

boston:college 

# CHARTER

2007

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# BOSTON COLLEGE CHARTER

The Department for Education published its Charter for Further Education in 1993 in which general standards were laid down for the Further Education Sector as a whole. The Charter covers three broad areas:

- Students
- Employers and the local community
- What to do if things go wrong.

In the introduction to the Charter the Secretary of State for Education stated that colleges were expected to develop their own charters. This is the seventh edition of the Boston College Charter. Our charter will evolve and develop as a result of continuing consultation with the community, both inside and outside the college which uses and benefits from its services.

The commitments made in this Charter will be regularly reviewed and monitored.

## **The College Mission Statement**

Boston College: A learning organisation raising aspirations and meeting the skills needs of individuals, communities and employers through high quality education and training.

## **Equal Opportunities Statement**

Boston College commits itself to the active promotion of equal opportunities in all areas of the College's life and work. The College seeks to prevent discrimination against any individual or group working at or served by the College on the basis of **age, colour, gender, disability, religious belief, marital status or racial and cultural origin.**

## STUDENTS

### 1.0 CHOICE AND INFORMATION

1.1 The College produces prospectuses and course information sheets which are available to actual and potential students free of charge. The information will be reviewed and updated annually and is obtainable from all College premises. Copies will be sent to county libraries and other information points. Availability and currency of information will be monitored by the Director of Client Services. The information covered includes:

- courses and qualifications

- course aims
- entry requirements
- teaching and assessment arrangements
- teaching and learning facilities

1.2 The College will maintain close links with Connexions and schools in the following ways:

- the College will work towards the development of links with schools in the catchment area to promote effective communication and co-operation including the provision of vocational courses in Key Stage 4
- copies of the College prospectuses and course information leaflets will be provided to each school on publication and on request
- the College will provide a briefing meeting for all careers officers and teachers in the Autumn term each year to present the programme for the following academic year.

Student Services will make arrangements for pupils to visit the College individually or in groups.

1.3 The College provides access to a range of careers information in electronic and paper versions which are available to potential and current students free of charge in the Learning Resource Centres or the Student Services Centre.

1.4 Members of the public are welcome to visit the College by arrangement. Opportunities to visit the College or use its services are advertised in the local press and other media.

## 2.0 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

2.1 The College makes special arrangements for international students which are described in the International Students Policy.

- all international students are provided with the *International Student Handbook* before arrival and *Student Handbook* at the start of their course
- the International Co-ordinator, personal tutors, EFL team, the International Administrator, Accommodation Officer and Students Services, provide support to all international students on arrival, at induction and throughout the course
- the College will assess all international students to measure their competence in English. All students will study English as a Foreign Language as part of their course.
- the College provides a Hall of Residence for 136 students and the Accommodation Officer provides additional information and support with accommodation in a range of homestay accommodation, flats and houses
- an induction programme is provided for all international students on arrival and during the first term of their programme. Support for students is a continuing process which lasts throughout the students' attendance at College.

### **3.0 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND OTHER ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act the College produces an annual *Disability Statement* which is available from Student Services. The definition of Disability for the purpose of this Charter is that as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs Act 2001.
- 3.2 The College welcomes applications from students with disabilities and other support needs. Applications are made through the normal procedure and, where appropriate, interviews will be undertaken by specialist staff. Students will be integrated into main stream courses or taught in discrete courses as appropriate.
- 3.3 The College publishes a range of support leaflets that give details of the types of support provided for students. These can be requested from Student Services. Students may approach the College for individual advice on the support they can expect on the course they are applying for. The College employs an Inclusive Learning Manager who can provide this advice and act as an advocate for students within additional support needs within the College.
- 3.4 Where possible, students will work towards the achievement of recognised qualifications but all achievement will be recorded.
- 3.5 The College maintains links with outside agencies who may provide additional support. Within the College support is available for students with additional support needs from all staff but especially teaching staff, Learning Support Assistants, Counsellors, the Student Support Officer and Student Services.
- 3.6 Most areas of the College are accessible by students with mobility difficulties. The College will inform students of access problems which may affect them when they apply and make reasonable adjustments where required to do so in order to ensure access to teaching and public areas.
- 3.7 All students are encouraged to develop self-advocacy skills but staff will act, when necessary, as advocates for students where they find advocating their needs problematic.
- 3.8 Where students experience difficulty with their course, additional support will be provided in line with the Special Educational Needs Act 2001.
- 3.9 The College publishes a Disability Equality Scheme detailing how the college is:
  - promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
  - eliminating discrimination which is unlawful under the Act;
  - eliminating harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities;

- promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encouraging participation by disabled people in public life;
- taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.

#### **4.0 ACCOMMODATION**

- 4.1 For students who require accommodation a leaflet entitled '*Accommodation for Students*' is available free of charge from the Accommodation Officer or Student Services.

#### **5.0 ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS**

- 5.1 The College Admissions Policy seeks to ensure that all applications are treated fairly and efficiently. All students will be given the information and guidance necessary to make an informed choice of course.
- 5.2 The arrangements for admissions are set out in the leaflet '*Admission to Courses*' which is sent to all applicants for full-time courses and on request to all students wishing to follow part-time courses.

#### **6.0 SOCIAL AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

- 6.1 The College provides students with the opportunity to participate in sport and other recreational events which contribute to personal development. These are described in the *Student Handbook* available from Student Services.
- 6.2 The College actively supports the work of the Boston College *Students' Union* which provides a range of social and leisure activities.

#### **7.0 FINANCIAL CHARGES AND HELP**

- 7.1 The College annually reviews its policies and fees, and publishes an explanatory booklet entitled, '*Studying at Boston College, a guide to fees, payment arrangements and financial assistance*'. Copies are available from Reception and Student Services. The *Student Handbook* contains information on a range of financial topics under the heading 'Money Matters'. The information includes:

- sources of help and information
- Access Fund
- Assistance with Childcare
- Local Authority Travel Awards

The Handbook provides information on the type of support available, how to apply and how applications are processed.

There are other sources of financial help outside the College such as:

- Local Education Authority
- Department of Social Security

- Career Development Loans
- Charities and similar organisations

Information on financial assistance is available from Student Services.

## **8.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- 8.1 Boston College is committed to the promotion of high quality teaching and learning. It is recognised that both the College and the students have a role to play in this process and the contribution required from each side is set out in the **College-Student Agreement** which can be found in the *Student Handbook*.
- 8.2 The importance of College staff is recognised and the College has achieved Investors in People accreditation. To ensure staff receive regular training and up-dating the Personnel Manager, Recruitment and Development is responsible for a plan-led staff development programme through which staff develop their understanding of curriculum change, qualifications, assessment methods, tutorial functions and the changing technology of their academic or vocational areas.
- 8.3 Course Information:  
At the beginning of the course students will receive an introduction to the course including:
- course structure
  - final qualifications
  - assessment methods
  - grading, assignments and tests
  - homework requirements
  - work experience
  - tutorials
- 8.4 Students should have a clear understanding of what is required to be successful. Advice and information are available from tutors and information is provided as part of induction and in tutorials.
- 8.5 Students will be informed if their work is unsatisfactory and advice provided on how to improve. If necessary, additional support will be offered through learner support arrangements.
- 8.6 Staff will deliver planned study activities through appropriate and good quality learning materials.
- 8.7 The Student Advisors and Connexions will provide information and guidance to prospective and current students. Requests for an interview will receive a response within 10 working days during term time.
- 8.8 Further information about the support available from Student Services can be found in the *Student Handbook*.
- 8.9 As part of their course full-time students will develop skills to support their learning.

## **9. LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRES**

- 9.1 The range of services provided are described in the leaflet, *'A Brief Guide to the Learning Resource Centre'*.
- 9.2 A Learning Resource Centre Charter sets out the standard of services provided and is available to users of the Resource Centres.

## **10. EXAMINATIONS**

- 10.1 The College will ensure that examinations and assessment are carried out in accordance with examining body requirements in an appropriate environment.
- 10.2 The Examinations Officer will display examination information on designated examinations notice boards on all main campuses.
- 10.3 Students eligible to be entered at the College's expense must meet prescribed standards of attendance and completion of work. These standards will be explained to students during their induction process.
- 10.4 While students will be provided with information and help with regards to examinations each student is responsible for their own entry and attendance.

## **11.0 PROGRESS REVIEW**

- 11.1 All full-time and vocational students will receive regular reviews of progress.
- 11.2 The induction period of all courses is regarded as a diagnostic period when staff and students will work together to:
- introduce students to the College and the course
  - assess whether the course is appropriate in content and level
  - consider alternative programmes if required

All full-time students will receive a written progress report at least twice each year and a personal, oral progress report to which parents may be invited. The arrangements for reporting progress will be detailed in course handbooks.

## **12.0 THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- 12.1 The College operates a course review and evaluation procedure as part of its quality assurance system which promotes the continuous improvement of teaching and learning standards.
- 12.2 The College actively seeks the views of students on the services, teaching, resources, accommodation and the other facilities it provides. Each year the College undertakes a range of questionnaire-

based surveys entitled 'Student Perceptions of College' (SPOC).

### **13. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

- 13.1 The College has written disciplinary procedures relating to student behaviour and academic performance. These are detailed in the leaflet '*Student Disciplinary and Complaints Procedures*' which can be obtained from Student Services.

### **14.0 THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT**

- 14.1 The College seeks to provide a safe, healthy and clean environment for students, staff and visitors. A no smoking policy operates inside all College buildings.
- 14.2 A programme for the cleaning and maintenance of the College buildings and grounds is in place. This programme is monitored by the Estates Manager and a report is produced each term.

### **15.0 REFECTORY SERVICES**

- 15.1 The Refectories will provide wholesome and nutritious food cooked and served in a hygienic environment.
- 15.2 The needs and resources of student will be taken into account when planning the prices and opening hours of refectories. The refectories will be provided with annual budgetary targets.
- 15.3 The food supplied will reflect the diverse national and ethnic composition of the College.

### **16.0 EMPLOYERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

- 16.1 Employers play an active role in Further Education at a national and local level. Employers have a significant role in determining the nature and content of qualifications and courses through Sector Skills Councils and lead bodies involvement with National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's).
- 16.2 The Business Development Directorate will take the lead, on behalf of the College, to co- ordinate links with companies to improve responsiveness to employer needs and understanding of College provision. The College will continue to develop and maintain links with new and established companies in the local area.
- 16.3 Locally, Boston College has wide ranging contacts with employers through which the College consults the business community and informs it of developments in the College. Some examples of the College's contacts with industry include:
- The Governors
  - Business Development Directorate
    - Work-based Learning - through Boston Training Agency
    - Workforce Development - through Boston Conference and Management Centre and Boston College Training

## Services

### Collaboration with Boston Chamber of Commerce

- Staff visits to Employers
- Market surveys
- College Information Officer
- Marketing Operations
- Boston Education Business Partnership
- Local Learning Partnerships

16.4 The College operates an annual questionnaire-based survey to test the views of employers, the 'Employers Perception of College' survey (E.P.O.C.). The results are available for inspection in the College Learning Resource Centre. The College welcomes the views of employers at any time. Employers may have personal contacts with tutors and lecturers and will wish to express their views directly to course staff. More general observations should be passed to the Director of Business Development. If employers are not satisfied with the service they, or their employees, receive from the College, they should contact the Director of Learning and Skills. If employers wish to contact national bodies concerned with education and training the College will, if required, advise and supply contact addresses.

16.5 The Director of Business Development or Curriculum Leaders will maintain links with employers who provide work experience to ensure that: employers are clear about the nature and purpose of the work experience and their responsibilities College students are well prepared to enable them to make a useful contribution to their organisation.

16.6 The College will supply work experience providers with report sheets to enable employers to comment on student performance.

16.7 A list of the College Governors is available from the Clerk to the Corporation. Any member of the governing body can be contacted through the Clerk to the Corporation at the College. A leaflet entitled 'The Role of the College Governors' is available from the Clerk to the Corporation.

16.8 The names of people to contact with enquiries is given on College publicity material such as:  
Prospectuses  
Handbooks  
Course Information leaflets  
College website

For general or initial enquiries the first point of contact is the Information Officer in Student Services. The Information Officer will respond to enquiries within 10 working days.

16.9 Employers who recruit from the College have the right to clear information about what skills and knowledge a student is likely to possess.

The College will supply references for full-time students up to 3 years after their departure from College. Employers seeking a reference should write to the Student Services Manager.

16.10 The College maintains a database of employers who sponsor students. All such employers will be sent the course information sheet within 28 days of the student starting the course.

- 16.11 Details of courses are found in prospectuses and course information leaflets which include:
- fees
  - other charges
  - time commitment and duration
  - teaching and learning styles
  - assessment
  - qualifications
- 16.12 Employers who sponsor students will be provided with a written report once a year for employees following vocational courses.
- 16.13 The College seeks to maintain close and effective links with the community through public services, voluntary organisations, Local Authorities, schools, employers, parents and students.
- 16.14 The College Marketing Manager informs the public about College activities through the media.
- 16.15 The College participates in community sporting, charitable and fund raising events and each year raises funds for local charities.

## **17.0 PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

- 17.1 The College will agree standards and quality assurance measures with partner organisations as part of collaborative contracts. This will include a statement on which parts of the College Charter apply. These arrangements will be published and made available to trainees whose training is delivered in this way.

## **18.0 WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG**

- 18.1 The College's Mission statement is a commitment to high quality education and training. The College is constantly striving to achieve this goal but recognises that from time-to-time things may go wrong. The College will investigate all complaints rigorously and rapidly and, where appropriate, take action to rectify problems.
- 18.2 Where students or others feel the service offered by the College is unsatisfactory a procedure has been established to enable them to voice their complaint and to receive a prompt response. This procedure is summarised in the *Students Handbook*. The Handbook is issued to all fulltime students and copies are available from Student Services.
- 18.3. A leaflet explaining the complaints procedure is also available. Employers, or any member of the community, should write to the Director of Learning and Skills stating their complaint. The College will normally respond, in writing, within 15 working days.
- 18.4 A full version of the Complaints procedure is available from Student Services.