

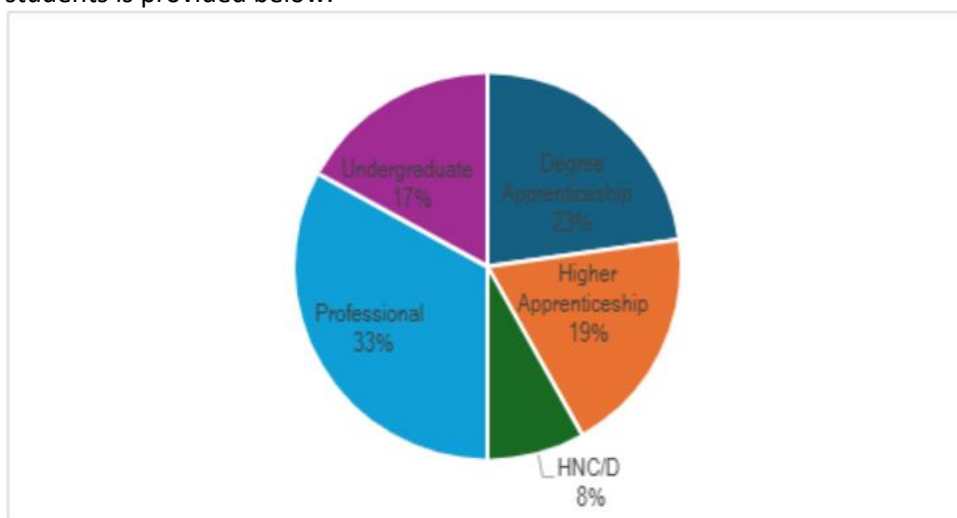
Abingdon and Witney College is a medium sized, general further education college operating mainly from three major sites across south and west Oxfordshire. The College offers a broad range of Higher Education (HE) provision:

- In partnership with the Oxford Brookes University Associate College Partnership (ACP) we offer full time other undergraduate (Foundation degrees) and full time undergraduate programmes (Top up degrees and one full degree).
- Higher National Certificates and a number of professional qualifications at level 4 and above such as AAT, CIPD, ILM, CPCAB and CET. These are considered as part time other undergraduate programmes or higher apprenticeships.
- One degree apprenticeship in Business and Management Practice.

The College is committed to meeting local and regional needs to widen participation in HE by under-represented groups. The focus of provision is vocational education and training and the College takes account of local skill needs and progression into higher-level courses when determining its curriculum offer.

In 2014, QAA judged that the College meets UK expectations across all aspects of the Quality Code and with commendation for the enhancement of student learning opportunities. The QAA noted that an accessible, supportive and responsive ethos empowers students from different backgrounds to develop and succeed. HE provision is of high quality and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education.

In 2025-2026 the College had 288 Higher Education students. The breakdown of the types of HE students is provided below.



The data shown within this statement encompasses our full HE offer (including partnerships) in order to give a broader understanding of our student profile.

The progression rates into highly skilled employment or further study are above numerical thresholds for all learners. Those students on full time other undergraduate programmes sit significantly above the threshold (99.5%). Internal College data for the 2025-26 academic year shows a continuation (retention) figure of 93.4% overall. There is no significant correlation between key characteristics and withdrawals.

Higher Education courses at Abingdon and Witney College are designed for, and targeted specifically at, those groups of potential students who do not follow traditional routes into higher education. Curriculum design and timetabling takes into account the additional responsibilities of students from vulnerable groups who are more likely to have caring responsibilities, childcare arrangements and the need to work alongside study. For example; 1 day per week, courses that start at 9.30am and finish by 3pm, part time opportunities etc.

Governors are responsible for the strategic direction of the College. Working with the Principal and the Senior Management Team, the mission, strategic aims and annual objectives are set out in the Strategic Plan “Be you, Be Extraordinary”. In addition, the strategic direction of HE is guided by the HE Strategy, which is aligned to the College Strategic Plan and sets aspirational targets for the College’s HE provision.

How did we do?

Our recent Ofsted review (June 2024) included a “deep dive” of the HE Programme; Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship where delivery of apprenticeships was deemed as outstanding. Ofsted published the following relevant information in the inspection report:

“Learners and apprentices are highly respectful and tolerant of staff and others in the college community. They value and celebrate diversity and individuality. Learners and apprentices are courteous towards all within the college and their behaviour is exemplary. Learners and apprentices are positive ambassadors for the college, equipped with the behaviours they need for study, work and life. Leaders and managers have successfully established a culture of inclusion. They are passionate about providing learners and communities with opportunities to ‘be extraordinary’.”

“Disadvantaged learners value highly the learning and social opportunities as well as the breadth of community learning that courses offer. Learners with high needs and those with previously poor experiences in education are supported well to learn and become independent. Learners are often able to progress to higher levels of learning where they show a strong commitment to their studies. Staff embrace the inclusive culture and, together with leaders, they serve their communities well.”

Participation 2025-26

- Participation in HE within Abingdon and Witney College shows greater access opportunities to those in under-represented groups than reported nationally in two key areas; students who declare disabilities and mature learners (aged 25+).
- Those that declare disabilities are 2pp above the national average and mature learners are 12pp above the national average, showing a broader range of students studying on our programmes from those hard-to-reach populations.
- The majority of HE students are local to College and therefore a comparison with Oxfordshire data is helpful in relation to BME and POLAR4. (*Stats are from 2021 Population - UTLA | Oxfordshire | Report Builder for ArcGIS)
- Whilst locally, participation for EIMD quintiles 1 and 2 have remained relatively stable, nationally this figure has increased. Oxfordshire Statistics (OCC Data Hub) shows that locally the most deprived neighbourhoods account for 16% of the population, therefore the College remains firmly above the regional picture by 4pp.
- The proportion of BME learners accessing College HE provision is 6pp above the local demographics and has seen gradual growth since 2022-2023.
- Our male demographic remains relatively low although there has been some growth (5pp) since last year showing an improvement in recruitment of males to HE

Widening Participation Area		2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	HESA Data (2024-25)	Oxfordshire Data*
Ethnicity	Non BME	83%	76%	77%	80%	67%	86.9%
	BME	17%	24%	23%	20%	33%	14.1%
EIMD Quintile (POLAR4)	1 and 2	26%	20%	24%	20%	43%	16%
	3 to 5	74%	80%	76%	80%	57%	84%
Gender	Male	26%	26%	29%	34%	44%	
	Female	74%	74%	71%	66%	56%	
Age	20 and below	26%	25%	37%	34%	38%	
	21-24	24%	18%	14%	19%	27%	
	25-29	14%	11%	9%	10%	12%	
	30 +	36%	46%	40%	37%	23%	
Learning Difficulty/ Disability	No LDD	74%	79%	76%	79%	81%	
	Yes LDD	26%	21%	24%	21%	19%	

Achievement rates by different student groups 2025-26

- At the time of writing, of the 149 students that were due to finish their programme in 2025/2026, 24 learners are awaiting results or still to complete exams/resits with 2 learners extending their programme of study into next academic year. Of the remaining 125 students:
 - 9 students withdrew before the end of the course giving a current total achievement rate of 93% (considered strong in HE)
 - Students aged between 25-29 and considered mature learners have a 100% pass rate
 - Students with protected characteristics consistently outperform their counterparts with the exception of those with LDD
 - The lowest performing group were males with 5 withdrawals out of 30 learners. Each of these learners is on a different programme, showing no trends other than their gender in terms of reason for withdrawal. At the time of writing
- At the time of writing 44 students completed their full degree programmes however, 3 are yet to submit their final work. Currently 100% of students studying on full degree programmes have so far achieved this academic year.

Achievement rates by different groups		Achievement Rate 2022/23	Achievement Rate 2023/24	Achievement Rate 2024/25	Achievement Rate 2025/26
Ethnicity	White	93%	89%	94%	92%
	BME	85%	92%	96%	96%
EIMD Quintile	1 and 2	93%	88%	100%	96%
	3 to 5	92%	93%	93%	92%
Gender	Male	82%	96%	90%	83%
	Female	96%	87%	96%	96%
Age	20 and below	78%	92%	100%	92%
	21-24	94%	85%	100%	96%
	25-29	96%	88%	85%	100%
	30 +	96%	92%	92%	90%
Learning Difficulty/Disability	No LDD	92%	88%	94%	94%
	Yes LDD	94%	95%	96%	86%

Equality of Opportunity Risk Register

The College has identified five potential key risks to equality of opportunity via the extensive internal self-assessment process for 25-26:

1. Personal Development Plan (PDP) meetings are inconsistent across the college

Risk to Students: Students may not receive timely academic guidance, target setting and pastoral support, resulting in reduced engagement, lower achievement and weaker progression outcomes.

Objective: Ensure all students receive regular, high-quality PDP reviews that support academic progress, personal development and progression planning.

Action: Implement a standardised PDP process across all faculties, monitor completion rates through termly quality reviews and provide targeted support to areas with low compliance.

2. Attendance remains inconsistent across areas and courses

Risk to Students: Low attendance can negatively impact student achievement, engagement, retention, progression and overall student experience.

Objective: Improve attendance across all programmes to support positive student outcomes and enhance retention and achievement.

Action: Monitor attendance regularly at faculty and course level, identify students at risk of poor attendance, implement targeted interventions and share best practice from high-performing curriculum areas.

4. Progression data is not consistently collected across level 4+ programmes

Risk to Students: Without accurate progression data, opportunities to evaluate student outcomes, identify gaps and improve support for future learners may be missed.

Objective: Establish robust and consistent progression tracking across all Level 4+ programmes to inform quality improvement and strategic planning.

Action: Implement a standardised progression monitoring process for all higher education programmes, with annual data collection, validation and reporting responsibilities clearly assigned.

5. Higher withdrawal rates among male students and students with LDD

Risk to Students: Students may fail to complete their programme, limiting their educational, employment and progression opportunities.

Objective: Reduce withdrawal rates and ensure equitable outcomes for all student groups through targeted support and intervention.

Action: Conduct a detailed analysis of withdrawal patterns for male students and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), identify key causes and implement targeted retention strategies informed by the findings.

Widening Participation Activities

Examples of activities undertaken by the College to widen access to HE include:

1. Providing high quality pastoral support to help more vulnerable students throughout their time at College. Every course timetable includes weekly tutorial slots to ensure that any student concerns or barriers to achievement can be resolved swiftly and appropriately.
2. Providing access to the Student Services team and wide-ranging support to help vulnerable students through their time at college. Students have access to student advisers and behaviour support.
3. Maintaining high levels of academic support through the management of small groups and ease of access to academic tutors.
4. Providing a virtual learning environment via MS Teams to all HE students to ensure that additional resources are available outside of classroom study and where students are not able to attend college due to additional personal, family or work pressures.
5. Working closely with local schools to raise aspirations and promote lifelong learning, targeting progression to HE courses.
6. Working with the College Adult Learning faculty, through its community outreach work, to promote the benefits of HE study to adult students and ensure smooth transition.
7. The College offers further HE experience events throughout the academic year targeted toward students identified as having the potential but currently not the appetite or stated intention to apply for higher education study.
8. Ensuring students with protected characteristics are more closely monitored during periods of disruption.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The College reports the performance of students undertaking HE courses both during and at the end of programme. Quality monitoring KQI meetings are held with programme managers to monitor in year data such as recruitment, attendance, retention and progress. The student voice is particularly important in ensuring we are adapting our processes to meet the needs of underrepresented groups and these are taken into account within KQI meetings and throughout the academic year in the form of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs).

Further specific monitoring and evaluation activity will continue to be undertaken to support the College's main widening participation activities. The annual HE Self-Assessment Report (SAR) contains a critical analysis of key performance indicators and a range of data linked to student cohort. In 2025-26, the College self-assessed the quality of our HE provision to be in line with expectations (met). This document highlights areas for further improvement which are included in the College Quality Improvement Plan as appropriate. The College's Governing Body has oversight of this process.

<http://www.abingdon-witney.ac.uk/about-us/key-documents/>