

1. Welcome to WACC

Welcome to WACC. This Learner Handbook will provide you with the essential information that you need to start your journey with us.

As a result of coming to WACC people change the direction of their lives and the lives of their families forever.

Here at WACC, our aim is to support you in your life and your career. We recognise that most people have had some poor work experiences and sometimes no job at all. When you are out of work, you are fearful about money and your future and may lose confidence in yourself. People forget how capable and talented they are because all the positive things somehow get lost when you are unemployed.

With the support we provide at WACC, you will be able to increase your skills to meet the constant changes required in the job market and, if you wish, to develop new, transferrable skills to move into other areas of work. We can also support you to acquire the skills and confidence to work for yourself.

WACC was recently inspected by Ofsted and is officially an outstanding college. What this means is, no matter what course you attend, where or when you attend your classes, you will receive amazing guidance, teaching, care and support. The belief that our teachers have in you as an individual makes WACC the best place for you to learn, develop and achieve your ambitions.

We have a wide range of courses to get you started, from informal learning through to recognised qualifications, apprenticeships and professional studies, all designed to support your journey to a sustainable job and career. Therefore, I warmly invite you to step forward and take up learning at WACC, your local community college, a step that could change your life for the better, forever.

Jev Bhalla - College Principal



2.Term Dates



Main Term Dates:

Term Start	Half Term	Term End
Monday 12th September 2016	Monday 24th October 2016 - Friday 28th October 2016	Thursday 15th December 2016
Wednesday 4th January 2017	Monday 20th February 2017 - Friday 24th February 2017	Friday 7th April 2017
Monday 24th April 2017	Monday 29th May 2016 - Friday 2nd June 2017	Friday 14th July 2017

Term dates may be different depending on your chosen course of study with us. Your tutor or the Learner Services team will be able to advise you.

3.Learner Charter

As a learner of the College, you can expect us to:

- Respect you as an individual and meet your educational needs as far as possible.
- Provide you with a confidential initial interview and assessment to help you to find the right course
- Ensure that your sessions start and end on time and let you know quickly about any changes to your timetable
- Talk to you about your learning plan and review it with you regularly
- Provide you with a safe and supportive place to learn
- Ask you regularly about how you feel about your course and the College, listen and respond to your feedback in a positive way
- Deal quickly with any problems you may have
- Offer you on-going advice and guidance during your studies and beyond to support you into work, higher education or training

4.WACC Code of Conduct

We have a responsibility to each other to ensure that WACC continues to be a happy, safe and positive learning and work environment. As a member of the WACC community you are expected to sign up and agree to the following:

BE SAFE

To ensure my safety and the safety of those around me, I will:

- Wear my ID badge whilst in College.
- Actively discourage bullying (including internet and text bullying) and inappropriate behaviour and report these things to a member of staff.
- Follow health and safety procedures and use personal protective equipment in practical sessions.
- Follow fire drill instructions.
- Take responsibility for my own property and ensure it is safely stored in class.
- Never bring alcohol, drugs or weapons to College.

BE RESPECTFUL

I will show respect for others by:

- Being positive about differences in gender, ability, culture, ethnicity, religion, belief, sexual identity, opinions and abilities. This means I will not use sexist, racist, ageist, disablist or homophobic language, or make unwelcome remarks designed to hurt others.
- Respect College and other people's property.

BE RESPECTFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT

I will care for my environment by:

- Not creating litter, recycling whenever possible and reducing energy usage whenever possible.
- Returning all trays dishes, cups and cutlery. Our Bistro is a self-clearing area.
- Leaving classrooms tidy.
- Not smoking or vaping in College, only in the designated outdoor area.

BE READY TO LEARN

- Attend all classes and be on time.
- Let the College know as soon as possible if you are going to be late or absent.
- Be ready and prepared for learning or work by bringing the right equipment to sessions.
- Meet all deadlines for work and complete it to the very highest standard you can.

- Ask for help if you need it and help others when you can.
- Make sure all work is your own. Not to cheat or copy (plagiarise) other's work.
- Take off caps, hoodies or outdoor clothing in lessons.
- Avoid eating or drinking in class (except water).
- Switch off mobile phones/MP3 players etc. when in class and put them away unless you are requested to use them.

BE ACTIVE IN THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

- Act as a positive role model for the College.
- Take part in cross College activities.
- Tell us what you think! Share your ideas on how we can make the College even better.

On signing the Learner Code of Conduct, you are making a commitment to adhere to the Colleges rules. You have chosen WACC and we want you to be happy and succeed. Following the Learner Code will help make this happen.

5. Use of WACC Computers

- College computers are for your college work only
- Use of software, the internet and email should be for coursework only
- Use of chat lines or games is not permitted unless part of the learning programme
- You must not do anything that is likely to harm a computer or the network
- You must not look at or download files that are offensive, illegal or pornographic
- You must not use the College's systems to send or view any materials that might cause offence to any person for example a person's race, gender, religion or disability, etc.



Our IT systems are monitored and any indication of illegal activity will be reported to the police. College reserves the right to block what it considers unnecessary or inappropriate websites or downloads. Any attempts to interfere with the College's computer security facilities is concerned gross misconduct and may result in exclusion.

Learners are permitted to use their own devices to connect to the college wireless network. This includes portable computers and other mobile devices. The college is unable to provide extensive support to learners using their own equipment and any such use must be governed by the college acceptable use policies. The college reserves the right to disconnect or refuse connection of any device in the breach of those policies.

6. Confidential Information

We will treat any personal information that you give us with the utmost care. The College complies with the Data Protection Act 1998 which means that we will not share any information we hold about you with any other person or agency without your permission. However, the police force may request information about a learner to aid an investigation. In this instance the College must comply with their request. Concerns about safety and wellbeing may also necessitate information sharing with third parties. Wherever appropriate we will seek your consent to share information with others.



7. Attendance

To ensure that you get the most from your time with us it is vital that you have excellent attendance. The College expects all of its learners to have 100% attendance. If for any reason you are going to be late or absent you must let us know as soon as possible.

You can call 01922 663000 or email us at info@wacc.ac.uk



8. Bullying and Harassment

The College expects everyone to be treated with respect and does not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment.



If you are being bullied or harassed within college, no matter by whom, you should report this to one of the safeguarding team (see chapter 9). We want you to feel able to report incidents of harassment and bullying and know that these will be dealt with promptly, fairly and effectively. We will look at the options for dealing with the issue with you but the decision on what action to take will be yours. If it is considered to be a safeguarding issue then this will be dealt with according to the College's Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying UK provides advice and support for those experiencing bullying. To take a look at their website [Click Here](#)

9. Safeguarding at WACC

Here at WACC we are committed to your safety and wellbeing. We all, as members of the WACC community, have a legal requirement to report any concerns of suspected or disclosed abuse of a learner or person under 18 or a vulnerable adult of any age.

The welfare of our learners, visitors and staff is priority

We recognise that:

- We all have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity.
- Working in partnership with staff, learners and agencies is essential in promoting a safe learning and working environment.

The WACC Safeguarding Officers are:

Safeguarding Officers



Neerja Bansal



Claire Harvey



Garry Welborn

We safeguard all our learners by:

- Valuing them, listening to them and respecting them
- Adopting safeguarding guidelines through carefully considered procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff safely
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need it, and involving learners and their parents/enablers appropriately

If you have any concerns about your safety or the safety of another person please tell a member of staff or ask for a member of the safeguarding team at reception.

Confide System

You are able to report safeguarding concerns online through the College's Confide System. This is available on College computers when you login.

10. Prevent

Because there are concerns about people in the UK supporting extremism or becoming extremists the government has introduced its Prevent strategy.

It seeks to protect vulnerable people against messages of violent extremism from different groups who seek to undermine British Values.

Prevent is not about preventing people from having political and religious views and opinions but about supporting them to share these concerns or act on them in non - extremist ways.

What are British Values?



British Values have been defined as:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual Liberty
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs

WACC supports Prevent by:

- Raising awareness within its learning community to prevent its members from radicalisation
- Valuing freedom of speech but will not tolerate beliefs or ideologies which leads to violence or harm of others or vulnerable people
- Promoting responsible and effective use of ICT to prevent users from accessing illegal and inappropriate content
- Being clear that radicalisation and extremism is a safeguarding concern which a clear referral process

The Lets Talk About It website is a useful source of information about Prevent. [CLICK HERE](#)

11. Wellbeing Support in Walsall

Crisis Team (mental health) 01922 60770

www.dwmh.nhs.uk/in-a-crisis/

Walsall Samaritans 01922 624000

Walsall Police 0845 133 5000

Walsall Victim Support 01922 648907 / 0300 30319

www.victimsupport.org.uk

Rethink 01922 707862

Walsall Sexual Health and Contraception Advice:

- Manor Hospital 01922 633341
 - Hatherton Centre 01922 6054354
 - Walsall Walk in Centre 0196057454
- www.walsallwalkinhealthcentre.nhs.uk

Kooth.com online support for young people - www.kooth.com

WPH Counselling 01922 649000

www.wphcounselling.org

Walsall Housing Advice Line 01922 653405

Domestic Violence Forum 01922 406767

Stepping Stones 24hr helpline 0800 389 5790

Relate 0121 643 1638

The Beacon (24hr) 01922 669840

www.cri.org.uk/content/beacon-recovery-service

Debt Line 0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.org

Citizens Advice Bureau 01922 700600

www.walsallcab.org.uk

Walsall Welfare Rights 01922 652250

www.walsall.gov.uk

12. Learner Services and Support Team

At WACC we are committed to ensuring that you reach your full potential and do the very best you can while you are with us. The Learner Services team are available to you by providing information, advice and guidance on anything that may be affecting your studies with us.

Learning Support

If you had extra help at school or another place of learning, or had additional time for exams, come and talk to us about how we can help you.

We also have a learning resource centre which is a quiet environment where you can work independently or with support staff. Staff in the learning resource centre will also help you with study skills and exam techniques and assistive technology.

WACC can also provide the special resources you may need to help you on your course if you have a difficulty or disability.

Financial Support

You may be eligible for financial support from our Discretionary Learning Support fund depending on your household income. To find out if you are eligible, speak to our Learner Services team.



You may be eligible for financial help with:

- Childcare costs
- Travel costs
- Tuition and exams costs

We aim to help as many learners as we can with our Discretionary Learner Support. However, the fund is limited and applications are dealt with in the order they are received. If your application is not approved you do have a right to appeal.

Careers Advice

The Learner Services team can provide you with 1:1 support to help you to explore and plan your next steps. We will help you to think and reflect on your current skills, qualifications and experience to help you plan for your future.

We have a range of tools and career resources and can support you to update your CV and get it out there! We can support you to job search and complete application forms as well as coach you in interview skills.



Together, with you, we will build a careers action plan outlining your steps to achieving your career goals.

Drop in to Learner Services for more information or email the team at guidance@wacc.ac.uk

13 WACC Learner Voice - Tell us what you think!



There are many ways you can share your comments and ideas, and influence the decisions we make at WACC.

WACC's Learner Rep role is to find out what our learners' views are on all aspects of WACC life and present your ideas to the College's Senior Leadership team and Board of Directors.

We have regular Learner Rep meetings, and Reps support at College open events so that new learners can get a first-hand point of view of what it is like to be a learner at WACC.

If you would to be a Learner Rep come and have a chat to the Learner Services team about this important role.

Learner Feedback Questionnaires

The only real judge of how well we are doing is you, the learner. We really value your thoughts and ideas on how we can improve what we do. Once a term we will ask you to complete our electronic learner survey.

We understand that completing the survey takes time, but the information we get from you is priceless and really does help us to improve and do things better.

Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions

We want to make sure that Walsall Adult and Community College provides a high standard of service to all of our learners and customers. We welcome feedback about our services; your compliments, complaints and suggestions help us to continue to improve our services.

If you wish to pay us a compliment or make a suggestion then please use the 'How did we do?' leaflet available from Reception, Learner Services, the Learner Resource Centre or click the link on Moodle.

We hope that you do not have cause for complaint but we recognise that things may not always meet your expectations and you want to raise a concern about some part of your College experience. We take all complaints seriously and ensure that they are investigated with the aim of a satisfactory resolution.

We aim to:

- Deal with your complaint quickly and fairly.
- Tell you how we will deal with your complaint.
- Provide our response within 15 working days and keep you informed if further time is required.

You can expect:

- An acknowledgement within 5 working days, following receipt of a written complaint.
- A full response to your complaint within 10 working days of the acknowledgement letter being sent to you.

How to make a complaint

Please make your complaint in writing:

- using the 'How did we do?' leaflet (available from Reception, Learner Services, Learner Resource Centre or click on the link on Moodle)
- by letter to: Assistant Principal Quality Assurance and Support, Walsall Adult & Community College, Hawbush Centre, Beeches Road, Walsall, WS3 1AG.
- by email to info@wacc.ac.uk

Please make sure that you provide your name, address and telephone number so that we can respond to you.

Any learner requiring an advocate to support them in making a complaint should contact Learner Services. Alternatively, you might prefer to choose one of your friends or someone you know.

What if you disagree with the outcome of your complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, you can appeal against the decision. To do this write to our Principal within 10 working days of the date on the response letter, outlining the reason for your dissatisfaction.

Finally, if you are still dissatisfied you should contact the Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT to review the complaint.

14 Our Policies and Procedures

We are committed to getting it right and continually improving on what we do. We have a number of policies and procedures to ensure that we remain outstanding. This learner handbook contains overviews of the College policies on: Attendance, Bullying & Harassment, Safeguarding and Learner Behaviour Support.

If you require a copy of one of our policies please ask at reception or your tutor.

WACC Assessment Appeal Process

If you believe that the assessment decision on your work to be unfair or inaccurate you have the right to appeal

Stage 1 - You should raise your concerns with your tutor/assessor. If you feel that a satisfactory resolution is not reached within 5 days then:

Stage 2 - You can appeal in writing to the IQA who will discuss the appeal with the Assistant Principal Quality Assurance and Support to reach a decision. The decision will be made and you will be contacted within 10 working days.

If the appeal is still not to your satisfaction you can appeal, in writing, to the relevant awarding organisation. You can ask a member of staff for these contact details.

15 Learner Disciplinary Procedure

To enable all learners to have a positive and fulfilling experience at WACC the College does not tolerate any anti-social behaviour. We adhere to the Learner Disciplinary Procedure which is set out below.

If you are under 18, we have a legal duty to contact your parents/guardian in the event of the disciplinary procedure being instigated.

The Disciplinary Process

Stage	Reason		Action	Taken By
Stage 0	Initial concerns about a learner's academic progress or conduct.		Informal meeting	Tutor
Stage 1	Issues not resolved by the informal intervention of the tutor/assessor		Formal Verbal Warning	Pathway Leader
Stage 2	Issues not resolved by the Stage 1 intervention or serious misconduct		Written Warning	Curriculum Manager
Stage 3	Issues not resolved by the Stage 2 intervention or gross misconduct		Code of Conduct Contract or Exclusion	Vice Principal
Appeal				Principal

16 Respect - Equality and Diversity



We are proud of the cultural diversity of our staff and learners and the richness that is brought to the College by all who study and work here. We expect all staff and learners to treat everyone fairly and without prejudice. We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, racial or derogatory behaviour.

We must all stand up to discrimination and unfair treatment of others by reporting it quickly. You can speak to your tutor, a member of the safeguarding team or ANY staff member if you experience discrimination or see anything that concerns you while you are at College.

17 Faith and Religious Support

There are times in our life when we may wish to draw upon our faith or religious belief.

Here are some local community faith groups and places of worship who are happy to provide support and guidance to you.

Guru Nanak Gurdwara -www.gnst.org.uk

Aisha Mosque and Islamic Centre - www.aishamosque.org

St Pauls at the Crossing -www.thecrossingatstpauls.co.uk

St Mary's the Mount- www.stmarysthemount.co.uk

Birmingham Central Synagogue- <http://centralshul.com/>

If you would like details of other local places of faith and worship please contact Learner Services.

You can find information on different religions and ethics on the BBC website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>



18 Sustainability



At WACC we understand the importance of taking care of the environment to safeguard the planet's resources for future generations. We do this through our careful use of resources, the learning opportunities we provide and our engagement with the local community.

Here are some examples of our commitment to sustainability:

- We support the development of sustainable communities locally, nationally and internationally and we promote Fair Trade
- We manage our resources carefully, reducing the environmental impact of our activities, aiming to recycle, reuse and purchase resources responsibly
- We are engaging with our community and our partners to make learning accessible locally
- We are reducing our running costs and waste so that we can be more focused on supporting learners, communities and employers

19 Outstanding Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching is at the heart of all we do. To ensure that we provide you with the highest standard of teaching we have a variety of ways to support tutors in delivering outstanding sessions as well as supporting you to achieve to the best of your ability.

We do this by:

- Assessing your needs
- At the beginning of your course, the College will ask you to undertake an initial assessment. The results of your assessment will identify whether or not you may benefit from additional support to achieve your learning goal.
- Supporting learners
- You will have a full induction onto your course to inform you about your course, the College, your place of study, its facilities and access to the full range of services available to you as a learner.
- Lesson observation visits

- During one of your lessons, your tutor may be visited by one of our observers of teaching and learning. The observer may ask to speak to you or other learners without the tutor present. The observations are a key part of our quality processes and are used to help identify areas for future staff training and to obtain learner feedback

20 Where to Eat at Hawbush



The Bistro at the Hawbush Centre is run by learners for learners. You can buy a range of hot and cold food and drinks, From a bowl of chips to a main meal with veggies or salad to meet your 5 a day, you can be assured that your food has been cooked fresh in a 5* hygiene rated kitchen. The vegetables and salad grown by learners in the College garden is used in the meal sold in the Bistro - you can't get fresher than that!

The Bistro is open from 10.30am - 3.00pm. You can also buy hot and cold drinks from the drinks machine located in the Bistro area. Chilled water is available free from our water dispensers.

21 Travelling to WACC and where to Park

By Bus

Our Hawbush site is on the 301 & 302 bus routes which run to and from Walsall town centre bus station approximately every 3 minutes. The bus stop is situated right outside on the Bloxwich Road and is called the Beeches Rd stop.

Our Whitehall site is on the 4, 4H & 4M service, which run between Walsall and West Bromwich. Here at WACC we are lucky to share a large on site free car park with Forest Arts. However, there are times when the car park can get busy and congested. Please be courteous and park sensibly in the designated car spaces thereby allowing access to the buildings for emergency vehicles when necessary.

There is a secondary car park that learners can use Car Park B which can be accessed via Hawbush Road.

WACC takes no responsibility for any vehicles, bikes or motorbikes left in the car park.

You can view more information and interactive maps on the contact page on our website

22 Smoking Area

WACC Campuses, like other public buildings, are no smoking areas. There are designated smoking areas at your community venue.

The non-smoking policy also includes electronic cigarettes which cannot be used within the College buildings.

If you want to give up smoking then try Stop 4 Life, a free NHS service and you will be four times as likely to succeed. Go to the *Stop 4 Life* website. <http://stop4life.co.uk/>

23 Lost Property

We ask that you look after your belongings and do not leave your bags unattended. We advise that you do not bring in valuable or sentimental items as we are not responsible should they be lost or break while you are at College.

Lost property is kept at reception for a limited time.

24 Good Luck in Your Studies

We hope that you have found this guide to WACC helpful and that it has answered any questions that you had about your studies at WACC.

If you require any more information pop in and speak to Learner Services who will be able to help or direct you to someone who can.

