

## **Northampton College Higher Education Access and Participation Statement 2016-17**

Northampton College is committed to providing higher education opportunities for students from all backgrounds in order that they can progress to top-up degrees and into employment with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to be successful.

It is recognised that students will not enter higher education from the same starting points and the entry criteria and admissions process at the College are designed to offer higher education to applicants who may not have been academically successful in school or who may not have followed traditional routes into higher level study. Applicants who do not meet the standard entry criteria will normally be interviewed and may be offered a place on an HNC or HND programme based on other criteria such as performance in the interview or a portfolio of relevant work. All students will be guided in their development of study skills through timetabled lessons in the college library working with experienced members of the library staff and students entering higher education without formal academic qualifications will be entitled to further support in these areas if required or requested.

We wish to ensure that all higher level students feel themselves to be working in a suitable environment and with appropriate teaching and resources for the level of work being undertaken. To this end, our HE students have access to a number of entitlements that identify them as being in higher education. These include a Higher Education Study room which is accessible only to HE students, access to equipment that other students are not allowed to use and to rooms that other students are only able to use when accompanied by a member of staff. They are also entitled to lessons taught by industry practitioners brought in from relevant organisations who can ensure that our students are learning current practice and developing strong employability skills.

Our higher level programmes are particularly suited to applicants who are not able, for whatever reason, to leave the immediate area and who wish to study in a way that is not exam based or lecture centred. Practical assignments, group activities and live briefs benefit students who prefer on-going and portfolio assessment, and who want to develop confidence in academic study before progressing to traditional degree top-ups.

The success of our higher education programmes, which have been running at Northampton College for almost two decades now, can be seen in the progression of our students to top-up degrees and into employment. Our graduates perform extremely strongly against traditional third year degree students with 70% achieving first class or upper second honours degrees in 2016, and many go on to start up their own businesses. We currently have ex-HND students running successful film and photography companies (including two who were nominated for a MOBO award this year) and others who have established theatre and music companies travelling in the UK and abroad.

HNCs and HNDs offer a unique opportunity for higher level study for students from a wide variety of backgrounds and prove that, with the right support and learning environment, you don't have to be a straight A student to succeed in higher education and progress to a successful career.