

# **New College Durham**

## **Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29**

### **Introduction and strategic aim**

New College Durham (NCD), situated in the Northeast of England, is a mixed economy College originally established in 1921 with a history in professional and technical education. The College's strategic approach is delivering high-quality professional and technical programs which clearly align to meet both employer demands and student needs across both the local and wider regional area. This approach directly aligns with the Northeast Local Enterprise Partnership's key priorities which include innovation, business growth, skills development, and enhanced connectivity and infrastructure.

As a Mixed Economy Group (MEG), NCD plays a crucial role in offering opportunities to those who would otherwise not study HE. Our curriculum is deliberately career-focused, supporting regional economic growth by equipping students with necessary skills and fostering opportunities for both immediate employment and/or further education. New College Durham stands as the largest further education college in County Durham, renowned for its comprehensive range of vocational and academic courses that cater to a diverse learner population. Offering a blend of A-levels, vocational diplomas, higher education degrees, and apprenticeships, the College is pivotal in shaping the skilled workforce of the region. The diversity of our programmes ensures that every student, regardless of background or career choice, has the opportunity, to achieve to their full potential.

NCD offers a range of programmes at levels 4 and 5 validated via the College's indefinite awarding powers, these include foundation degrees, Higher National Diploma's and more recently Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). All HTQs established at NCD are careful to ensure appropriate progression routes exist for our students, within our Level 6 provision if they opt to take up further HE opportunities. Our 3-year degree provision and Level 6 top up programmes are validated through the Open University (OU), a partnership which has continued successfully since 2017.

The College also offers its NCD validated programmes to currently two associate colleges. This is part of our broader strategic commitment to support equality and celebrate diversity within all our educational and operational practices. The College takes pride in that we are educating our students, and actively contributing to the socioeconomic development of both the local region and wider national economy, preparing a workforce which is ready to meet the challenges of today and the future.

The College has had strong HE enrolments over recent years with, 3,199 full-time students in 2023/24 academic year, with a significant representation from diverse and often underrepresented communities, affirming our commitment to promoting equal opportunities. Notably, 65.3% of our Higher Education students reside in the Polar 1 & 2 areas (IMD),

typically our Higher Education students are Mature students, with only 16.4% under 21 and majority (49.3% - 31years and older).

Our curriculum is deliberately career-focused, supporting regional economic growth by equipping students with necessary skills and fostering opportunities for both immediate employment and/or further study. The inclusivity of our programmes ensures that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity, to achieve to their full potential.

### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

The College has identified three high risks to equality of opportunity that student groups may experience at New College Durham which are shown in **Figure 1**. These risks were identified through a College wide consultation led by our Access and Participation Development Group during this consultation, engaging with both staff and students, the College considered the whole student journey (Access, Continuation, Completion, Attainment, and Progression). The College alongside the consultation carried out a detailed assessment of performance to identify where additional risks or indicators of risks could be found in our data. Our planned objectives and targets were then developed to address the key areas of risks.

**Figure 1 – Potential additional risks to equal opportunity**

<b>Risks to Equality of Opportunity</b>	<b>Assessment of Risk</b>
1. Knowledge and skills	Medium
2. Information and guidance	Medium
3. Perception of higher education	High
4. Application success rates	Low
5. Limited choice of course type and delivery mode	Low
6. Insufficient academic support	Low
7. Insufficient personal support	Medium
8. Mental health	High
9. Ongoing impacts of coronavirus	Medium
10. Cost pressures	High
11. Capacity issues	Low
12. Progression from higher education	Medium

### **Mental Health**

Evidence suggests a growing number of students reporting mental health conditions, experiencing the adverse effects of stress, or seeking support for low levels of well-being. The repercussions of deteriorating mental health or well-being can be significant, including feelings of isolation and even withdrawal from studies or higher education entirely. The college has seen an increase in student numbers since 2019, of students reporting disability, this may have some significance to the gap in continuation.

### **Perception of Higher Education**

Perceptions of Higher Education particularly within the Northeast has created limited access to Higher Education. The financial challenges students now face can heavily influence these

perceptions, with students from lower-income backgrounds in particular facing additional family pressures to gain paid employment.

### **Cost Pressures**

There is substantial anecdotal evidence from curriculum staff which indicates that financial pressures are a significant factor in some student's non-continuation. These pressures are particularly likely to impact students from lower income backgrounds more than other groups, contributing to the lower rates of continuation and completion among our full-time undergraduate students in these categories.

### **NCD Risk 1**

Our analysis identifies gaps in academic performance, notably in continuation, for students under 21 diagnosed with mental health conditions compared to their peers without disabilities. Specifically for students from deprived areas (using the IMD 2019), NCD students show a continuation rate gap of 11.8 pp compared to their peers without disabilities. When compared to sector benchmarks, the gaps are 9.1 pp for continuation.

### **NCD Risk 2**

Analysis has also shown an increase of 6.3 pp gap from the previous year 2019/20 between Undergraduates students not reporting a disability and student reporting a Disability within Continuation. This increase does not reflect the sector pp gap which has seen a slight decline from 2019/20.

### **NCD Risk 3**

Our analysis identified an Ethnicity GAP of 10.2 pp between White & Other Ethnic groups Specifically for students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds in continuation. While this gap has reduced from the 2019/20 pp gap of 30.7 there is still further work to be done. Compared to sector benchmarks, the gaps of 10.2 pp is 8 pp higher than the sector.

### **NCD Risk 4**

Our analysis identified young undergraduates are less likely to complete their studies, with data showing a -6.5 pp gap. This has increased over the last two years by 4.2 pp. Evidence suggested this is due to our franchised provision and our increase in numbers from 2019.

Our assessment using the Office for Students (OfS) APP data dashboard has provided a good understanding of the risks and opportunities within the College for our students. However, there has been some limitations to this dataset due to no data available. Despite these limitations, where possible, our approach has been to incorporate both aggregated data and insights from other national data sources such as ONS and local government insights. To ensure we address all possible barriers to equal opportunity within the College members of the Access and Participation Development Group (APDG), with members from across all departments within the College reflected with their teams the 12 national risks from the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) across the different student lifecycle stages. From this we have categorised and ranked each national risk. Findings from this identified 3 high-priority risks which included perception of higher education, mental health

issues, and cost pressures. Medium-priority risks involve knowledge and skills, information and guidance, insufficient personal support, and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Low-priority risks included application success rates, limited course options, insufficient academic support, and capacity issues. Through strategically prioritising risks where students are impacted the most and where we believe our interventions can be most effective allows us to focus our resources and strengths on the areas across the departments that will generate the highest impact for our students.

## Objectives

**NCD Risk 1** - Reduce the gap in student success (continuation) between students of low and high socioeconomic status (IMD Q1 & 2) by 2% annually through improving access to academic and mental health creating specific monitoring and progress activities.

- **Objective 1:** Significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation) between students Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1 and 2 and students IMD Q3-Q5 by 2028/2029 to 0.3pp through targeted strategies that address their unique challenges and the systemic barriers they face. These will include early identification and intervention using academic performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators and may include academic support, counselling, or financial support adjustments.

**NCD Risk 2** – Eliminate the gap in Undergraduates student continuation between students not reporting a disability and students reporting a Disability for by 2029. Using support intervention strategies to ensure successful completion.

- **Objective 2:** Eliminate the gap in student continuation between Disability reported and Non-Disability reported for Undergraduates by 2029 by reducing this gap 1.5pp annually and improving personal, academic support, enhancing the reasonable adjustments policy and improving access to initial assessment, advice and guidance.

**NCD Risk 3** – Significantly reduce the 10.2 pp gap in continuation between White & Other Ethnic groups specifically for students from mixed ethnic backgrounds by 2 pp annually through developing focused support and intervention strategies.

- **Objective 3:** Significantly reduce the 10.2 pp gap to 2.2 pp in continuation between White & other Ethnic groups, specifically for students from mixed ethnic backgrounds by reducing this gap by 2 pp annually through developing focused support and early intervention strategies. These will include early identification and intervention using academic performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators and may include academic support, counselling, or financial support adjustments.

**NCD Risk 4** – Close the completion rate gap of -6.5 pp for young undergraduates 2 pp annually which will eliminate this gap by 2028 through on programme monitoring and focused at risk support strategies.

- **Objective 4:** Close the completion rate gap of -6.5 pp further for young undergraduates by 2 pp annually which will eliminate this gap by 2028 through on programme monitoring, focused at-risk support strategies and offering flexible programmes and delivery options to accommodate students who might be balancing studies with work or family responsibilities.

## **Intervention strategies and expected outcomes**

### **Intervention strategy IS1: Improved Continuation**

#### **Objectives and targets**

New College Durham will significantly reduce the gaps in student success (continuation) between students Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1 and 2 and students IMD Q3-Q5 by 2pp reducing this gap in 2028/2029 to 0.3pp. (FIT PTS\_1).

**Targets** - Continuation Gap reduced in 2025/26 to 9.6pp, in 2026/27 to 7.4pp, in 2027/28 to 5.2pp and in 2028/29 to 3.0pp between students of low & high socioeconomic.

#### **Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 1 (Knowledge & Skills), Risk 10 (Cost Pressures) and Risk 3 (Perception of Higher Education).

#### **Related objectives and targets**

Objective 2 and Objective 3

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Early Identification and Intervention	<p>Clear additional induction session focusing only on support available including academic support, counselling, and financial aid adjustments.</p> <p>Library support for students, specifically information literacy and research methodology</p> <p>Enhanced Academic Support</p>	<p>1 hrs Induction Session 100 sessions per L4, L5 &amp; L6 Group at the start of the year x 3 staff = 300hrs Cost £18,000 Materials = £1,800 (est)</p> <p>2 0.5 FTE counselling staff, (based on proportion of FTE's time) x 40.00 = £2,000.</p> <p>financial aid adjustments - £45,000 (based on estimated costing of 20 students).</p> <p>academic support tutor - 1FTE X 20000 = £20,000</p>	<p>psychological support and counselling can help students manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges that might otherwise hinder their academic and social functioning.</p> <p>Students' knowledge and confidence grows in information literacy and research methodology</p> <p>Students enhance their academic confidence and motivation</p>	<p>Early Identification and Intervention with a focused support induction package will contribute to Risk 2 &amp; 3</p>
Monitoring student progress	<p>identify students at risk of dropping out, using academic performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators.</p>	<p>At Risk meetings x 3 per year based on Proportionate time for SLT Manager, Director of HE, Quality Manager, Head of School and Programme leader. 0.1 FTE estimated hrs x 3 meetings 50,000 x 5staff = £25,000</p> <p>Administration costs 0.02 FT = 700</p>	<p>Staff aware of students at risk of dropping out, and better able to monitor engagement levels and support interventions.</p>	

## Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

	Total cost
IS1Activity	£101,200
IS1 Evaluation	£1,540

## Summary of evidence base and rationale

As a College we analysed continuation via the OfS dashboard we identified gaps in student success (continuation) between students Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintiles 1 and 2 and students IMD Q3-Q5 course data. Data also confirmed by the Department for Education (DfE) on widening participation in higher education shows that the North East continues to have the second lowest progression rate among the regions, at 40.4%, compared to the national average of 44.4% in England<sup>1</sup>. Based on the analysis conducted and what we know from our own College data, students who face initial lack of belonging are choosing to leave the HE environment rather than seek additional support. both our data and current research also suggests both cost pressures and mental health are contributing factors for students not remaining in higher education<sup>2</sup>. We believe the activities identified will contribute to not only the success of individual students but also to the overall health and wellbeing of the College students. By investing in strategies that address the specific needs of individual students from low economic backgrounds, we can ensure a more equitable, inclusive, and productive educational environment.

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<sup>1</sup> [Widening participation in higher education, Academic year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/explore-education-statistics)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aoc.co.uk/news-campaigns-parliament/aoc-newsroom/poor-mental-health-is-the-top-reason-for-poor-student-attendance-say-colleges>

## Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student Feedback	Induction survey	Empirical - Type 2	Details analysis shared internally and reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB) and headline data reported to the Board of Governors in November at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE)
At risk student Data analysis	Statistical data trends on students' views on the perception of the support provided	Empirical - Type 2	Details analysis shared internally and reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB) with headline data reported to the Board of Governors in November at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE)
Annual Review	Review of the impact on programmes, and the evaluation strategies used.	Narrative - Type 1	Both Internal & External reported to the Board of Governors in June (Annually) at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE) and published via the NCD website in the annual APP Evaluation report in June.

## Intervention strategy 2: IS2 – Eliminate Disability Gap

### Objectives and targets

New College Durham will

Eliminate the gap in student continuation between Disability reported and Non-Disability reported for Undergraduates by 2029 by reducing this gap 1.5pp annually and improving personal, academic support, enhancing the reasonable adjustments policy and improving access to initial assessment, advice and guidance (FIT PTS\_2)

**Targets** - Continuation Gap reduced in 2025/26 to 4.8pp, in 2026/27 to 3.3pp, in 2027/28 to 1.8pp and in 2028/29 to 0.3pp between Disability reported and Non-Disability reported for Undergraduates.

### Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 2 (Information and guidance), Risk 8 (Mental Health) and Risk 3 (Perception of Higher Education).

### Related objectives and targets

Objective 1 and Objective 3

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Inclusive Culture	Promote an inclusive culture through annual awareness campaign and targeted events that celebrate diversity.	1 X FTE overseeing the planning and execution of diversity initiatives.= £34,000	Students receive acknowledgment of their backgrounds and feel more empowered to advocate for themselves and others.	
Awareness Training for Staff	Annual training session for staff on disability awareness and assistive technologies that support students and the importance of inclusive teaching practices.	0.2hrs x 30hrs CPD Officer (based on proportion of FTE's time) x 40.00 = 800 x 30 = 24,000.	Annual training event	
Mentorship Programme	Develop a mentorship programme where students with disabilities can be mentored / supported by older students or alumni with similar experiences.	0.2hrs of FTE Support Officer (28000) =£560	Training will cover how to create an accessible and supportive learning environment.	

### Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

	Total cost
IS2 Activity	£58,560
IS2 Evaluation	£2,240

### Summary of evidence base and rationale

The OfS dashboard data identified, not a significant gap between Disability reported and non-disability reported for our Undergraduates, with a gap of 6.3pp. however, the college feel any gap between students reporting a disability against students not reporting a disability should be eliminated based on the Colleges widening participation agenda. Based on the analysis conducted nationally and what we know from our own internal College data through student forums and working groups, students who face disability also feel they have a lack of belonging within the HE environment. Our data also suggests both information and guidance and mental health are contributing factors for students not succeeding and progressing in higher education, this mirrors the disabled Commission findings<sup>2</sup>. We believe the activities identified will contribute to not only the success of individual students but also to the overall health and mental wellbeing of students who report a disability.

### Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student On Programme survey	Student Views	Empirical - Type 2.	Details analysis shared internally and reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB) and headline data reported to the Board of Governors in November at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE)
Staff CPD Evaluation.	Staff confident of creating an inclusive curriculum	Empirical - Type 2.	Details analysis shared internally and reported to the HE Teaching, Learning & Assessment Board (HETLAB) of which minutes are reported to the Board of Governors in three times a year at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE).
Annual Review	Evaluation report of the Mentorship programmes, and the impact progress.	Narrative – Type 1	Both Internal & External evaluation reported to the Board of Governors in June (Annually) at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE) and published in the annual APP Evaluation report in June.

### Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

To reach a wide cross College audience, the College will create effective promotional strategies, these will involve both the marketing team that can utilise both digital and traditional platforms to advertise the events and the Support Department who can advise on the most appropriate promotional materials and that these are available in accessible formats to ensure inclusivity. Feedback from these events, will be collated and evaluated through the academic year.

It is anticipated this, will not only celebrates diversity but also instil a sense of belonging and acceptance across the student body, ultimately enriching the educational environment for everyone involved. Resulting in Initiatives aimed at fostering a sense of community and inclusion can make students feel more connected and valued by their institution. This can improve student satisfaction and decrease feelings of isolation. Students who receive support and acknowledgment of their backgrounds feel empowered to advocate for themselves and others of the benefits

Encouraging staff to engage positively with students with disabilities through annual training sessions will enable them to understand better how to communicate effectively and inclusively through learning, ensuring all students feel respected and valued. We will evaluate these strategies via both student voice and staff CPD evaluations to analyse the effectiveness of both the training and impact on students. Our intention is to publish the evaluation the effectiveness of these strategies via the college website.

### Intervention strategy 3: IS3 – Improved Ethnicity

#### Objectives and targets

New College Durham will Significantly reduce the 10.2 pp gap to 2.2 pp in continuation between White & other Ethnic groups, specifically for students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds by reducing this gap by 2 pp annually through developing focused support and early intervention strategies.

**Targets** - Continuation Gap reduced in 2025/26 to 8.2pp, in 2026/27 to 6.2pp, in 2027/28 to 4.2pp and in 2028/29 to 2.2pp between White & other Ethnic groups, specifically for students from Mixed ethnic backgrounds. (FIT PTS\_3)

#### Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1 (Knowledge & Skills), Risk 10 (Cost Pressures), Risk 9 (Ongoing impacts of coronavirus) and Risk 3 (Perception of Higher Education).

#### Related objectives and targets

Objective 1 and Objective 2

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Early Identification and Intervention	<p>Clear additional induction session focusing only on support available including academic support, counselling, and financial aid adjustments.</p> <p>identify students at risk of dropping out, using academic performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators.</p> <p>Enhanced Academic Support</p>	<p>1 hrs Induction Session 100 sessions per L4, L5 &amp; L6 Group at the start of the year x 3 staff = 300hrs Cost £18,000</p> <p>Materials = £1,800 (est)</p> <p>2 0.5 FTE counselling staff, (based on proportion of FTE's time) x 40.00 = £2,000.</p> <p>financial aid adjustments - £45,000 (based on</p>	<p>support can help students manage stress, anxiety, and other challenges that might otherwise hinder their academic and social functioning.</p> <p>Staff aware of students at risk of dropping out, and better able to monitor engagement levels and support interventions.</p> <p>Students' knowledge and confidence grows in information literacy and research methodology</p>	<p>Early Identification and Intervention 1 a focused support induction package will contribute to Risk 2 &amp; 3</p>

		estimated costing of 20 students). academic support tutor - 1FTE X 20000 = £20,000	Students enhance their academic confidence and motivation	
Career pathway programme	Targeted Career Pathway workshops, programme aligned to subject careers (e.g. Bus, Health etc)n showing Career opportunities and different pathways to completion  Library support for information literacy and data literacy.	Each academic programme to provide 3 hours of delivery to fund this program.  2 0.03 FTE Library staff, (based on proportion of FTE's time). £960 = £1,920	Extra-curricular opportunities to enrich the student experience and allow students to develop future aspirations.  Students are equipped with study strategies which support their individual learning aspirations.	
Financial Support tailored and accessible promotion campaigns.	Clear student guide to available support which will be published within programme VLE site.	0.4 Marketing and Finance staff costs: total 30 hours annually. = £540,000	Increase in % of new students who understand and can access these support aids. % decrease in financial concerns from students.	

### Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

	Total cost
IS3 Activity	£610,720
IS3 Evaluation	£840

### Summary of evidence base and rationale

The attainment gap between White students and those from other ethnic backgrounds, remains a significant challenge in higher education. This gap reflects broader systemic inequities and requires targeted strategies to ensure all our NCD students have equal opportunities for success. Our focus for these strategies is to target Mixed ethnic backgrounds as data suggests this reflects the widest gap.

Evidence suggests in today's increasingly competitive job market, some students are uncertain whether their degrees will lead to the desired career outcomes. Coupled with the rising cost of tuition and student cost pressures higher education is a significant concern for many students. The prospect of accumulating substantial debt can lead to some questioning the value of their investment and can lead to uncertainty about the value of higher education. The College has outlined three key strategies in an attempt, to reduce the gap identified within the OfS dashboard. Early Identification and Intervention, using academic

performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators will enable us to target effectively support interventions where required.

Delivering a Career Pathway our research has shown can support students understanding of the value of their programme and its long-term gains and while cost pressures still play a significant role in lack of academic engagement it is anticipated Improved access to financial support through tailored and accessible promotion campaigns will enable students to gain all the information required to make informed choices regarding their future prospects.

## Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Student Feedback	Positive support	Empirical (Type 2).	Details analysis shared internally and reported to the HE Teaching, Learning & Assessment Board (HETLAB) of which minutes are reported to the Board of Governors three times a year at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE).
At risk student Data analysis	Statistical data trends on students at risk across subject areas.	Empirical (Type 2).	Details analysis shared internally and reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB) with headline data reported to the Board of Governors in each team at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE)
Annual Review	Review of the impact on programmes, and the evaluation strategies used.	Narrative - Type 1	Both Internal & External reported to the Board of Governors in June (Annually) at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE) and published via the NCD website in the annual APP Evaluation report annually.

Each activity in this intervention strategy will be reviewed annually, using the evaluation methods identified in the table above. The intervention strategy as a whole, will be reviewed annually to determine progress against impact achieved based on previous trend data.

## Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

The College has outlined three key strategies in an attempt, to reduce the gap identified within the OfS dashboard. Early Identification and Intervention, using academic performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators will enable us to target effectively support interventions where required.

Delivering a Career Pathway programme our research has shown can support students understanding of the value of their programme and its long-term gains and while cost pressures still play a significant role in lack of academic engagement it is anticipated

Improved access to financial support through tailored and accessible promotion campaigns will enable students to gain all the information required to make informed choices regarding their future prospects.

#### Intervention strategy 4: IS4 Continuation Intervention

##### Objectives and targets

New College Durham will close the completion rate gap of -6.5 pp further for young undergraduates by 2 pp annually which will eliminate this gap by 2028. (FIT PTS\_4)

**Targets** - Continuation Gap reduced in 2025/26 to 9.6pp, in 2026/27 to 7.4pp, in 2027/28 to 5.2pp and in 2028/29 to 3.0pp between students of low & high socioeconomic.

##### Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1 (Knowledge & Skills), Risk 10 (Cost Pressures) and Risk 3 (Perception of Higher Education).

##### Related objectives and targets

Objective 1, Objective 2 and Objective 3

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
On-Programme Monitoring & Support interventions	<p>identify students at risk of dropping out, using academic performance, attendance patterns, and engagement levels as indicators.</p> <p>Library support for students, specifically information literacy and research methodology</p> <p>Enhanced Academic Support</p>	<p>At Risk meetings x 3 per year based on Proportionate time for SLT Manager, Director of HE, Quality Manager, Head of School and Programme leader. 0.1 FTE estimated hrs x 3 meetings 50,000 x 5staff = £25,000</p> <p>academic support tutor 1FTE X 20000 = £20,000</p> <p>2 0.03 FTE Library staff, (based on proportion of FTE's time). £960 = £1,920</p>	<p>Staff aware of students at risk of dropping out, and better able to monitor engagement levels and support interventions.</p> <p>Students' knowledge and confidence grows in information literacy and research methodology</p> <p>Students enhance their academic confidence and motivation.</p>	<p>Early Identification and Intervention 1 a focused support induction package will contribute to Risk 2 &amp; 3</p>

<p>Focused At-Risk Support meetings</p>	<p>Develop a data-driven tracking system, for regular progress meetings between students and academic advisors through tutorial support</p> <p>Implement an early alert reporting system which allows tutors to proactively address potential issues before they escalate by setting up automated alerts in the academic tracking system using indicators of academic concerns, such as low grades, attendance or missed assignments</p>	<p>HE Quality Manager and Data officer 20hrs – 0.02 FTE's (based on proportion of 70,000 = £28,000</p> <p>BIS systems report development – 10hrs = 1 FTE (based on proportion of FTE's time) 70,000 = £14,000</p>	<p>a data-driven tracking system available for each programme.</p>	
<p>Flexible Programme Delivery Options</p>	<p>Develop smaller modular programme structures for appropriate programmes which allows students to build their qualification over time and at their own pace.</p> <p>Review and implement more flexible schedules of delivery through hybrid, evenings or weekends.</p> <p>Introduce flexible assessment methods options to accommodate diverse student needs and learning styles.</p>	<p>0.2 hr Academic staff 50000 x 20hrs per programme = est cost £20,000</p>		

### Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy

	Total cost
IS4 Activity	£96,800
IS4 Evaluation	£840

### Summary of evidence base and rationale

The College analyse of the completion data for all modes of study via the OfS dashboard and our internal analysis of our young undergraduate provision are less likely to complete their studies than mature students, with data showing a -6.5 pp gap. While we don't believe this is a significant gap due to the increase in numbers from 2019 of mature students therefore reducing the size and scope of our young undergraduates. The gap has however, increased over the last two years by 4.2 pp and analysis suggested this risk is the

consequence of risk 1 and therefore is expected to improve over time if strategies identified in Risk 1 begin to be effective.

The college Intends to however, identify a completion intervention strategy and evaluate the interventions to ensure the gap is reduced through robust on-programme monitoring, focused at-risk support strategies and develop flexible programme delivery options to accommodate students who might be balancing studies with work or family responsibilities.

Based on the analysis conducted and what we know from our own research, internal data, and student feedback, factors such as Cost pressures, Mental Health and Work and family commitments are all identified as contributing factors for students not completing their studies higher education<sup>3</sup>.

We believe the activities identified below will support individual success and elevate some of the challenges students as now facing when deciding to remain in college.

### Evaluation

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
On-Programme Monitoring & Support interventions	Students at risk of falling feel supported through academic intervention evidenced through students surveys	Empirical (Type 2).	At risk report shared internally with school heads and progress actions from these reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB).  At Risk data paper reported to the Board of Governors three times a year at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE)
Focused At-Risk Support meetings	Compare completion rate of at-risk students involved in the meetings with those who are not.  Collect insights from academic tutors regarding the effectiveness of the meetings.	Empirical (Type 2).	Intervention report shared internally with school heads and reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB).  Interventions & Evaluation report shared internally at the Board of Governors annually at the HE Quality Curriculum & Student Experience Committee (HEQCSE) and published in the annual APP Evaluation report in June.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Dropouts-or-stopouts-or-comebackers-or-potential-completers-Non-continuation-of-students-in-the-UK.pdf>

Flexible Programme Delivery Options	Each school to evaluations impact against traditional programme delivery.  Review and continuously monitor the effectiveness using student feedback.	Empirical (Type 2).	Reviews & Evaluation shared internally at the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB) and the HE Teaching, Learning & Assessment Board (HETLAB)
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## Whole provider approach

The 2025- 2029 APP has been developed through a series of HE meetings, forums and focus groups involving all relevant stakeholders from across the College, including students, staff and governors. This ensures a comprehensive and credible College wide approach. At these meetings we regularly provide updates, assess and monitor progress through the colleges formal HE meetings across our governance structure, this includes the Higher Education (HE) Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, HE Academic Standards and Quality Board, HE Academic Board (chaired by our Deputy Principal ), and the HE Governance Committee. These progress updates are essential components of our annual strategic review process, particularly focusing on equality of opportunity.

Additionally, we have a well-established Access and Participation Development Group, the group is made up of a diverse range of managers and student groups from across the College, who's role is to specifically address equality related issues across the wide-ranging departments within the College. The Group actively engages students from different student groups to enhance and further develop the College's understanding of the HE student experience.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 has remained a priority for a number of years now, all NCD staff receive annual mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and new staff receive detailed introductions to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. In developing this plan, NCD has ensured that the commitments identified in the plan align not only with NCDs own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy but also with future plans and duties under the Equality Act. The Board of Governors have ultimate responsibility for the effective development and implementation of the College's Equality and Diversity, related policies and procedures, and for ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

## Student consultation

Student engagement is embedded in our governance of the APP, with both the President and student representatives also members of the APP working Group. The Student President is a representation on the Board of Governors, Academic Board and the Colleges sub-committees, including the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Committee and Higher Education Quality and Standards. Consultation with students of different groups at the College is also empowered through the Students' Union which plays a full role across the College's Higher Education provision with each school across the College having their own student representee as a member of the Higher Education Student Forum. Close working relationships have continually existed between the Students' Union, the Board of Governors, the College Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team as a result, students have numerous opportunities to contribute to the College's approach to widening access and participation.

Students have consistently contributed extensively to our Access and Participation Plan over the last few years, with our Students Union President taking a lead role in activities which support our access, success and progression work. The College's previous APP was devised in consultation with students, and the student forum has continually been involved in the monitoring of the performance progress against the previous plan. For most of the academic year, the same process has continued with a new Student's Union President however, due to the timing for this new APP it has made this process towards the end of our APP development challenging to have student involvement, due to many students rightly choosing to focus more on completing their studies and preparing for end of year assessments because of this there was limited consultation towards the end of the development stages.

The Students' Union, while did submit in the previous submission window, has this time chosen not to submit an independent student submission alongside this new APP. This is due to the timing of the required submissions and their own academic pressures of course work deadlines. While students have had sight of the submission throughout the development process and viewed the draft version at the end of June, which students approved, it has not been possible to seek formal Student approval of the final plan before its submission due to the timing of the submission.

## **Evaluation of the plan**

We have used the OfS self-evaluation toolkit and TASO toolkits to identify effective evaluation approaches to inform our evaluation strategy. The College intends to use an evidence-based approach and where possible triangulate its findings with national benchmarking data and research, it is anticipated this approach will enhance the depth and reliability of our evaluations. Quantitative methods, including surveys and statistical analysis are intended to offer the College numerical insights, while qualitative methods such as focus groups will aim to provide us with robust contextual data.

Through using the OfS evaluation self- assessment tool the College reviewed its evaluation plan of this APP submission and results from this showed we are 'emerging' in the Strategic Context, Programme Design and Learning from evaluation. The College recognises there is work still to be done for us to identify our evaluation practice as strong, further formal training opportunities have been identified to support this in 2024. Ensuring our continuous improvement against targets set, as well as extend our evaluation across the College wider departments

The College intends for the evaluation of its intervention activities to be subject to both internal and external critical review on a regular basis. We aim to achieve this through creating a matrix which captures the evaluations generated at each intervention level. The matrix together with formal update reports on target progress will be presented three times per year to a number of the College's formal Higher Education Committees for critical review such as Higher Education Academic Standards and Quality Board (HEASQB), Higher Education Teaching, Learning & Assessment committee (HETLAC), HE Academic Board and the Board of Governors.

A report summary based on our evaluation progress will be published externally annually through our college website with our intention over the lifetime of this plan to further explore and enhance our evaluation skills allowing us to identify opportunities to explore the Type 3: Causality to effectively understand the causal relationship between our interventions and outcomes.

### **Provision of information to students**

The college commits to supporting students to access Higher Education through allocating financial support towards hardship through our Hardship Policy which is written to allow Higher Education Students suffering financial difficulty to determine their eligibility for support from the College and to assist them with their study costs, in addition to this the college has the ability to award emergency loans prior to hardship funds being paid to the maximum of £150 per student.

Access to the financial support package is open to all eligible HE students (full and part-time) via an application process. The allocation of the funds is based on UK residential requirements, students are awarded payments based on the following tiers:

<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
If the annual household income is £16,190 gross per annum or less.	If the annual household income is greater than £16,190 and less than or equal to £26,000 gross per annum or less.	If the annual household income is greater than £26,000 but less than or equal to £32,000.

The support is aimed at targeting funds to those with greatest need in this APP plan. Key aspects of the support will be focused towards:

- White male economically disadvantaged students
- Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])
- Reported disability
- Mixed Ethnicity.

On average an HE student will receive between £350 and £450 hardship funding per year this is depending on student applications and eligibility.

### **Information for students**

**Prospective students** receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, and by email communications. Prospective students can also receive a wide range of information regarding the New College Durham's provision via our website<sup>4</sup>.

**For current students** Information about fees and any financial support available is available through our student portal, internal communications, Higher Education Forums, and emails. The College also operates and financially supports a Students' Union which is led by a Student President and supported by a team of student reps drawn from across the student community which current students engage with for additional support and guidance.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk/>

Further research conducted to produce this APP include the following references

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Higher Education Academy (2017) *Supporting student success: strategies for institutional change*, Available at: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/supporting-student-success-strategies-institutional-change> (Accessed 16/07/2024)

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# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: New College Durham

Provider UKPRN: 10004576

## Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

### Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	BA / BSc Top Ups	N/A	9250
First degree	BA Hons Social Work	N/A	9250
First degree	BSc Podiatry	N/A	9250
Foundation degree		N/A	9250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	BA / BSc Top Ups	N/A	4500
Foundation degree		N/A	4500
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	3000
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

# Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: New College Durham

Provider UKPRN: 10004576

## Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

### Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OIS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

**Table 6b - Investment summary**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£316,000	£1,488,000	£332,000	£337,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£75,000	£80,000	£85,000	£90,000

**Table 6d - Investment estimates**

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£85,000	£85,000	£90,000	£90,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£101,000	£103,000	£110,000	£115,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£130,000	£1,300,000	£132,000	£132,000
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (£)</b>	<b>£316,000</b>	<b>£1,488,000</b>	<b>£332,000</b>	<b>£337,000</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>82.7%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Access activity investment</b>	<b>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (£)</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£50,000</b>
<b>Financial support investment</b>	<b>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£75,000	£80,000	£85,000	£90,000
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)	4.2%	4.4%	4.7%	5.0%

