Annex A - 2019-20 access and participation plan

New College Durham

2019-20 access and participation plan

Assessment of current performance

The College has an outstanding reputation and has demonstrated positive performance in its Higher Education provision for a number of years. In the last year, this has been recognised by the award of TEF Silver and the successful re-approval of our Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP) for a further six years.

The College is strategically committed to promoting its Higher Education programmes to students coming from widening participation categories, and has for many years engaged in a range of activities directed towards raising aspirations and achievement, eliminating artificial barriers to entry as well as meeting the needs of government, employers and the regional economy. Students who engage in its programmes are supported throughout their programme of study through the use of higher education academic support tutoring, delivered by a small team of Higher Education Academic Support Tutors. The support role is aimed at assisting higher education students develop the skills of academic writing and research. This is in addition to the academic support provided at programme level by programme level tutors and, in some cases, Personal Learning Coaches (PLCs). Such measures have contributed significantly to our high retention trends, by supporting students to access, succeed and progress to higher level study.

New College Durham students are studying on a range of programmes including Higher Nationals, Foundation Degrees, three year honours degrees, top up honours degrees, Higher Level Apprenticeships and professional programmes. For the academic year 2017/18 students' current data suggests that the College will achieve:

Provision	Retention	Ach Rate
All HE Provision	91%	95%

The College is committed to ensuring all students are supported, the Higher Education Student Experience and Quality Enhancement Committee (HESEQE), a sub-committee of Corporation and chaired by the Vice Chair of the New College Durham Corporation monitors performance in all aspects of students' access, success and progression. HESEQE reports directly to the full governing body. It also monitors the student voice through the monitoring of internal surveys, internal student committees and external NSS.

Student enrolments across different student characteristics on Higher Education courses are demonstrated in the TEF 3 data in table 1 below.

Enrolments by Characteristic (TEF 3 Data)		Full-time		Part-time		Total	
		Headcount	%	Headcount	%	Headcount	%
Level of study	PG / UG boundary	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	First degree	280	46%	135	28%	415	38%
	Other UG	330	54%	355	72%	685	62%
Age	Under 21	275	45%	100	20%	375	34%
	21 to 30	215	35%	200	40%	415	38%
	Over 30	120	20%	195	39%	315	29%
Ethnicity	White	580	95%	475	97%	1,055	96%
	Black	10	2%	5	1%	15	1%
	Asian	10	2%	5	1%	15	1%
	Other	10	2%	5	1%	15	1%
	Unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Sex	Male	210	34%	190	39%	405	37%
	Female	400	66%	300	61%	700	63%
	Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Disability	Yes	60	10%	25	5%	85	8%
	No	550	90%	465	95%	1,015	92%
Entry qualifications	HE-level	115	19%	170	34%	285	26%
	High tariff	40	7%	10	2%	45	4%
	Medium tariff	95	16%	30	6%	125	11%
	Low tariff	160	26%	85	17%	245	22%
	Non tariff	170	28%	165	33%	340	31%
	Non-UK students	30	5%	35	7%	60	6%
Domicile	UK	580	95%	460	93%	1,040	94%
	Other EU	25	4%	35	7%	60	5%
	Non-EU	5	1%	0	0%	5	1%
Local students	Yes	250	43%	200	44%	450	44%
	No	330	57%	255	56%	585	57%
POLAR	1	80	30%	30	32%	110	30%
	2	80	30%	25	26%	105	29%
	3	40	15%	20	21%	60	16%
	4	35	13%	10	11%	45	12%
	5	30	11%	10	11%	45	12%

Table 1 - Enrolments by student Characteristic (TEF 3 Matrix)

Over the years, the Higher Education provision offered by the College has increased in size and range and currently provides for over 1300 (FTE) students studying in both full time and part time study mode.

Gender

In the academic year 2016/17 60% of our HE students were female and 40% male. This proportion moved marginally in 2017/18 with 61% being female and 39% male. Pass rate for females was 1% lower than male in 2017/18 (94% & 95% respectively) this gap has increased slightly from the previous year where females success was 0.8% lower than males (94.3% and 93.5% respectively). While the College continues to monitor its data to ensure positive outcomes for all students it doesn't consider gender to be a barrier to success.

Polar Quintiles

The North East area traditionally has low entry numbers progressing into Higher Education, compared to other regions. Only 30.2% of adults in County Durham are qualified to level 4 or above, with 10.1% aged 16-64 having no qualifications. This geographical market from which the College draws the majority of its Higher Education students, County Durham, has one of the lowest participation rates into higher education in the UK. There are 43 disadvantaged wards documented by POLAR 1 & 2 data in the county which are particularly targeted by the College. Most of these students are drawn from widening participation categories and have applied solely to the College rather than having made multiple applications. 60% of the Colleges full-time HE students are recruited from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 this is almost as high for our part-time HE students at 58%. Continuation (90%) from these Quintiles in 2016/17 showed a -2% gap on students outside of these quintiles. Success for Quintile 1&2 students show a -1% gap at 83% and has continued to be a focus for enhancement during the previous academic year.

Ethnicity

Data from students of particular ethnicities continues to fluctuate year on year, BME student numbers are small, and accounted for only 5% of our HE provision in 2016. This then showed a slight decrease in 2017 to 4% while still higher than County Durham BME percentage of 1.8%. (Source ONS).

Black / Black British students are the College's lowest ethic group at only 1% of the HE Provision in 2016/17. This academic year (2017) has remained at 1% but higher than the Durham population of this target group which is 0.1% (ONS County Durham, 2016).

BME groups performed +5% better than White British students in 2015, this gap reduced significantly in 2016 to 2.8% and reflects our commitment to actively promote equality of opportunity within the Colleges HE enhancement plan.

Continuation rates for students who identify themselves as White British are slightly higher than BME students (85.8 & 84.0 respectively) and continues to be a focus for enhancement in 2018. Continuation rates are high for BME sub groups with Black minority students continuation being 84.6% (1.4% higher than the TEF 3 BM) and Asian minority students continuation rate at 94.1 (9.6% higher than the TEF 3 BM). (Source TEF 3 Metrics)

New College Durham is currently looking at potential avenues to enable the College to monitor the carer target group so this data can also be captured and analysed. This will be discussed within the new academic year Data Meetings.

Disability

The number of HE students recorded as having learning difficulties has risen significantly from 7.6% in 2015 to 11.5% in 2017 however students from these target groups perform 4% better then students with no learning difficulties, the retention gap remains low at 86.4% & 86.2% respectively.

Some key notable outcomes include;

- a revised College Policy on Learning Support;
- low level low tables, low level access counters at the Refectory, Costa and Starbucks and the Learning Resource Centre;
- information on funding made available to all students as part of induction and throughout year.

Age

Numbers of mature students accessing FT Higher Education at the College is 67% for PT this number increases to 75% which demonstrates the flexibility of the programmes on offer allowing ease of access to these target groups In keeping with this national picture, the College has also experienced a slight, but continued, reduction in mature part time student recruitment (75% of our PT students are Mature Students (enrolment no's 17-18)).

The College has utilised its FDAP to validate a range of Foundation Degrees that has allowed for direct progression from the majority of our Level 3 provision, this increase in

progression opportunities has seen the number of students under the age of 21 increase by +2%. The College also runs a targeted HE progression programme where it works closely with a number of schools, sixth forms and Colleges to introduce them to the HE portfolio. This along with fewer mature students enrolling has accounted for the change in age profile.

We have seen a growth in the number of higher and degree apps, with over 300 students currently enrolled on a range of prescribed and non-prescribed HE programmes.

All new programmes are validated wherever possible in both full and part time mode and also takes account of the needs of employers to deliver programmes as part of an apprenticeship programme.

The Access Plan reflects the College's commitment to providing a range of full and part time higher education courses which support the access & participation agenda through flexible study patterns and multiple enrolment points throughout the year. *(Resource plan target T16a_07)*

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

New College Durham is proud of the social and cultural diversity of its community and sees it as a strength that inspires innovation and creativity. It is committed to the College being an institution where learning and working exists in an environment that advances equality of opportunity, celebrates diversity and allows everyone to achieve their fullest potential.

The College will meet its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality by;

- driving the agenda at the highest level;
- developing and raising awareness across the organisation;
- sharing good practice;
- working with students, staff and external partners to address barriers faced by particular groups to allow full participation;
- monitoring, measuring and evaluating the impact of Equality and Diversity policies, and practice.

In recognition, of its commitment New College Durham has been recognised by the National Centre of Diversity as Leaders in Diversity. This was achieved in May 2016. This process has given the College a framework against which to analyse performance and identify areas for further development and improvement.

Future Plans

The College recognises however, there is additional work required to ensure all target groups and sub groups are included in its analysis of performance within all aspects of the student lifecycle.

We are currently working on strategies to gather further information on our HE student lifecycle, to support this we have recently appointed an HE Data analyst as part of our Business Information System Department (BIS). A student scorecard has been designed and will be developed to report access, success and progression data across all student characteristics groups and sub groups, the College has committed to consultation & design being completed by February 2019 to ensure a full analysis of differential performance of different student groups and identified gaps are available to inform our 2020/21 AAP resource plan and future targets. This project is at an early stage of its development and as such data to monitor the impact is currently minimal.

Prior to submission and in preparation for the development of our 2020-21 plan, a dedicated full time member of staff has been appointed and is currently interrogating the data using the student score card to enable the College to clearly identify access, success and progression performance by all student groups. The College will analyse the data of each student group on a termly basis and implement intervention strategies where any gaps arise.

Access – Academic Board and the Higher Education Student Experience and Quality Enhancement Committee will monitor applications and enrolments on a termly basis. The College will monitor investment closely to ensure it continues to drive activity in the desired direction. The College will seek student views on IAG and curriculum design through surveys and focus groups, to inform this evaluation. The College will monitor all activity and identify where we are having the most success and which activities are not as cost effective and this will form the basis of our 2019/20 activities plan.

Success – Detailed statistical data analysis will be undertaken to compare attendance, retention, withdrawals, mitigation, suspension of studies, success and completion. This analysis will be done on a termly basis for all students, including those with protected characteristics, and reported back to Academic Board and HESEQE. Any negative trends that are highlighted will be investigated thoroughly and immediate intervention put in place to ensure we reverse the negative trend. We will also gather evidence from the student voice and staff feedback on TLA, resources and student support (including financial support). It is anticipated that this feedback will

support the statistical data and demonstrate that the Colleges approach is supporting students to succeed

Progression – We monitor progression through our own internal system, iGraduate and through the TEF. This information will be analysed to identify any gaps in progression for protected characteristics. Any areas showing as negative will be investigated and intervention strategies implemented. This data is gathered annually and will be reported to both Academic Board and HESEQE.

We will monitor outputs from this data and this will inform future KPIs, widening participation strategies, our marketing plans, as well as the overall College HE Strategy. Data will be analysed at various levels starting at course level, where regular meetings will interrogate data identifying and implementing intervention when required and sharing of good practice across different student characteristics. The HE Curriculum and Quality Forum (HECQF) will be the vehicle by which all teams good practice activity will be disseminated. Findings from this forum will then be escalated up to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB), HESEQE and Academic Board to ensure WP targets for HE are met.

Through its newly established Higher Education Quality and Data Working Group the College has begun to proactively use data available to understand levels of engagement across our different student characteristics. Findings from this analysis has identified potential under-representation and focussed our interventions to support those student groups and backgrounds particularly for young white males.

The College is actively engaged in consultation with its student body and corporate governance to ensure its institutional wide approach to WP allows appropriate target setting against all student characteristics. This approach is student centred and evidence-led to ensure barriers and gaps are fully explored and reduced, enabling positive outcomes across all stages of the student lifecycle. This commitment to develop further performance analysis will be evident within its 2020/21 access and participation plan.

In addition, the College is actively working on strategies and sharing information on HE performance using performance data which will be gathered from a range of sources including our own Foundation Degree Academic Registry, External Examiners, Teesside University, Pearson's, The Open University, Advance HE, MEG, AOC, North East Colleges Teaching and Research Network, ProAchieve, Unit E (College Management Information System), HESA, ONS and OfS.

Ambition and Strategy

The College has made considerable progress to enhance its widening participation agenda over the previous four years. Our ambition moving forward is to meet challenging targets across the student lifecycle. Our new HE Strategy reflects the changing HE landscape.

Our commitment to Higher Education can be demonstrated by our significant financial investment that will enhance an existing provision and support the development of future activity. This has included the development of a new HE suite, digital and media centre, and the advanced manufacturing centre, all aligned to regional and national priorities.

We will deliver value for money in the form of positive employer involvement and student outcomes. All of this will be unpinned by the use of Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and employer engagement.

Quality Assurance Measures

The College continues to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement through the setting and rigorous monitoring of challenging targets. Targets are set and agreed with Corporation for the key performance indicators (KPIs) of recruitment, retention, achievement, progress / attainment (classification), student voice (including NSS outcomes) and destination of higher education leavers; performance against these KPIs is monitored closely at curriculum area, school and board level through HESEQE.

A robust performance management framework, including performance management meetings attended by senior managers and quality review meetings attended by operational managers, is effective in ensuring that high standards are maintained. Data for all KPIs is scrutinised resulting in timely intervention to secure a positive impact for all students; underperformance is investigated and quality enhancement plans, a function of annual self-assessment reporting, are implemented, updated and closely monitored to address underlying causes and issues. As a result, students are very effectively supported to achieve their learning goals and performance targets are met and frequently exceeded.

In this Access Participation Plan the College has used retention as its principal target and has set itself high but realistic milestones. The details are contained in the 19-20 Access & Participation Resource Plan. The College is also setting new targets in relation to the development of innovative foundation degree provision to meet local and regional higher

skills needs using the flexibility offered by its Foundation Degree Awarding Powers. This process is informed through the College's strong links with employers and our regional Local Enterprise Partnership.

The monitoring of the Access and Participation plan is the responsibility of Academic Board and HESEQE. This will be monitored at regular points throughout the academic year.

The access and participation plan will be a standing item on Academic Board and HESEQE agendas. All updates on progress against the plan will be provided by the HE Quality and Data Working Group. Based on the information provided, these committees will then make decisions on interventions and further financial investment. For example, in 2017, a decision was made to appoint to the new post of HE Disability Adviser to enable student to access and be aware of the full range of student support available to them.

Student Voice

The College will continue to evaluate findings from student surveys of student experience and the qualitative data associated with the academic performance of the College's students, to refine its teaching, learning and assessment strategies, in order to maximise student recruitment, retention and achievement. In particular the College will monitor closely the effectiveness of the bridging activities for students entering the College's higher education programmes with Level 3 FE qualifications in relation to their subsequent academic performance. Feedback from students informs the content and delivery model for future activities.

A comprehensive student representation system exists at course, curriculum, school and College level with regular meetings taking place throughout the academic year. The HE student body is also represented at the highest level of decision making and a HE student representative sits as part of the College Corporation. Any issues raised by students are identified and actions put in place to address. Actions are then evaluated to ensure improved levels of student satisfaction.

Students have access to all plans via the College VLE. Students have been involved the development of this plan via the Students Union. Further monitoring will take place through this route and in the Higher Education Student Forum. This meets regularly and represents all full and part-time Higher Education students.

Student Support

During the academic year 2016 – 2017, 97 HE full time students accessed the Advice Support Careers Service (ASC) for specialist funding advice; 20 Current HE part time students also accessed the ASC service for specialist funding advice. Following individual consultations, each student is asked to comment subjectively on the quality and effectiveness of the advice received. Outcomes of these students will be monitored through the students' life cycle and evaluation of access, success and progression considered to review the impact. This was previously achieved through gathering and acting on students' opinions and our intention in 2018/19 is to ensure a more robust process using the toolkit resources provided on the OFFA website.

Staff Development

Following annual reporting, quality enhancement plans are developed to ensure continuous developments of student experience, ensuring students are taught by staff who have the appropriate academic qualifications and have contemporary technical skills and knowledge. Quality Enhancement plans are monitored by Heads of School, Quality, Vice Principals and Governors across the academic year to monitor actions and ensure there is a positive impact on the student experience. Actions identified for further enhancement are collated, and in 17-18 there was a requirement for a more focused HE induction, staff development and support for new teaching staff. The Head of HE has worked with the Lifelong Learning Manager to implement a specific HE session within the College induction programme for new staff. Planning meetings for staff development days has included the identification of HE specific sessions.

The College will continue to research and develop the most effective approaches for delivering Higher Education programmes to students, building on the experience of raising academic standards with its further education learners. Research has acknowledged that different approaches may be required in delivering to mature students who have frequently been out of education for some time, and who make up the majority of its part time higher education student population. In 2016 – 17 an HE specialist became part of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) team and along with the HE community there has been an increased focus on developing skills in TLA in HE via a range of proactive and responsive CPD activities.

Student Induction

In 2019-20 the College will continue to deliver a robust HE induction programme to all students. This programme ensures that all full time and part time HE students are made

aware of the full range of support available to them. Representatives from Finance, Student Progression, Personal Learning Coaches, Academic Support, Students' Union, and Library will participate in the programmes and where available, give appropriate advice and guidance. Following student feedback the initial induction programme was increased with a further four week period of talks which allowed students to access further information, advice and guidance from all support services across the College. In 17 – 18 the programme included an extensive set of workshops to support students in bridging the gap in relation to academic requirements with group talks and individual sessions.

External Collaboration

The College works closely with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) and the Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (TVLEP) to identify employer needs for higher vocational qualifications. Within the LEP's Strategic Economic Plans (2014), they forecast that employers in the North East region will require a further 170,000 employees by 2020 with higher skills at level 4 and above. The College has the capacity, expertise and qualification awarding powers to develop and deliver innovative programmes which will provide opportunities for non-traditional higher education students to succeed, progress, and make a valuable contribution to the local and regional economy.

The North East Collaborative Outreach Programme (NECOP)

NECOP is delivered by a partnership of Colleges[1] and Universities[2] in the region working together to create a step change in the progression to higher education of young people from target under-represented backgrounds. The consortium, led by Newcastle University, is working across 92 ward areas with 108 schools, 17 Colleges and 5 universities to deliver an intensive, progressive programme of higher education interventions aligned to a newly developed Regional Progression Framework. New College Durham leads the College network group in NECOP. The Regional Progression Framework has been specially designed to enable consortia members to plan the NCOP offer to ensure that all existing outreach activity complements rather than duplicates effort. Owing to the size and scale of

---

[1] Bishop Auckland College, Cleveland College of Art and Design, Darlington College, Derwentside College, East Durham College, Gateshead College, Hartlepool College of FE, Middlesbrough College, Newcastle College, New College Durham, Northumberland College, Prior Pursglove and Stockton Sixth Form College, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Redcar and Cleveland College, Tyne Coast College, Stockton Riverside College, Sunderland College.

[2] Durham University, Newcastle University, Northumbria University, University of Sunderland, Teesside University.

NECOP, geography is less of a consideration, and the focus is on differential activities and outcomes that provide intensive support to targeted pupils.

Learning outcomes have been developed and mapped to the Careers Development Institute Framework and Gatsby Benchmark to demonstrate how all activities support specific higher education-focused outcomes.

Through its FutureMe programme, the NECOP is supporting higher education progression by delivering a programme of activity specifically developed to meet the needs of schools/Colleges and their cohorts with available support including undergraduate mentoring, online tutoring, Higher Education Ambassador sessions, masterclasses, specialist programmes for white working class boys and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and self-confidence/resilience workshops. Alongside the main programme of FutureMe activity, NECOP is also working to make an improvement in progression rates through regional marketing, Teacher CPD, and sub-regional projects to address key issues influencing higher education progression.

Stages of Student Lifecycle

Access, Success and Progression Activities

Whilst considerable effort is spent on raising aspirations in the community and local schools, the developmental aim in College is to support improving attainment of widening participation students, including those who progress internally. Activities to achieve this aim include:

- Comprehensive careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provided by specialists working in the College's ASC Centre thereby enabling prospective students considering higher education study at the College to make a fully informed decision about costs, progression opportunities and entry requirements.

- Continue to provide Experience Higher Education events offering degree-style lectures across the College's whole higher education provision available with involvement from employers.

- "Exploring Higher Education" event aimed at attracting adults back into education to study on the College's range of higher education and professional programmes; an increased focus on Higher and Degree Apprenticeship awareness-raising to both employers, progressing apprentices and new students from local Colleges and sixth forms.

- A week of progression activities directed at the College's Level 3 FE students, the aim of which is to enable existing FE students to experience higher education activities, shadow existing HE students and participate in a range of masterclass and information giving activities and events.

- Event activities directed towards KS4 and KS5 staff across County Durham and outlying schools held to support IAG Higher Education guidance regarding different educational pathways

- Outreach work with schools and academies to support participation to higher education undertaken throughout the academic year by specialist staff within the School Liaison Team. This includes involvement from the curriculum with activities that are both educational and accessible ensures a comprehensive package to aspiring students.

- Personalised visits to all the Sixth Forms and centres within the geographical catchment area of the College undertaken by the Vice Principal Economic Development & Student Progression (14 centres in total) and allocated School Liaison Officer to develop tailored activity plans to inform and engage prospective students. *(Resource plan target T16a_05)*

- Bespoke higher education events, including summer schools, tours and tasters held within the College to raise awareness of higher education opportunities, explore the financial implications of such study, and support transition to the College environment.

The college takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 as a starting point and then seeks to use the APP to enhance and increase activities in college to support underrepresented groups. The following activities are funded through the College's Access and Participation Plan and the College feels these go beyond the responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010.

- In order to address gender stereotypes, the College has successfully run numerous campaigns through NECOP and its own marketing department, such as Men into Health and Women into Engineering.
- The provision of the multi -prayer room and washing facilities following feedback from students.
- A project to address the continuation rate for white working class males.
- Staff have undertaken mental health awareness training;

- Social Work students undertook British Sign Language as part of their enhancement programme.

- New and revised College policies on Learning Support.

- CPD sessions delivered to all HE staff by HE Disability Advisor and the team on all aspects of disability support and our procedures;

- Braille studs on every staircase rail in the College.

The College monitors activities for Access, Success and Progression closely to ensure equal opportunities for all Higher Education students including full-time, part-time and Higher Apprentices.

Access, Success and Progression Measures

In order to improve our **Access** and **Progression** to higher education the College will:

1. Continue to build on the current programme of outreach to local schools to support and encourage applications to higher education.

2. Build upon feedback from outreach activities and curriculum focused events to enhance the content of future activities aimed at progression to higher education.

3. Build upon feedback from progression activities and curriculum focused events to enhance the content of future activities aimed at progression to higher education.

4. Continue to monitor BME recruitment trends to ensure that HE recruitment numbers are a reflection of our local community.

5. Continue to monitor part-time student recruitment and retention trends to ensure that HE student numbers are a reflection of the local community.

6. Develop flexible routes into higher education, for part-time students and further develop the higher and degree apprenticeship provision.

7. Support employers, schools and internal stakeholders involved with student recruitment to understand the range of pathways into and through higher education.

Evaluation Approaches to Improving Access

Further Education to Higher Education

The tracking of destination data of the College's progressing students both from FE to HE and HE and beyond is a key focus. The College undertakes a number of activities (see page

13) which support widening participation and has been successful in bringing students in from low income families. This is due to the range and consistency of the activities which raise the aspirations of this group of students to progress to higher education. A particular strength of the College is its available routes to, and demonstrated, internal progression from Level 3 further education study to foundation degree to top-up degree higher education study.

For our HE students destinations we track this through three measures:

- The College's own internal collection of destination data, collected by course teams and recorded via our Unit E system. The College has reported 95% positive outcomes on this internal measure in 2017 this is an increase from 92% in 2016, the process for destination capture is robust with destinations targeted around the proportion of students achieving a sustained positive destination i.e. their destination between October and March of the year after completion.

- Destination data is also gathered independently via iGraduate on behalf of the College, and reported to the Destination of HE leavers (DLHE) survey. In 2015-16 iGraduate data reported 3% of graduates were unemployed, this figure reduced further to 2% in 2016/17 showing a significant increase of +3% compared to the national average of 5% (HESA).

- The TEF 3 metric highlights that overall full time students who progress to Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study achieve 1.2% better than the sector average of 71%, the College split metric demonstrates positive flags for both Male (77.2%) and other UG(76.5%) cohorts.

We are currently in the process of developing the same internal system to track all of our part time HE students, this will indicate categories such as remains in employment, attained new job, and attained promotion following completion of study and moved to self-employment.

As a College, we continue to strive for positive employment outcomes for our students from all backgrounds, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes. We analyse the data of the small % of students who do not make positive progression and identify interventions that could support them beyond their time at the college eg. Offering advice and guidance sessions.

School Partnerships

The commitment of the College to supporting access to HE in County Durham and the North East Region is exemplified by its role as the lead sponsor for two academies North Durham and Consett. The joint vision is for all students, whatever their ability and background, to have the opportunity to fulfil their real potential and make an informed choice about their future. The relationship with both North Durham and Consett Academy enables a mutually beneficial partnership to inform and promote pathways to higher education through a variety of activities, some of which are bespoke to each Academy and have been highlighted in the Access, Student Success and Progression measures section below. The College has a positive progression partnership arrangement with all 36 schools in the county and many others in the wider region. The College continues to progress its HE recruitment strategy, the first phase of the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is now launched and in 2018/19 this enables potential students to create accounts, allowing them to save courses they are interested in. This will allow us to gather further data at an earlier stage of the application process, and allow for a more informed evaluation.

Evaluation Approaches to Improving Progression

The HE Strategy Group (chaired by the Principal) monitors the above measures outlined to ensure that applications, particularly from students in low participation neighbourhoods, continue to grow in line with the College's Widening Participation (WP) targets.

Student surveys and student voice activities produced by the HE Development & Quality Unit will be used to inform evaluation and to ensure that the information advice and guidance (IAG) continues to meet student needs and expectations.

Investment in this area will be monitored to ensure that it continues to drive measures which meet College targets. Applications are monitored weekly throughout the year and will from 2018/2019 be reported on within the HEASQB. This board has the remit to monitor and evaluate activities across the HE curriculum, with a particular focus on outreach work and identify where the College is having the most success and impact in terms of its HE applications. The focused approach to this analysis will be through enhanced developed feedback of individual events, start of year feedback surveys and focus groups to gain a robust insight into good practice and enhancements.

While in previous years only qualitative measures have been sought, the College is now committed in 2018/2019, to developing and implementing a robust quantitative measure of

success of this approach, by tracking and monitoring of individuals who have expressed an interest in higher education at Key Stage 4, through to commencing studies on a higher education programme.

Whilst we recognise the quantitative measuring of this approach will be long term, we believe that its output will be instrumental in evaluating and amending our outreach provision.

Success measures

In order to continue our **Success** in higher education the College will:

1. Continue to monitor student data to ensure all students achieve their learning goals.
2. Commit to expanding the data analysis of performance to ensure all target groups within the HE cohort are identified, supported and monitored through regular team and formal meeting structures.
3. Continue to ensure all students are provided with regular access to Tutorial Support (TS) and when required (via the online booking system) a Personal Learning Coach (PLC) or HE Academic Support Tutor (HEAST).
4. Provide all essential academic resources to support success throughout the student's life cycle. Ensuring that students have access to resources outside of normal HE taught sessions such as bespoke curriculum resources, access to an effective VLE which supports learning and access to quiet study areas.
5. Maintain focus on the needs of BME students to ensure that the high levels of continuation and success are maintained.
6. Maintain focus on the needs of part-time students to ensure that the levels of continuation are further developed.
7. Continue to support improvements in the performance of full time white males to further develop performance from the current Addressing barriers to Student Success Project which is due complete in 2018/19.
8. Continue to evaluate and enhance student induction to support their preparation for study and ensure continuation rates remain high.

Evaluation of Approaches to Success

The Colleges evaluation of the above approaches to continuous improvement of success, is robust and will continue to be based on statistical analysis and comparison of trends across

the provision, by school and by curriculum as well as being broken down into protected characteristics of students.

The College is committed to expanding its statistical analysis and comparison trends in 2018/2019 to ensure all sub groups are included within its breakdown of protected student characteristics.

Curriculum Managers along with Programme Leaders report their student progress data to the HE Development & Quality Unit (monthly) and at HE Quality Reviews (held four times a year). Data is reported for all students including those with protected characteristics. From these meetings good practice is shared across academic teams and interventions (when required) are actioned and dealt with in a timely manner to ensure robust strategies for improvement and gaps are identified, addressed and monitored.

College data analysis is also reported at the HEASQB where interventions progress is monitored. Both the analysis and progress against any interventions are monitored closely against College Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) by Governance and senior management at Senior Executive Group (SEG).

Data on student withdrawals, suspension of studies and mitigation requests are being monitored closely in 2018/19. This enables the College to evaluate how effective our early intervention strategies are for support and allows the College to monitor any gaps across protected characteristics.

The College will continue to monitor and address student feedback through module reviews, QDP in-house surveys, NSS and student rep forums and formal HE committee meetings.

Student retention and completion rates will continue to be monitored annually to ensure that targeted improvement is achieved. Successful outcomes of these approaches are expected to demonstrate that students feel supported to achieve and feel the College is meeting its commitment to ensuring value for money.

Investment

Fee income generated as a result of this access and participation plan will be used to support a number of activities and initiatives. For example, the proposed expenditure for 2019:20 is identified in the below table:

	Total (£)	HFI (%)
Access Investment	103,432	4.7
Success Investment	62.000	2.8
Progression Investment	43,000	2.0
Financial Support Investment	243,000	11.1
Total Activity Spend	451,432	20.7

In 2019/20 the College will be further refining its outreach work with Sixth Forms within the region. Progression data and student feedback will be used as indicators of the impact of these activities and monitored annually to ensure growth. The College will continue to develop its links with other local FE providers in the region, particularly those which do not have the range of higher education routes available at the College. This is in addition to the schools outreach programme.

The College will continue to evaluate the findings from the College's student surveys of student experience and the qualitative data associated with the academic performance of the College's students, to refine its teaching, learning and assessment strategies, in order to maximise student recruitment, retention and achievement. In particular the College will monitor closely the effectiveness of its bridging activities for students entering the College's higher education programmes with Level 3 FE qualifications in relation to their subsequent academic performance.

For example, during the academic year 2018 – 2019 full time and part time HE students accessing the ASC service for specialist funding advice; will be monitored throughout their time with the College, as well as students being asked to comment subjectively on the quality and effectiveness of the advice received. Attainment data will also be monitored to evaluate the impact of this support on student outcomes.

The College operates an Access to Learning Fund for Higher Education students. In order to qualify the student must satisfy the following three requirements relating to their residence and immigration status on the first day of the first academic year of the course:

- Have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands throughout the three-year period preceding that date other than wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education; (Students covered by the Bidar Guidance and those classed as "home" students are also eligible);

- Be ordinarily resident in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland (Students from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are ineligible for support);

- Be settled in the United Kingdom under the terms of the Immigration Act 1971, in other words ordinarily resident here without being subject to any restriction on the period for which they may stay.

The Access to Learning Fund is allocated to students from low income households and available to encourage students, who may not have previously applied to Higher Education to consider further study. An eligibility criterion for HE students to receive this support is a student's residential household income being £26,000 or less. This support is available for both Part-time and Full-time students.

Types of support available include:

> HE Hardship fund
> 19+ Cash for College
> 24+ Bursary
> Travel support – accessed via the Access to learning Fund

Eligibility criterion for HE students to receive this support is a student's residential household income being £26,000 or less. Support is available for both part-time and full-time students. Allocation is based on Access to Learning Fund criteria which is used to undertake an assessment of Income against expenditure. Following this assessment applicants are banded on determined level of hardship.

The College uses 4 categories of hardship when determining the level of award to each student:

Category	Deficit
1	< £1000
2	< £2000
3	< £4000
4	> £4000

The College activities aimed at supporting progression and employability are offered across the full student life cycle. For 2019/2020, the career service will also be working closely with underrepresented students who require a more bespoke career support to ensure all students achieve their career goals.

Our increased investment in financial support reflects the number of students across our HE provision who are accessing the full range of student support available to them. This is reflected in the increased amount of students accessing support from Personal Learning Coaches, HE Academic Tutors, Counselling services, HE Learning Support, HE Disability Coordinator, as well as the HE Hardship Fund.

In the next six months the college will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of its financial support plan, outcomes of this will form the basis of the 20/21 plan due to be submitted spring 2019. The College will analyse attendance and retention data on a termly basis and the continuation and progression data on an annual basis. Data on students in receipt of financial support will be compared to previous cohorts in receipt of support as well as comparison to cohorts not in receipt of any financial support. The information will be interrogated and interventions put in place where gaps arise. This information will be reported termly to Academic Board and HESEQE. We intend to work closely with the OfS and utilise the financial support evaluation toolkit to allow us to gain a greater understanding of the effectiveness of our financial support process.

The College has committed to implementing methods using the financial support evaluation toolkit by 2019/20. In this academic year, work has begun on applying methodologies for the

survey toolkit. This will enable the College to evaluate the effectiveness of its financial support packages by using the statistical tools to identify four key outcome measures;

- Access to HE
- Completion of a degree within 5 years
- Attainment of a second class degree or above
- The DLHE successful outcome metrics.

The College will evaluate the findings from the above four measures on an annual basis, at the end of each academic year once all KPI measures have been validated. The evaluation of this information will inform future practice with regard to financial support to identify the most effective measures across the student lifecycle. This will ensure evaluation leads to a more robust targeting of financial support that leads to the most appropriate outcomes and demonstrates the best VFM.

The College is committed to its progression investment of 2.0%. Activities will focus on ensuring opportunity for employment or self-employment skills, highly skilled employment, graduate level employment and further study, such as;

- Employer led project briefs;
- Enrichment activities such as student attendance at conferences designed to enhance employability skills;
- A range of guest speakers from industry and the public sector;
- Specific career led activities as part of a bespoke tutorial programme delivered by the Advice, Support, Careers (ASC) department, including CV Writing and Interview Skills.

The College investment of activity as set out in the Access & Participation Resource Plan (Table 7) aims at supporting its objectives and targets for access, success and progression and will continue to support all students within its HE provision.

Investment beyond the Access and Participation Plan.

The College continues to strengthen and build on its commitment to employer engagement and the higher skills agenda. Through a targeted campaign, it will engage both the higher education and skills landscape by linking employer needs for highly skilled individuals with student career aspirations. Our commitment to this can be seen through;

- A full range of employer engagement activities such as business breakfasts and employer forums, aimed at identifying higher skills needs within the region. This will be fully supported by the Vice Principals, Head of HE, Director of Apprenticeships, Heads of School and Curriculum Managers.

- Targeted employer engagement activities aimed at part time HE provision such as working with employers to identify individuals currently in employment who currently do not possess higher levels skills. This work will be done by Vice Principals, Heads of School, Curriculum Managers, the Apprenticeship Team and Business Development Team.

- Working in partnership with large employers, such as Nissan, Atom Bank and Durham County Council in the development, design and delivery of higher level degree and masters apprenticeships. This work is led by Vice Principal for Economic Development and Student Progression, Vice Principal for Higher Education and Vice Principal for Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement.

- Remission is allocated to innovation champions within each school to support the development of higher levels skills within the existing workforce, with a focus on part time HE students.

- Our application to become an Institute of Technology (IoT) which will be a high-quality, employer-led institution specialising in providing higher level technical provision.

Our investment commitment reflects a balance between supporting the relevant underrepresented groups and supporting the College's commitment to widening participation. Underrepresented groups are supported through our inclusive activities by utilising the range of support identified on page 23. All our activities are evaluated using a range of methodologies, dependant on its intended outcome.

Findings from this evaluation informs future activities as well as being incorporated into the colleges quality assurance cycle and used to further enhance future developments across our WP agenda, curriculum design, annual reports and the overall HE strategy.

Examples where our evaluation has demonstrated change for underrepresented groups are:

- Feedback from mature students indicated the timing of our HE Open Event was not appropriate due to students having family / caring / work or other personal commitments. This evaluation led us to revise the timing to a Saturday morning,

resulting in a greater number of attendees and increase in applications from both full and part-time programmes.

- HE Open Day – feedback evaluations indicated that students from underrepresented groups wanted greater access of information with regard to support. This feedback led to changes to subsequent HE Open day events where we included representatives from finance, student learning support, the disability team and the student union. This enhanced the student experience and provided all students with information and support needs in one location. This has been welcomed in subsequent student feedback.

- Employer engagement – format of this event has changed to incorporate student attendance, this has led to increased attainment and progression opportunities. Further feedback from employers indicated they were more likely to attend early morning events as this caused less disruptions to their day.

- Positive employment and work experience outcomes have arisen due to the above employer engagement events.

All activity is analysed on a termly basis at Academic Board and HESEQE. This termly monitoring allows interventions to be implemented quickly to reverse any negative outcomes of any characteristics.

We will continue to actively review the distribution and effectiveness of funds of investments made beyond that identified within the Access and Participation Plan. The College is currently utilising funding through the NECOP project, which is to ensure that all existing outreach activity compliments rather than duplicates effort.

Provision of information to students

The College operates a Higher Education Information Group remit of which is to ensure the production of information for all audiences regarding learning opportunities offered is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. This group is also responsible for ensuring higher education information procedures are systematically reviewed and enhanced information to meet audiences' requirements.

The College policy on Higher Education Information clearly states the aims and principles in relation to obligations to stakeholders. The policy includes procedures covering health checks of information, management of course information and audit of course information. The College ensures compliance with good practice on categories of information published on the website. The information provided to students is guided by the principles of accuracy, accessibility clarity, timeliness and completeness.

In 2019/20 the College will ensure that prospective students receive timely advice about tuition fee levels and any financial support available to them which is sufficient to enable them to make fully informed decisions about the costs associated with study at this institution. The College will market test the information and intend to publish with the student body using the Student Union to undertake the testing. The College will modify the information in the light of the test results.

The College provides such information to UCAS and to the SLC in a timely fashion for incorporation in their databases for each academic year. It ensures compliance to mandatory information required in relation to Key Information Sets and Wider Information Sets.

The College will monitor and review information to ensure compliance with Consumer Protection Law as recommended by the Competition and Markets Authority.

The information we provide to students will be guided by the principles of accuracy, clarity, timeliness and completeness. The Colleges ASC service coordinated and led external quality audits the outcome of which were the awards of Investors in Careers and matrix quality marks.

The College will provide such information within the Higher Education section of the website, within the Higher Education Prospectus, and in the marketing material provided at programme level. For 2017 – 18, the Start of Programme Survey indicated that 93% of HE students felt the advice they received before they started helped them to choose the right programme.

The College will ensure that staff providing financial advice to prospective and current students are fully informed of the financial implications for students at this institution and are able to advise students accurately and comprehensively.

The content of the published information will include full details of Access to Learning arrangements operated by the College. These details are contained in the College's Access Fund policies, which is are public domain documents. It includes eligibility criteria, the nature and level of financial support available, and the process by which funds can be applied for.

The College marketing strategy focuses on increasing awareness and College reputation for delivering quality higher education programmes. This includes a broad range of traditional and digital communications within the geographical area. The marketing strategy is informed through extensive market research which considers demographics, motivation for attendance and areas for potential growth.

During 16-17, the College commissioned a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to manage and analyse (prospective and current) student interactions and data throughout the programme lifecycle this will ensure a consistent approach to prospective and current programme information across all schools.

The College is committed to the principle of full consultation with its students in relation to all aspects of their experience at the College. Students are consistently involved in consultations related to key changes and enhancements to higher education provision.

Communications are facilitated through formally trained student representatives and various groups at course, School and College level. Student feedback is considered vital to the deliberative process which ensures that the College continues to deliver high quality and accessible higher education provision.

The College operates and financially supports a duly constituted Student Union which is led by a Student Union President. The post of President is an annually elected position; all enrolled students are eligible to vote. The post is paid and is normally of one calendar year's tenure. The President is supported by a team of student officers drawn from across the student community there is also an elected HE student representative on the Students' Union Assembly. Students are also supported by the College's Learning Development Co-ordinator whom acts as the President's mentor. The LDC mentor provides support in terms or appeals, complaints and disciplinary issues and also implements the recruitment, training and support of peer mentors. This approach has proved successful; 94% of higher education

students responding to the 2016 – 2017 Start of Programme Satisfaction Survey agreed they are aware of the range of support the College offers.

The College will continue to encourage Students' Union administration and activities to help mature and part time students feel involved in College life and instil positive relationships with staff and other students. *(Resource Plan Target T16_07)*

The Student Union, in accordance with a formal agreed constitution provides the College with a means to consult with the entire student community through its Union representatives. The Students' Union is responsible for all aspects of student representation in the College ensuring it communicates with all of our students from a wide range of backgrounds via Course Reps, VLE systems and formal meeting structures, HE Student Forums are held termly, with standard agenda items such as TEF and AAP discussed.

The Student Union President, as the elected representative of the student body, has participated in the development of this plan and attends a number of Governors meetings and HE Strategic Planning meetings where the Access & Participation Plan is being monitored and evaluations are taking place to amend or approve any future contents.

* course type not listed.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Podiatry	£9,250
First degree	Social Work	£9,000
Foundation degree	Year 1	£9,000
Foundation degree	Year 2	£9,000
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other	Top Up Quals	£9,000
Other	Undergraduate	£9,000
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree	Year 1 - 2017 start	£3,000
Foundation degree	Year 1 - 2017 start Counselling	£4,000
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other	Year 2 - 2016 start Top Up	£4,000
Other	Year 1 - 2017 start Top Up	£4,000

								Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					
header: Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body													

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
T16a_01	Student success	Mature	**Other statistic** - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase retention rate across FT and PT provision over the duration of the agreement	No	2012-13	85	90	90	100	92		
T16a_02	Access	Low income background	**Other statistic** - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Increase in the % internal progression (Level 3 to Level 4), for FT entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds, referenced to Postcode/IMD files	No	2012-13	44	55	55	55	57		
T16a_03	Student success	Mature	**Other statistic** - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Student Success. We are currenly starting to analyse the data relating to degree and foundation degreee and HNC/D classifications. We have set targets that have been agreed with corporation and teams are working to achieve this. We will be in a position to monitor from September 2016 onwards	no	2012-13	80	84	84	90	90		
T16a_04	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	**Other statistic** - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Positive Progression data	no	2012-13	70	74	74	80	80		
T16a_05	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	**HESA T1c** - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, other undergraduate entrants)	target of 15% year-on increase in community engagements with these categories	Yes	2012-13	1000	3162	4182	4810	4810		Using available data from the Durham County Council, the total recorded participation in education, employment (with training) and training for 16 year olds living in County Durham was 93.9%. Participation dropped significantly as the age increases; overall, Durham County Council reported 6.9% (4.8% for England). The College continues to work successfully with partners to provide opportunities to young people who are currently not engaged in education, employment or training.
T16a_06	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	**HESA T1a** - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	target of 33% of retained students from these categories	No	2016-17	20	30	30	40	40		
T16a_07	Access	Attainment raising	**HESA T1b** - State School (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Raise attainment with KS4 and KS5, a structured skills programe, for incresed levels of progress through school activities / engagement / enhancements, referenced to Postcode for duration of the agreement	No	2016-17	83	85	86	87	88		

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
T16b_01	Progression	Socio-economic	Operational targets	Introducation of additional Foundation Degrees based on market demand	No	2012-13	19	29	30	30	31		

Optional commentary on milestones.
This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.