



WTC
ACCESS AND
PARTICIPATION
STATEMENT

AUGUST 2021

WTC Access and Participation Statement	
Purpose	To set out clearly WTC's commitment to support access and participation in the college's courses by students from disadvantaged backgrounds and under-represented groups.
Enquiries	Enquiries about the Access and Participation Statement should be directed to the Chief Operating Officer (Janey Lawry-White) at operations@wtctheology.org.uk
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Approved by	Board of Trustees
Next Review	October 2022
Staff member responsible for update	Chief Operating Officer

1. Introduction

WTC is a not-for-profit, interdenominational, charismatic theological college with the vision of taking rigorous and accessible Kingdom Theology into the heart of the local church across the UK.¹ Our goal is to equip and empower people of all ages and backgrounds for leadership, mission, and discipleship and, through this, to effect personal and community transformation. We offer part-time, university-accredited qualifications in theology to around 210 students per year.²

In addition to a range of degree and certificate courses in Kingdom Theology, WTC offers two vocational Graduate Diplomas which are unique in the UK in Church Planting and Leadership and Student Ministry. All WTC courses are currently validated by the University of Chester.

Our student body (church members and leaders) consists of a wide age range (18-75), with the majority aged between 35-60. They are drawn from a broad cross-section of professional and socio-economic backgrounds in the UK. Students come from a range of church denominations but the majority (c. 70%) are members of the independent church sector (i.e. not affiliated with a formal denomination), which have no dedicated theological colleges. A number left school with no formal qualifications while others come to study with WTC already having multiple degrees. This richness in backgrounds, thought and experience is part of what makes studying with WTC such a rewarding experience.

2. Values and Principles

WTC's [values](#)³ inform and underpin every aspect of the college's activities. Specifically, our value:

“Maintaining a high view of humanity as made in the image of God, both male and female, and nourishing the beauty, uniqueness, interdependence, freedom and creativity of humanity, that we may live out our God-created purpose”

sets out the Biblical truth that each person is valuable and unique. All aspects of our teaching and operations, including plans and policies, seek to communicate the value and dignity which we believe every individual has in the Kingdom of God. This, in turn, informs our practice of promoting and teaching equality and inclusion, and fostering opportunity for every student.

WTC offers degrees in Kingdom Theology because at the heart of our study is the belief that Jesus came proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. Jesus placed considerable emphasis in his ministry on earth on including those on the margins of society and affirming their value in his Kingdom.

¹ WTC is a registered charity (No 1123573) and a company limited by guarantee (Reg No 6506007).

² The University of Chester validates all WTC degrees and qualifications.

³ <https://wtctheology.org.uk/about-us/vision-values/>

Another WTC value is accessibility. Our course delivery model as well as the study skills and financial support all support this value explicitly.

3. Practice

3.1. [Delivery Model](#)

- Our courses are delivered via a pioneering blend of in-person teaching, web learning and video-conferencing. Apart from the two intensive teaching weeks (Sept and Jan), students study at local learning 'Hubs' near their home locations and around their existing commitments. This model makes studying with WTC highly accessible to adults at all stages of their working life.⁴
- Our student body profile provides evidence of how accessible our courses are, with the student age range between 18-75; 78% of students working (full-time (38%), part-time (25%) and self-employed (16%)) in a wide range of sectors as well as primary carers (2.5%); volunteers (7%); retired (6%); and unemployed (5%).

3.2. [Course Content](#)

- The Bible emphasises the high priority God places on the poor and excluded. Modules on engaging with those on the margins of society are included in all programmes of study, and the Faculty who teach them are practitioners in the areas they are teaching, meaning that students are challenged to think about how they can translate this into action in their own lives.
- All programmes also emphasise the value of each individual, notably the radical (in the context of Ancient Near East culture and first century Jewish and Greek culture) biblical teaching on God's view of women as of equal value to him as men.

3.3. [Access](#)

- Members of our Faculty and staff, including our Principal, regularly speak at churches, Christian network festivals and gatherings, on Christian radio and podcasts, with the aim of encouraging church leaders and members to invest in studying theology to inform all aspects of their work, life and mission and to explain how accessible studying with WTC is around their existing commitments.
- Faculty conduct regular visits to our Hubs to meet with church leaders and potential students from the region and to provide 'taster' sessions of what studying with WTC is like.
- We hold regular Online Open Days at which potential students and church leaders who wish to find out about WTC in order to

⁴ 75% of WTC students work full-time, part-time or are self-employed throughout their studies.

recommend it to their member- and leadership as a place to study can meet faculty, staff, Hub and Programme Directors and former students and have their questions answered.

- WTC seeks to operate a fair recruitment and admissions process, which is transparent, reliable, valid and inclusive.
- Entry requirements are stated on the website, including that mature students (26+) do not need formal qualifications to study. Given the high percentage of mature students among the student body, this makes the courses accessible and attractive to a number of people who otherwise wouldn't consider studying at tertiary level. In addition, individual circumstances are taken into account when applications are reviewed, and applicants who appear borderline are asked to submit an exegesis so that the level of their English language can be assessed to ensure they will be able to study at level 4.
- Applicants can contact WTC staff and faculty during the admissions process to discuss any aspect of studying or their individual concerns relating to finances, the academic programme, their concerns with studying etc. Hub Directors, many of whom are current or past students at WTC, are also in touch with applicants for their Hubs and can answer questions and discuss concerns.
- Information on [course fees](#) for different programmes are clearly set out on the website together with information on criteria for, and how students can access WTC bursaries.⁵ [Facts About Fees](#)⁶ gives details of what the fees cover, how to access WTC bursaries, and also a list of other prospective grant-making bodies students can apply to, as well as some information on accessing student finance.
- [Participation](#)
 - 3.3.1. [Preparation to study](#):
 - WTC offers outstanding study skills support to all students in groups or on a 1-2-1 basis by appointment. We have two part-time Study Skills Tutors who will support any student but they typically spend most time supporting particularly those with neuro-diversity (Specific Learning Differences) or students who lack confidence around fulfilling the academic requirements.
 - All new students are contacted by our Study Skills Tutors before the start of the academic year, and provided with

⁵ <https://wtctheology.org.uk/courses/fees-faqs/>

⁶ https://wtctheology.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2021_Facts-about-Fees_01.pdf

resources to introduce them to studying at HE level before the start of the academic year so that they can prepare and practice.

- For those students with neurodiversity, our Study Skills Tutors will meet with them virtually before the start of the academic year, to talk through options on applying for DSA and the nature of the study skills support WTC offers.
- All new students are offered the opportunity to engage with the IT team both before and at the first Residential teaching week to ensure they are comfortable with the IT requirements of the course and the teaching delivery. IT Support is available to any student who wishes on a 1-2-1 basis throughout their studies with WTC by appointment.

3.3.2. Study Skills

- Our comprehensive Study Skills resources are available to all students throughout their studies with group meetings with our specialist tutors and faculty as well as 1-2-1 meetings available to support them.
- Faculty members also offer regular virtual meetings with students through the academic year to provide support on writing essays and all the skills which this entails.

3.3.3. Disability Support

- WTC welcomes students with physical disabilities and neurodiversity to our programmes. All Hub and Residential venues are accessible to students with physical disabilities, and our study skills provision provides individual and group support to all students, including those with Special Educational Needs.
- WTC first welcomed two deaf students for the academic year 2019-2020 and worked with them to access the specialist support they needed to attend the Residential weeks and Hub nights as full members of the community. Making our courses more widely accessible to the deaf community is something we are working on, as we are now much more aware of the significant challenges they face accessing higher education. We currently have one deaf student.

3.3.4. Financial support

- In addition to student finance for those students who qualify, WTC offers two central bursaries paid for through fundraising. The General Bursary is available to those on low household

incomes and the Principal's Bursary Fund (PBF) to students with a background in offending and addiction.

- A number of students also receive financial support from trusts, their churches, families, friends and/or individuals within their churches. WTC provides help and advice in person and on the [website](#),⁷ including directing students to a list of trusts which have granted funds to WTC students in the past to help with fees.

3.4. [Progression](#)

- Our most popular course is the GradDip. Of the 281 alumni of this course, 44 (16%) have continued to WTC's PGDip or the MA to date. Other students have continued their studies in other HE institutions, with one former student, having completed his PhD, appointed Dean of Undergraduate Studies on the WTC Faculty.
- In the Alumni Survey (2018),⁸ 78% of respondents said that studying with WTC had a significant impact on their vocation/work/ministry, with 13 respondents reporting that they had gone for ordination; others took on leadership positions within their existing jobs and others set up business or changed their job as a result of studying. An additional 17% said that the study had had some impact on their vocation/work/ministry.

4. **Areas of progress**

4.1. [Gender equality](#)

WTC models the values it espouses and teaches:

- WTC teaches and models our value of gender equality. This past year, the college has had a ratio of 55:45 female to male students.
- Currently the three senior roles - Principal, FD and CoO - are all held by women; our Board consists of three women and five men; and 11 of the 30 faculty members (37%) are women. Having women in leading roles and doing an excellent job is a powerful role model for female and male students, particularly in some sections of the church community where gender equality is not yet fully espoused.
- Our Principal has written several books on the theology of female:male relationships as taught in the Bible. This

⁷ <https://wtctheology.org.uk/courses/fees-faqs/>

⁸ Apart from this survey, WTC hasn't tracked systematically the progression of former students.

continues to raise the profile of WTC's values, teaching and modelling in this area. She is regularly consulted by churches who are wishing to move away from a male dominated leadership structure in this regard.

- We hold a women-only discussion as part of one of our Residential gatherings to provide a forum for our female students, staff and faculty to discuss areas of specific challenge relating to their experience of gender discrimination and how they can address and overcome these. These have proved very popular.

4.2. Diversity

- Three (10%) of our faculty of 30 are non-white. One of our Board is black and we are actively recruiting another non-white Board member. While we are intentional in increasing the numbers of non-white persons working for WTC, those already working with us provide a role model for black and brown students.
- This past year, of our total of 210 students, 16 are people of colour (8%).
- We held our first student-led discussion on how WTC can become a more welcoming place for non-white students in January 2021. This will become a regular, annual event, during a Residential. Practical recommendations from these discussions are being implemented in college life.

4.3. Socio-Economic Disadvantage

- From 2017-18 to 2020-21, between 12% - 17% of the student body each year received bursaries from WTC Central.
- 16 students have benefitted from the PBF (for those with a history of addiction and/or offending); and the first student, who was the catalyst for establishing this bursary, graduated in summer 2020 with his BA. 4 of the recipients of the PBF in 2021-22 are on the BA course and will graduate in the next 3 years. This is a considerable achievement and represents a significant change in each student's self-image and levels of educational achievement as well as the subsequent opportunities open to them.
- One of our Hub locations (West Midlands Hub) is in Betel UK Headquarters. Betel UK is an independent Christian charity for men, women and families affected by drug and alcohol addiction and homelessness. Our partnership with them,

including a number of their leadership team around the UK studying with WTC, is testimony to our increasing levels of engagement with students whose backgrounds have restricted their access to education having this opportunity made available to them. Our Manchester Hub meets in The Message Trust premises. The Message Trust works in schools, through the creative arts, on the streets and in prisons sharing the love of Jesus Christ through words and actions with the hardest-to-reach young people.

4.4. Areas of continued focus

4.4.1. Engagement with black majority churches

- WTC values include building strong relationships with those who share our vision for taking theology back into the local church. We are working on engaging with black majority churches (BMC) with the help of our black students, an ex-Advisory Group member and our trustees.