.ac.uk
Can I study GCSE Science alongside my Access course? If so, how do go about it?	If you have the time, then yes you can. The college offers GCSE Biology. It is worth checking with the universities you are interested in applying to and discuss which science subject at GCSE they will accept. For further information please contact our Enquiries Team via email at enquiries@wnc.ac.uk
I have a criminal record and want to go into social work/nursing/teaching. Will it stop me getting into this college and/or university?	The most important thing is to be honest, and you have already done that by asking the question here. In terms of college, if you have declared it on your application form a member of staff will contact you to discuss this with you. For most applicants, this will not prove to be a barrier to an Access to HE course. In terms of university, contact them and explain your situation. Many Access students with criminal records are still offered university places, but you do need to talk to them to explain your individual situation.

COURSE QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
I would like to start reading around the subject before I begin. Is there a booklist?	Yes, we do provide a booklist within our kitlist on our website. You can find this at wnc.ac.uk/Applicant-zone/Kit-lists.aspx
Can I pick which units are graded and which are ungraded?	The graded units have been carefully selected to give you the best chance of being offered a place when you apply to university. Therefore, the graded and ungraded units are pre-set and you cannot choose which will be graded/ungraded.
I started an Access course a few years ago at a different college. Personal issues prevented me from completing the course; however, I did complete three biology units. Can I use these units, and will they count towards my overall diploma?	There are lots of different Access courses across the country, and each is attached to a different awarding body or exam board. Because of this, units studied on one Access course may be vastly different compared to a unit of the same name on another Access course; therefore, it is often not possible to use previously studied units for this Access course. However, the study you did will really help you in the units on this course, for example, you will already understand some of the terminology.
I really hate to do presentations and/or exams, I get really nervous and stressed. Can I do an essay instead?	All tutors fully understand how stressful presentations and/or exams can be. However, these assessment methods are part of the course. However, if you do feel really stressed, we do have a Student Welfare Team and Wellbeing Hub you can access to help you deal with this anxiety.
If I get a merit for an assignment, but university needs a distinction, can I resubmit it to get a better grade?	Sadly not. Therefore, it is important to manage your time to ensure you achieve the grade you are capable of for each assignment.
I will need to drop my children off at school in the morning before college. I will therefore not arrive to class until 9:40am. Is this OK?	Due to the demands of the programme, it is really important you attend all classes and on time. However, in reality, often when you talk to your friends and/or family, you will be able to put a 'plan' together to help you manage all this. This 'problem-solving' skill is highly desirable at university and one of the key traits they are looking for.
Will I get help with my university application?	Yes, your personal tutor will help you. We also have guest speakers who will talk about university applications, and our Careers Advice Team can help you as well.
You have mentioned UCAS. What is it?	UCAS stands for 'Universities and Colleges Admissions Service'. It's the centralised service that all students use to apply to university. You access it online, and for a fee, UCAS will process your form for all your university choices. Your tutor will help you complete this.

Question	Answer
You have mentioned work experience, I am currently working in a school, just some voluntary work. Is this OK or do I need to get a paid job in a school? Which courses do you need to have a work placement for?	Either paid or voluntary work experience is fine. If you are going to apply for a vocational degree (nursing, midwifery, social work, counselling, physiotherapy, paramedic etc.), you are strongly advised to secure work experience before starting the Access course as a number of universities will not consider your university application without it. So please check with each of the universities you wish to apply to.
I currently work full-time, and I am the only one in the household earning. Can I work full-time and do this course? / Will I still be able to work full-time alongside the course?	The Access course is very intense, and students will need to carry out a lot of individual study in your own time. In September, our courses will be delivered over three days in college plus around 15 hours of self-study at home. Therefore, if you work full-time, only you will know whether you can handle the time commitment necessary to complete this course.
What method of assessment is used on the course?	We use a variety of assessment methods on the different pathways. This allows you to practice for university. They include examinations, presentations, controlled assessments, research projects, posters, work booklets, and essays.
What will our weekly timetable look like? What time do the classes start and end each day? I need to plan my work around it.	In September, our Access course will be delivered over three days in college, plus around 15 hours of self-study at home. Only you will know whether you can handle the time commitment and secure those higher grades needed to get into university. The GCSEs for Access course will be one full day. The Preparation for Access course will be over one day plus a half day per GCSE. Most of the lessons start around 9am each day and will finish at 4.30pm. However, tutorials may run until 5pm on some days, so it is important to factor this in when organising your childcare/work commitments. Your tutor will tell you when you start if there are any changes to this.
What do I need to bring with me to college, e.g. what books, equipment etc?	For the first week of lessons, a pen and paper are the most important items to bring with you. During the first week, your tutor will advise you of any extra items (please ask them if you are unsure).
What days will I be in college?	The simple answer is, we don't know yet. Timetabling will be completed by 1 June 2026 at the latest.
Will the start and finish times be negotiable?	If you miss the start or the ends of lessons, you will be making your life more difficult. For logistical reasons, the start and finish times are set by the timetable and are not negotiable.
Will the days be negotiable?	For logistical reasons, the days that you are in are set by the timetable.
Will the deadlines for assignments be negotiable?	Deadlines are there to make sure you finish the course on time. We do have an extension procedure, if you do need more time, but it is only offered for extenuating circumstances.

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
I think I have dyslexia. Can I get any support?	The college has an excellent support team who can help you. In order to access this, you need to ensure you identified your possible support needs on your application form. The support team will contact you to discuss your needs.
I may need to have time off college due to health reasons i.e. I may need to go into hospital for an operation. What support will I get?	Due to the demands of the course, it is really important you attend all your lessons. For emergency hospital events or for a pre-agreed absence from college to attend hospital, it may be possible to arrange temporary alternative study arrangements. However, any temporary alternative study arrangements need to be agreed by Programme Area Leader Angela Rowntree before you start the course.
I have mental health issues; I suffer with anxiety and sometimes will struggle to come into college. Is this going to be an issue?	Due to the demands of the course, it is really important students attend all lessons. Therefore, it is expected that all students are confident that they will be able to attend their lessons before they enrol onto the course. This will give them the greatest chance of passing the course and progressing on to their chosen university degree. However, tutors are aware that life does not always go as planned. Therefore, if whilst on the course you feel anxious or worried, we can refer you to the Student Welfare Team.
Will there be any support for me?	The college offers a variety of support including The Inclusion Service which can help support with dyslexia, mental health and well-being, autism, disability hearing loss and visual impairment. In order to access this, you need to ensure you identified your possible support needs on your application form. The relevant support team will contact you to discuss your needs
I have been out of education for over 10 years and I'm really worried about returning. I think I may need extra time with the tutors. Is this possible?	All tutors are aware that starting a new course can be stressful. Tutors work hard to make the experience as stress-free as possible. Because of these, we do not assume any prior knowledge in your Level 3 topic areas, and try to ease you in gently.
My child is ill, and I can't come in today. What do I do, and will it impact the course I'm on?	If you have to be off with a sick child, please do not worry. You will be able to access resources on Microsoft Teams to keep up with the work. You can also book 1:1s with a member of the Access Team to help you catch up.

FACILITIES QUESTIONS

Question	Answer
What parking facilities are there at Derby Road?	Parking is available on site and is free.
Is there a nursery at college?	Unfortunately, not; however, it may be possible to secure financial support to help you place your child in a nursery close to you.
What catering facilities are there at Derby Road?	There are catering facilities onsite where you can get refreshments including hot food for your lunch. There are also vending machines for drinks and snacks in the college.
I have mobility issues; will we be on the ground floor or is there a lift?	There are lifts between floors.
What ICT facilities are available at Derby Road?	There will be computers that you can access whilst in college.
Are there accessibility arrangements in place at Derby Road?	Derby Road Campus has been adapted to make it accessible to students with a variety of needs.
Will I have access to books etc.?	We have our own extensive Learning Resource Centre (LRC) at Derby Road, which is fully equipped for our purposes.

