



## Access and Participation Statement

William Booth College is the training college for The Salvation Army's employees, officers, envoys and cadets from across the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and further afield. William Booth College is committed to widening access and participation in learning at a variety of educational levels. The nature of some vocational courses requires non-standard admission processes which do not rely upon academic achievement as criteria for access.

An **Open Learning** programme offers introductory courses below undergraduate level, these courses are offered via distance learning and cover areas such as biblical studies, Christian theology and church history. Three levels of study are offered:

- Starter courses suitable for people new to the Christian faith or unused to study.
- Foundation level courses involve answers to questions of around 750 words.
- Award level courses involve additional reading and answers to questions of around 1500 words.

These courses are open to adults of any age and of any religious faith or none; students currently participating in these courses cover a broad demographic, including those who are preparing to access the DipHE in Salvation Army Officer Training at William Booth College.

The **Candidates Unit** operates the processes by which students for the DipHE in Salvation Army Officer Training are recruited. The team engages with a variety of access points to encourage people to consider their understanding of God's calling. Vocational discovery opportunities include regular 'Design for Life' weekends and an annual 'Exploring Leadership' day. The unit also attends regional events throughout the UK and Ireland to promote spiritual leadership. The vocational assessment process which forms part of the non-standard admissions procedures for the DipHE in Salvation Army Officer Training is also undertaken by this unit; the focus of this process is upon calling and character, although recommendations for preparatory studies (such as those offered through Open Learning) may also be made. The nature of vocational assessment necessarily means that students are drawn from the membership of The Salvation Army. Students will frequently come from low socio-economic backgrounds and with low educational outcomes from the school systems. Our policies of not charging fees to students, of providing access to hardship funds, and assisting students who have not achieved well in prior education, enables access to the DipHE in Salvation Army Officer Training programme for those who pass the vocational assessment.

The **Higher Education Unit** offers three undergraduate programmes in partnership with an external HE institution.

The DipHE in Salvation Army Officer Training is offered in both full-time and part-time (distance learning) modes. There are no formal academic requirements for entry to the programme, although a basic assessment of language and numeracy competence is undertaken to ensure that students

can reach the level of attainment required. The programme has a notable success rate in supporting the learning of students who have been out of formal education for some time, or who are without standard qualifications. The holistic nature of the tailored support that is offered to individual students from diverse backgrounds has been repeatedly highlighted as an aspect of good practice in external reviews. Upon completion of the DipHE, all students are offered full-time employment as an officer within The Salvation Army.

Officers who have completed the DipHE in Salvation Army Officer Training have the opportunity to study at degree level via two separate top-up degree programmes. The programmes are delivered on a part-time, blended-learning basis designed specifically to develop the individual and enhance their ministerial practice. The tuition costs of these degree programmes are financially supported by The Salvation Army. The students are well-supported by the tutors and staff throughout their study and the programmes have a very high completion and pass rate, including some students who are returning to study after a lengthy period of time. Following completion of these degree programmes, some officers go onto post-graduate study with other external higher education institutions.

Due to the vocational nature of the higher education programmes, the demographic of the students tends to be mostly mature students. Students with Specific Learning Differences, disabilities or other under-represented groups are well-supported by their tutors, pastoral support officers, the learning support team and by wider mechanisms within The Salvation Army, such as the Wellbeing Department.

Alongside its higher education provision, William Booth College also offers a wide range of courses and skill-enhancing programmes designed to address the learning needs of officers and employees of The Salvation Army. Provision includes short and accredited courses offering a variety of subjects, including management, leadership, people skills and ministry specific skills. For all courses on offer, the tuition costs are financially supported by The Salvation Army.

*Revised May 2024*