

Heart of Worcestershire College

Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25



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Overview

HoWC is a Further Education College which recruits across Worcestershire as well as further afield. The majority of its learners are recruited from the localities of Worcester, Redditch, Bromsgrove and Malvern with some students coming from southern areas of Birmingham. In 2018/19 it enrolled around 11,000 students funded by the ESFA, of whom 2,200 are full time students in the 16-18 age group following vocational education and 2,500 are apprenticeships. The College does not have any A Level provision, concentrating its efforts on providing opportunities to students for whom the traditional route is not appropriate.

The College has a strong tradition in supporting students with needs, and currently recruits over 200 students, both 16-18 and 19-24, who have an Educational Health Care Plan. In addition, OFSTED has praised the support given to students with disabilities and learning needs, as well as the level of support targeted at groups such as those living independently, looked after children and care leavers. Our aim has been to use the experience gained in successfully supporting FE students, to assist HE students to continue their courses and succeed.

In 2018/19 we had 176 students on FT courses. The majority of our students are recruited from our own level 3 vocational courses. Students who would not otherwise have the confidence to study at HE level are able to continue through to HE within the College, often having started at level 2 at the age of 16, and progressing through level 3 before entering HE at the age of 19. Having obtained an HND or Foundation Degree, they may top up to a degree within the College or at local Universities. This has given many students access to HE who would not have experienced it if they had been expected to follow the traditional route. In addition, we provide a FT degree course in Sociology, which had 65 students in 2018/19, the majority of whom were mature students.

In 2018/19 we had about 970 PT students. These fall into 2 distinct groups – the first group consists of around 170 students on a variety of courses who study on campus, and include degree "top ups", HN's and Foundation Degrees. Around 50 of these students are studying Engineering courses and are employed by local industry, seeking to obtain HNC's, HND's or FD's to progress their careers and round 50 are studying for FD's in Early Years or Childrens' Services. We also have 14 students on Diploma in Education courses to provide the qualifications needed for teaching.

The second group of around 800 PT students is much larger and consists of students on an employer focussed part-time Foundation Degree in collaboration with the University of Worcester and the Chartered Institute for Payroll Professionals (CIPP). These students study for a FD in Payroll Management or in Pensions Administration and Management. Both FD's were developed specifically for this group of students, all of whom are employed in payroll and pension roles, mostly administrative. The course consists of distance learning, weekend residential classes and on the job support. It gives access to students, 95% of whom are mature, who are unlikely to access HE without these courses, and provides opportunities to progress their careers.

Whilst the data provided by OfS amalgamates the data from CIPP and non-CIPP PT students, they are very different groups of students. Thus, for the purposes of this Access and Participation Plan the data relating to CIPP students has been separated from that of the other part time provision delivered at Heart of Worcestershire College in order to better identify where the focus of funding should be concentrated in order to improve access and participation.





Heart of Worcestershire College has well established links with Staffordshire University, University of Wolverhampton, Birmingham City University and the University of Worcester. The College also has extensive collaborations that inform planning and curriculum from its work with third sector groups, employers, councils and other local/regional stakeholders.

Much of the College's HE and higher level professional provision is delivered in buildings dedicated to higher education in Worcester and Redditch to provide a high quality "university-type" environment. Delivery of higher education vocational provision, such as sports, media, computing and engineering takes place in the College's high quality specialist facilities in Redditch, Bromsgrove and Worcester.

All national averages have been obtained from the APP OfS dashboard apart from ethnicity, where local averages are also quoted. The data tables provided have been calculated from ILR data using the published methodology and matched to the OfS dashboard. By additionally using 2018/19 ILR data we have been able to use more recent access and performance data, and also to understand our data better by analysing data splits within the College, such as analysing by courses and, importantly, breaking the PT data into CIPP and non CIPP courses as mentioned previously.

1. Assessment of performance

Access

Overall, the figures taken from the OFS APP data dashboard show a good record of recruitment to target groups over the period covered between 2013/14 and 2017/18.

The gap in the young/mature FT student enrolment rates has fallen from 28% in 2013/14 to 18% in 2017/18 and mature FT access is around 40%.

FT deprivation Q1 has increased from 16% to 30%, and PT from 14% to 18% over the same period, though these fluctuate each year.

POLAR4 quintiles also show great variability, but the combined Q1/Q2 quintiles increase over this period for both FT and PT cohorts. PT Q1 is below expectations, but this is not regarded as an area to be targeted. Full details and reasons are given in section 1.1.

The proportion of students with disabilities has increased from 12% to 28% for FT and from 3% to 7% for PT.

The proportion of FT BAME students increased from 7% to 10%, above 2011 census rates for Worcestershire rates of 4.3%. We have measured the % of BAME non-CIPP PT students against local Worcestershire figures, and CIPP against national figures. Full details are given in section 1.2. We do not regard this as an area to be targeted.

We had 10% more male FT students than female in 2013/14 and this rose to 30% in 2017/18, though this reflects fluctuating numbers on courses such as computing. In 2013/14 we had 22% more female starts than males on PT courses, compared to 36% in 2017/18, reflecting mainly the fall in enrolments to engineering courses.



Continuation rates

These have been a key concern for the College over the past 2 years. There was a decline across full time in 2017/18, the contributor being the HND in Sport. This was identified as a target for improvement through the College's self-evaluation process and we are confident that when new data sets are released this decline will be mitigated. Part time continuation rates demonstrate a decline in 2016/17 and the rationale for this is within the text below.

	FT % Continued	PT % Continued	CIPP % Continued
2015/16	77.6%	82.1%	53.2%
2016/17	83.3%	69.2%	45.8%
2017/18	72.5%		

For non-CIPP part time students in 2016/17 the declining continuation rates can be partly explained by a significant number of students on engineering HNC and FD programmes not returning to complete their study. This was identified as a concern by the College and improvement planning has been implemented to ensure a reversal of the decline.

When viewed initially and through the lens of traditional HE delivery, we agree for **part time continuation** and **part time progression to employment or further study** overall would be a reason for concern as the data demonstrates below average performance across all reporting areas for this group.

The main contributing cohort for PT students are those studying towards the Foundation Degree in Payroll Management or the Foundation Degree Pensions Administration and Management. These awards are unique and have been created through a partnership between the University of Worcester, the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP) and Heart of Worcestershire College, and are delivered nationally through a blended model; 80% of students are funded by their employer to complete the qualification. Written in the true spirit of Foundation Degrees, to meet the needs of employers and the Payroll and Pensions sector, the awards provide a high quality development route for students, enabling progression within careers and recognition through higher level qualification attainment.

Entry points for the award widen participation and incorporate a strong recognition of prior learning and experience. The award is delivered over 3 years with an option to enter at year two; dependent upon current role and prior qualifications, students may enter at the year 2 entry point if they meet the stringent requirements set by the award, ensuring all students are ready, have the opportunity, and are able to succeed. The delivery model of the qualification has been formatted to meet the needs of both students and employers.

Designed to be flexible and adaptable, students are able to take the full term of their registration (8 years if they start from year 1, or 6 years from the start of year 2 through RPL) in order to complete all required modules and gain the full award. Students will 'dip in and out' and build their FD award in a manner and at a rate that best suits their role and career aspirations, and their employer needs, and over a time period which remains within the registration period but not necessarily within the 'traditional' full or part time model expected across the sector. This approach has a negative impact on metrics for part time students in relation to progression. The awards do however ensure that:





- 1. Students are able to access learning and maintain their full time role in employment
- 2. Employers are more likely to release staff to attend teaching sessions due to the effective modelling of delivery
- 3. Students are able to fit study in around their work and domestic routines, ensuring they are more likely to successfully complete
- 4. Students are able to gain skills and qualifications which map directly in to their long term career planning and contribute to long term social mobility

The reasons for the low continuation rates for CIPP students have been acknowledged by the Office for Students following our written response to the intention expressed by OfS to apply a specific condition to our registration.

Attainment

We have very low numbers on degree courses and so attainment information is sparse and only available for FT students.

From 2015/16 to 2016/17, the attainment rate for mature FT students fell from 65% to 30%. However this figure is based on only 30 students, and was for a known reason that was a one-off. It is expected that rates will improve again this year. This will be monitored. No information is available on the dashboard for any other target areas.

Progression

The dashboard shows a great deal of fluctuation over the period from 2012/13 to 2016/17. During that period there is a rise in mature progression rates from 66% to 80% for FT students. Over the same period, FT progression rates for deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 rise from 60% to 80%, and rise 7% for females and 13% for males.

However overall PT progression rates are low and have been falling. This is explained by the increase in the proportion of PT CIPP students where the progression rates are low. The progression rates for PT mature students is 40% below the progression rates for young PT students. It is important to note that this progression measure refers to the percentage of students in Graduate Level jobs and not the percentage of students who progress into further study or employment. Here destination data is high. This is because the CIPP programme equips students highly effectively to gain employment as payroll or pension professionals. The issue is related to the nature of the employment background, ambition and status of students recruiting to CIPP courses and full details are given in section 1.3, together with reasons why we have not selected this as an area to be targeted.



1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

Overall access for students reported in all quintiles at Heart of Worcestershire College is consistent and there is a good cross section broadly representing the demographic profile of the recruitment area. Published data tells us that there is a 1% difference between those entering FT HE study from quintile 1 (17%) and those who are reported as quintile 5 (18%) compared to a national deviation of nearly 19%. In addition the gap for full time and part time students has narrowed considerably over the 4 year period.

The College secured funding for a Careers Outreach Post whose role is to deliver activities and guidance sessions to learners in years 9-13 in local high schools. The purpose of the role is to ensure schools are meeting Gatsby benchmarks 7, to educate young people on further and higher education and to increase participation from students who would not otherwise have considered entering HE.

Deprivation

The table below identifies that there is a gap in access for non-CIPP PT students in quintiles 1 and 2 compared to national averages. Most of the cohort is formed of engineering students who are sponsored by their employer and in well paid employment. There are no gaps for FT or for CIPP PT students.

Start Year	Mode	CIPP	Total	Unknown	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	HOWC Q1,2 %	National Q1, 2
2017/18	FT	No	120		36	15	27	31	11	42.5%	41.6%
2017/18	PT	No	85		11	13	23	23	15	28.2%	40.7%
2017/18	PT	Yes	468	6	82	108	114	77	81	40.6%	40.7%

POLAR

A key strategic aim has been to improve access to FT HE for those young students from the poorest backgrounds across the region. The POLAR data below demonstrates that approaches have been successful and the College is now above national averages.

There is a gap in access for POLAR Quintile 1 PT students. However, we are dealing with small numbers so we have combined POLAR Q1 and Q2. For instance, the denominator in 2017/18, when rounded, is 50, so each quintile would average at around 10. Q1 rises from below 10% in 2015/16, to 15% in 2017/18. Given that numbers are very small, Q2 is around average, i.e. 19%, 19% and 20%, and that Q1 LPN is improving, we feel that this is not an area that needs prioritisation, although we will monitor it. Our objective and Actions are as follows:

Objective: To reduce the current gap by 36% during the APP period.

Action: To explore what the key factors holding back access could be – educational, financial, IAG, marketing, curriculum and be proactive in targeting 'failure points' including discussing experiences of other Mixed Economy Group (MEG) Colleges. If the gap does not close following initial corrective action then modify approach trying different intervention combinations.



Start Year	Mode	CIPP	% Q1, Q2	National % Q1, Q2
2017/18	FT	No	49.3%	27.7%
2017/18	PT	No	32.4%	38.2%
2017/18	PT	Yes	36.8%	38.2%

Success

Due to low student numbers the comparator 'Quintiles 3, 4 or 5 compared with 1 or 2' does not show any data on the dashboard for either deprivation or POLAR 4.

Non-continuation: There are no statistically significant gaps for full time of part-time students compared to national trends. What the College can state however is that investment in bursaries for students entering higher education from IMD quintile 1 or 2 has a positive impact on continuation rates. 84.2% of students in receipt of bursaries continued, compared to 71.9% of those who did not qualify for this financial support.

Start Year	Bursary	IMD Quintile	% Continued
2017/18	No	1 or 2	71.9%
2017/18	Yes	1 or 2	84.2%

Attainment:

There is no published data available for either full time or part time students due to small numbers.

Progression to employment or further study:

For full time students in quintiles 1 and 2 progression rates are 11% above the national average at 80%, and those reported as quintile 3, 4 or 5 are also 80% (5.3% above the national average).

For PT students (both non-CIPP and CIPP), there are small gaps in progression to Graduate level outcomes for PT students, but as can be seen from the Access and Participation Dashboard these do not consistently exist over a three year trend. This metric is most greatly influenced by the CIPP cohort.

This differential is a result of the nature of the employed status of learners on the CIPP programme, (who comprise the greatest proportion of part-time learners), explained in earlier sections. This programme accredits staff in existing roles and helps those at junior levels to become qualified payroll managers and senior assistants. Positive destinations and employment outcomes are high for this group. However, the role of Payroll Manager resides at Major Group 4 of the ONS Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Hierarchy. The TEF metric for "Highly Skilled Employment" only covers the Major Groups 1-3. Thus, the metric suggests that these part-time students are not progressing into relevant employment outcomes, when the evidence based on employment outcomes over classification of occupation, shows this is not the case.

The metric does not take account of the excellent career development and progression these students make, and the benefit they bring to their organisations. It is anticipated that should, in future years, as Graduate Outcomes include considerations of salary increases, promotion and other career development measures, that the full learning gain achieved through the attainment of this qualification will be represented in the College's TEF and Access and Participation Dashboard measures.





The College maintains a commitment to improving employability outcomes for all its learners, but will place greatest emphasis in its work on improving those for PT students. This work will include raising awareness of career opportunities and boosting students' capacity to identify and apply for appropriate next steps, as a cornerstone towards advancement to those occupations that are currently classified as "Highly Skilled" by the OfS. Improve historical progression rates by 50% during the APP period.

The aim is to provide access to on-line resources that PT students can draw upon to better seek out and apply for appropriate career progression opportunities. This will be informed through work with CIPP colleagues to consider how the students' higher skills might be better recognized within the profession and the identification of career pathways.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

It should be noted that Worcestershire BAME rates are well below that national average. In the last census, the rates were 2.4% Asian, 0.4% black, 1.2% mixed and 0.2% other. Since full time and part time students, excluding CIPP, are recruited locally, we have compared FT and non-CIPP PT rates with local Worcestershire rates from the 2011 census. We have compared CIPP recruitment with national rates.

Access

For both full and part time students the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students entering the College is now broadly representative of the population and there are no significant statistical gaps. In both modes the gap in access has narrowed by 7% for FT students over the past 4 years as a result of targeted activity.

Although Asian recruitment is low for FT compared to the national average, our recruitment numbers are small, and we have chosen not to disaggregate for this reason, particularly in view of the year on year variations.

In the 2011 census, the % BAME was 4.3% whilst in 2016/17 and 2017/18, the F/T % BAME starts was around 10% both years. Thus we do not plan to target this area.

The P/T non-CIPP BAME % has fluctuated in recent years, having been below the Worcestershire average in 2015/16 and 2016/17. However, in 2017/18, this rose to nearly 10% in 2017/18, and preliminary figures for suggest that it is now over 11% in 2018/19. Again, we do not plan to target this area.

The P/T CIPP % BAME has fluctuated in recent years, from 13% in 2015/16, to 10% in 2016/17, rising to 14% in 2017/18. Preliminary figures for 2018/19 suggest that the 14% figure will be maintained. Given that the national average is 14.6% in 2017/18, we do not plan to target this area.

Non-continuation:

There are no significant statistical gaps between groups. For full time and part time students those with non-white ethnicity are more likely to continue study, for part time however (College and CIPP) the numbers in this cohort are low and therefore have an un-balanced impact on percentage data. The dashboard does not provide information for disaggregated BAME continuation due to low numbers.



			PT Non-CIPP %	
	Ethnicity	FT % Continued	Continued	CIPP % Continued
2016/17	Non White	91.7%	100%	40%
2016/17	White	82.5%	68.3%	46.5%
2017/18	Non White	76.9%		
2017/18	White	72.0%		

Attainment:

There is no reported data relating to these groups due to low numbers in reportable cohorts.

Progression to employment or further study:

There is no gap in progression outcomes between reported ethnic groups for full time students. Rates are improving for all ethnicities and above the all provider average. EDIMs data will continue to be collected, analysed and used by the College for targeted intervention and improvement planning.

1.3 Mature students

Access

The College recruits mature students well when compared to larger providers. Of the full time students 59% are aged under 21 (against an average of 72.2%) and the remaining 41% are mature reflecting the low starting points and extended study undertaken to gain entry to higher education. The data shows that there is a gap in access for part time non CIPP students entering part time study at the College. The provision is made up of part time Business and Engineering programmes which are a direct progression route from level 3 courses and so students who have previously studied full time level 3 courses will enter prior to their 21st birthday. For CIPP the opposite is true, these students will be completing study as a career development opportunity and so be mature at entry. The College has a clear vision and responsibility to ensure that all students have a clear line of sight to employment and enhanced employment opportunities working cohesively with employers and the local enterprise partnership to ensure that appropriate courses are in place thus attracting a more non-traditional cohort.

Start Year	Mode	CIPP	% Mature	% U21	National % Mature	National % U21
2017/18	FT	No	40.8%	59.2%	27.8%	72.2%
2017/18	PT	No	60.0%	40.0%	87.4%	12.6%
2017/18	PT	Yes	95.9%	4.1%	87.4%	12.6%

Success

Non-continuation: Continuation rates for mature students exceed those of under 21s by 5% for full time but are 16% below their under 21 counterparts for part time students due to the impact of the CIPP provision discussed in section 1.

Objective: To reduce the continuation gap for mature PT students by at least 50% by 2024-25 using the OfS measure for continuation.

Action: Strengthen assessment screening prior to enrolment for part time applicants. Work with professional bodies and university partners to enhance formal support for distance learners (CIPP).





Develop and implement triangulated monitoring processes supporting early intervention. Enhance the capacity within the CIPP tutor team/system to identify students who are showing 'problem signs' and improve support capabilities.

Attainment: There is no statistically significant data variables between the mature and under 21 cohorts and both are in line with the College overall.

Progression to employment or further study: Progression rates for both mature students and those aged under 21 across full time programmes have increased, are at 80%, and are in excess of the national average. The part time cohort is predominantly aged 21+ due to the programmes offered such as the CIPP (as discussed at the beginning of this section) and other 'employer responsive' study such as HNC/D Engineering whereby students have completed lower level skills training and are subject to investment by their employer as part of the response to business development need rather than the individual aspiring to progress or continue to further study.

For analysis of the progression rates for mature PT adult students, see the section above relating to CIPP Students, who form the largest section of the mature PT student group.

1.4 Disabled students

The OfS APP dashboard does not identify any significant gaps for disaggregated disability, so our analysis is carried out at the aggregated level.

Access

Overall the College has an increasing population of students declaring disability at the point of application. For all applicants a declaration is required and initial assessment undertaken to identify any potential undeclared disability.

Start Year	Mode	CIPP	N %	Y %	National N %	National Y %
2017/18	FT	No	72.5%	27.5%	85.4%	14.6%
2017/18	PT	No	82.4%	17.6%	85.2%	14.8%
2017/18	PT	Yes	94.4%	5.6%	85.2%	14.8%

Once a disability is identified support is in place to ensure students remain engaged and are able to achieve. The College has a dedicated HE Engagement Officer responsible for co-ordinating student support and ensuring students access the appropriate funding to assist their learning. Due to the majority of full time students being internally progressing applicants, support transitions with the student and is available from the first day of study.

The recruitment process for the CIPP programme is rigorous and at the behest of entry tests set by the professional body. The partnership is aware that declaration of disability is not prioritised and is reviewing its interview and access protocols to better identify students with barriers to learning and be better placed to provide support.



Success

Non-continuation: Disabled students' overall continuation rate is equivalent to that of the whole College but 4.4% below the national average (full time students) and 2.3% below the average for part time students.

			PT Non-CIPP %	
	Disability	FT % Continued	Continued	CIPP % Continued
2016/17	No	80.0%	70.6%	45.9%
2016/17	Yes	89.1%	58.8%	37.5%
2017/18	No	71.3%		
2017/18	Yes	75.8%		

College data demonstrates that the continuation rate for part time disabled learners is more than 30% lower than their full time counterparts and for CIPP students 50%, a key area for development moving forward. By ensuring students are able to access the right support from the start of their programme the positive impact will follow through to continuation, attainment and progression outcomes.

The OfS APP dashboard shows that the continuation rate gap for part time starters in 2015/16 was 7% lower for disabled students than for students who had not declared a disability, so our aim is to close this gap.

Objective: To reduce the continuation gap for disabled PT students (7% for 2015/16 starts) by at least 50% (a gap of 3.5% of less) by 2024-25 using the OfS measure for continuation.

Action: Targeted DSA awareness for all part time students. Ensure that all CIPP students are made aware of the importance of declaring a learning difficulty or disability when they enrol. Increasing the availability of support on offer for students who have declared a disability

Attainment: In relation to attainment there is no data reported through the data sets available for disabled students due to the cohort size. The College maintains oversight of attainment for all cohorts and responds through stringent improvement actions to identified gaps.

Progression to employment or further study: Full time disabled students' progress in line with their College counterparts and national averages (0.0pp deviation). For part time students there is no published data available.

Over the past 3 to 4 years there has been a significant increase in the number of students declaring a mental health disability at the point of application and/or enrolment. This remains a priority for staff to both identify and ensure the support required is in place at the earliest opportunity to positively impact on continuation, attainment and progression for this cohort.

1.5 Care leavers

The College has learners from the looked after system and care leavers studying on programmes from entry level to higher education. These learners are identified from application stage and are individually targeted to receive support from the College Welfare Team.

Prior to attending College the learners are contacted to offer transition support to familiarise themselves with the College environment and build relationships with support team members. In year, learners are





offered 1:1 support via the welfare team to work with the learners to identify and reduce any barriers to learning, wellbeing and achieving their goals.

The support continues throughout their whole learner journey with the College. Part of that support includes acting as an advocate for the learner and ensuring their views are represented both internally and externally during Looked After Children (LAC) reviews and Personal Education Plans (PEPs) as well as liaising with any support agencies allocated to that learner.

The learners in this cohort are monitored internally on their retention and achievement rates through the College's Equality and Diversity action plan and reported via the corporation annual reviews. Each learner studying FE qualifies for a Tier 1 vulnerable bursary of £1200. The welfare team liaise with the student finance team to support the learner to make the application and receive payment.

Applications to Tier 1 bursaries are prioritised by the student finance team. This assists the learner to have all uniform and equipment in place prior to attending College to ensure there are no barriers for the learner to start their learning journey with us.

The College's careers strategy supports raising aspirations for all learners. Activities in year include trips to UCAS fairs, University visits, tutorials on HE and support with the UCAS application. Those learners identified in the LAC and care leaver cohort are targeted to receive at least one specialist 1:1 careers guidance interview with the qualified careers team.

The College are also part of the National Outreach Collaborative Programme (NCOP) where additional funds are available to support travel costs to university visits, employer visits, guest speakers and trips to raise aspirations for learners to progress into HE. An objective for 2019/20 for the NCOP project is to target LAC learners to engage further with the project and increase aspirations to progressing into HE. In any given year the numbers of LAC and care leaver learners can vary from 30-100. Success rates for 2018/19 were 72.1% for 31 learners.

The College is dedicated to raising aspirations for learners in this cohort and as part of the commitment to this group we have signed our statement of intent for the Care Covenant.

The College will monitor the numbers and the success of these students during 2019/20 with a view to creating clear targets in 2020/12.

The College will also promote the support given to this cohort, with the aim to increase the number of such students, and to improve the identification of such students if they apply from outside the College.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Access

The OfS APP dashboard shows no intersection data as significant for FT or PT access.

Continuation

The OfS APP dashboard shows no intersection data as significant for FT continuation. It identifies an intersection continuation gap of 25% between Q1,2 Female (54%) compared with Q3,4,5 Male (60%) for



2015/16. However, this is explained by the gender imbalance in CIPP compared to non CIPP PT enrolment and we will tackle this issue by targeting overall CIPP continuation rates.

Attainment

No significant issues identified on the dashboard.

Progression

The following intersection rates for deprivation and gender are significant for 2015/16 Part Time: Deprivation Q3,4,5 Male v Deprivation Q1,2 Female. However, this is again explained by the gender imbalance in CIPP compared to non CIPP PT enrolment and again we will tackle this issue by targeting CIPP continuation rates.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Carers

Other vulnerable groups subject to monitoring by the College include those with care responsibilities due to the nature of the provision the College offers, the range of access provision and support available, and the increasing number of non-traditional entrants this creates. These students, their success in continuation and progression, are being continually monitored and evaluated to adapt interventions and build on good practice.

At the point of this report there is no gap in continuation, attainment or progression for this group.

Gender

In addition to the above the gender breakdown of the provision is analysed and monitored.

Access

									HOWC Gap %
Start Year	Mode	CIPP	Total	F	М	F %	M %	HOWC Gap %	2017/18
2018/19	FT	No	77	36	41	46.8%	53.2%	-6.5%	-30.0%
2018/19	PT	No	78	38	40	48.7%	51.3%	-2.6%	-50.6%
2018/19	PT	Yes	288	211	77	73.3%	26.7%	46.5%	51.7%

The College data above demonstrates significant improvement in closing the gap relating to gender access. For full time and part time students this is now insignificant with the exception of the CIPP part time students who are predominantly payroll and pension administrative staff and female. The gap has narrowed and the College, University and Professional Body are working to further promote males within the industry to further impact on access. Our objective and Actions are as follows:



Continuation

			PT Non-CIPP %	
	Gender	FT % Continued	Continued	CIPP % Continued
2016/17	F	77.5%	82.1%	45.8%
2016/17	М	86.0%	64.4%	45.7%
2017/18	F	85.7%		
2017/18	М	65.4%		

There are some variances in recruitment numbers such as a high volume of males in the part time provision who achieve continuation rates above the national average and the majority of these students are completing study funded by their employer (Engineering).

All trends are identified through College processes and improvement actions implemented where applicable.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The College strives to provide Worcestershire with high quality further and higher education and training. We believe in demonstrating openness and transparency at all times and place the interest of our students at the heart of all College activities. Continually promoting equality and diversity and removing barriers to learning, we believe in inspiring all students to achieve success, we challenge and support staff to be successful. Through building strong partnerships with local communities and employers we listen to our stakeholders.

2.1 Target groups

Continuation

- Mature Part time students
- Disabled Part time students

2.2 Aims and objectives

Strategic Aim 1 (PTS_1)

Improve continuation rates for part time mature students

Continuation rates for part time mature students have been below their under 21 counterparts for several years, and was 16% for 2015/16 starters (OfS APP Dashboard) due in part to the impact of the CIPP provision (but also a significant number failing to complete HND study in engineering and leaving with a reduced award). The unique nature of CIPP delivery impacts on data collation and analysis but the College recognises that through enhanced partnerships there is potential for impact and improvement. Our aim is to close the gap, whilst maintaining the continuation rates for young students.

Objectives

- 1. Strengthen assessment screening prior to enrolment for part time applicants
- 2. Work with professional bodies and university partners to enhance formal support for distance learners (CIPP)
- 3. Develop and implement triangulated monitoring processes supporting early intervention



4. Enhance the capacity within the CIPP tutor team/system to identify students who are showing 'problem signs' and improve support capabilities.

Measure

To close the continuation gap for mature PT students (16% for 2015/16 starts), by at least 50% (a gap of 8% or less) by 2024-25 using the OfS measures for continuation.

Strategic Aim 2 (PTS_2)

Improve continuation rates for part time disabled students

The OfS APP dashboard shows that the continuation rate gap for part time starters in 2015/16 was 7% lower for disabled students than for students who had not declared a disability, so our aim is to close this gap.

Objectives

- 1. Targeted DSA awareness for all part time students
- 2. Ensure that all CIPP students are made aware of the importance of declaring a learning difficulty or disability when they enrol
- 3. Increasing the availability of support on offer for students who have declared a disability

Measure

To close the continuation gap for disabled PT students (7% for 2015/16 starts) by at least 50% (a gap of 3.5% or less) by 2024-25 using the OfS measures for continuation.

Strategic Aim 3 (PTA_1)

To reduce the gap in access for POLAR Quintile 1 and 2 PT students

The OfS APP dashboard does show that for the small numbers of PT students falling into this Q1/Q2 combined segment there is a gap in access. The gap fluctuates, not helped by the small number effect, and for part time Q1/Q2 students starting in 2017/18 was at 12.5%

Objectives

- 1. Explore the key factors that could be inhibiting access educational, financial, IAG, marketing, curriculum etc.
- Drawing from own experiences and vicarious learning from key networks, including Mixed Economy Group (MEG) and OfS - Transforming Access and Student Outcomes: What Works Centre, identify suitable and feasible ways forward.
- 3. Implement agreed strategies that are owned by internal multi-disciplinary and key external partners eg) IAG networks.

Measure

To reduce the current gap by 36% (from 12.5% for 2017/18 starts to 8%) during the APP period.



Strategic Commitment 1 - Careers Enhancement

To improve PT students' awareness of career opportunities and capacity to identify and apply for their next career step.

Context: As discussed in previous sections, the CIPP students account for a significant percentage of the part-time cohort. The payroll and pensions programme shows high levels of employer support for their higher study with circa 80% of students employer sponsored, an indication of the value of this programme for the employer and the student in terms of the career progression. However, any learning gains, in the form of a promotion, for example, may take time to manifest as there are relatively few opportunities in this specialised area and often employers expect a return on their training support before students can 'freely' look outwards for their next move. Employers may enlarge existing roles and increase remuneration, but this has not always been captured effectively in the historic 'six months after higher study completion' progression survey approach, nor the use of "highly Skilled Employment" criterion.

The college, along with its partner CIPP, will investigate and seek to understand why annual fluctuations in this measure appear and how this may inform college strategies to impact positively upon this measure.

It is anticipated the new Graduate Outcomes Survey, will provide greater insight into the positive impact the CIPP programme has on measures like salary increases, promotion and value to employers over short and longer timeframes. Alongside work to increase students' participation and response to this Government-led survey, the college will create its own survey methods to track and examine how progression is improved through the Foundation Degrees. This will include longer timeframes, ie 15 months after completion, and other quantifiable measures like career advancement.

This will take place concurrently with improved support for all PT, but with a specific focus on CIPP students to identify, target and prepare for career steps that draws upon their higher education investment.

The ability of these interventions to positively influence these outcomes will be measured through partnership work and collaboration with the CIPP, establishing baselines and survey methods in the 2021 year to compare and analyse any effect annually in future years, using both the measures developed through collaboration but also those arising from the Graduate Outcomes survey as these become more robust and secure, to allow direct comparisons against equitable cohorts.

The aim is to present this information in future Access and Participation Plans as well as directly to students from the 2021/22 year, via websites and through programme inductions, so that they can use this information to inform their study choices and career development plans.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

Widening access to the College's Higher Education offer is an essential part of the College's strategy to make a positive contribution to the local community. Nationally and locally part time HE has diminished



in spite of acknowledgement that the provision offers a valuable opportunity for those wishing to return to learning, those who have a wealth of life and employment experience without the academic qualifications to apply to more traditional study options, those with responsibilities such as care and those in work wanting to enhance their career opportunities. There is a need to adapt the HE provision in order to meet these needs and increase recruitment levels which have declined at the College overall by 37% over the past 3 years (full time has declined by 40% and part time by 34%). The College prides itself on enhancing opportunities for our students through widening access for non-traditional entrants as well as working collaboratively with students who come from deprived backgrounds, raising awareness of options available to them.

Alignment with other strategies

Staff teaching on HE programmes are enabled to keep up-to-date with their discipline areas and academic regulatory requirements through on-going dedicated scholarly activity. A specific Development Event runs annually which supports the opportunity to share progress information and enhance contribution towards the long term objective of the plan.

The College currently has an HE Strategic Plan 2016-19 which is independent of the whole College Strategic Plan. This is due for renewal and so for 2019-2021 a new strategy will be in place which aligns with this Access and Participation Plan. From 2021 onwards the College HE Strategy will be fully embedded in to the whole College Strategic Plan.

The College participates in the National Collaborative Outreach Programme. The local partnership for Worcestershire is Aimhigher Plus and brings together all 5 universities in Birmingham and University of Worcester (UoW), plus a number of college partners to help support young people across Worcestershire. This work is focused on local areas where higher education (HE) participation is lower than might be expected given the GCSE results of the young people who live there. This project has been extended until July 2021. The College has employed an NCOP Officer who works on this project and collaboratively with our local schools. The NCOP Officer has engaged with 100% of the College's own identified NCOP learners at least once and 90% are at SPP+ status (Sustained Progressive Programme) meaning a student has had 2 or more engagements. There is an additional focus for targeting learners in the looked after system across the county. There will be an additional focus of support for the College's own identified NCOP learners enrolled on English and maths with them having access to additional online tutor support.

Equality and Diversity

The College is committed to providing a learning environment, which respects all individuals and celebrates diversity. As a college, we value social and cultural diversity and seek to promote equality of opportunity and respect amongst all learners, staff, governors, visitors, partners and other stakeholders.

The College strives to be an outstanding inclusive college where all staff and learners feel valued and respected, having a fair and equal chance to reach their potential. We aim to respond to the diverse profile of needs expressed by our learners, staff and stakeholders and celebrate the diversity of the College community.

The College has a proactive and positive approach to Equality and Diversity and strive to go beyond the statutory requirements to ensure our learners, staff and partners have the best experience possible.



Overview of equality legislation

The general equality duty as detailed in the Equality Act 2010 requires us to give due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

To ensure that the College meets its responsibilities to both its public sector general and specific duties the following are in place:

Equality and Diversity Committee

The College has an established Equality and Diversity Committee to lead on the Organisation's strategic approach to Equality and Diversity. Key post holders from across College attend these meetings each term; this includes members of the HE staffing community.

Equality Policy

The College's Equality Policy is currently under review and the revised policy will be sent for approval to the College Corporation in October 2019. The revised policy will pay due regard to the Colleges Access and Participation Plan and this will be clearly referenced within this policy.

The College produces and publishes an annual equality report. The report is published to the website making it available to all staff, students and stakeholders.

Equality Annual Report

The College sets equality objectives at least every 4 years. These objectives are translated into an Equality action plan, which is agreed every year and monitored through the Equality and Diversity Committee and the College's Corporation.

To ensure the Access and Participation plan is embedded within the wider college Equality Strategy the reviewing; monitoring and evaluation of the Access and Participation Plan will take place through the Colleges Equality and Diversity Committee.

Equality Action Plan

The Equality Action Plan sets out the strategy for establishing how the College intends to ensure equality for all and builds upon existing practice. It is intended to be flexible so that the College is able to respond to new developments and changes in legislation. It will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Progress will be reported twice yearly to Corporation and monitored through the Equality and Diversity committee meetings taking place each term. In addition, in future, the Colleges Equality Action plan will be revised to include the targets and actions contained in the Access and Participation Plan.

Equality objectives

The College strives to ensure that all learners enjoy an excellent experience whilst at college and monitors this by analysing data regarding people with a protected characteristic. The EDIMS [Equality and Diversity Impact Measures] are incorporated into the College's Equality Objectives and action plan and are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and College Corporation.



Strategic measures

The College's Higher Education Vision is:-

- To continually work with professional, academic, business, staff and student partners to create relevant, inspiring and empowering higher education outcomes.
- The APP plan is owned by both academic and support staff across the College. A key part of the mission and an underlying value of HoW College is to be inclusive.
- The HE coordinators, along will with HE managers, will ensure that the APP actions are operationalised and monitored.
- The wider College community will also inform and monitor the APP because it is an integral part of the wider Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) which champions, monitors and drives E&D across all areas of the organisation.
- The HE Academic Board will receive reports and progress and will also be proactive in considering interventions that can add value to the APP. This feeds into E&D monitoring and action planning at Corporation level.

The RISE strategic themes that are anchored to this vision are:-

RESOURCEFUL

To continue to provide and enhance the high quality, flexible HE learning resources, human, virtual and physical, that are needed to drive student success.

To develop creative, proactive, inquisitive, resilient, flexible and work/promotion ready students who can contribute significantly to their economic and social life.

INNOVATIVE

To co-design and create a highly responsive, employment and future-focused curriculum. Developing the knowledge, traits and skills to prepare learners for future success throughout what will be a varied and fulfilling working life.

STIMULATING

To provide a highly rated teaching, learning and assessment experience that is challenging, relevant, engaging and supportive.

To work in partnership with our students, staff and the wider HE ecosystem, empowering them to further develop our dynamic, relevant and engaged academic community.

EMPLOYABLE

To further develop our strategic relationships with professional bodies, University partners, employers, awarding bodies and the wider sector to assure that our HE offer is employment and career focused. To raise the capabilities, capacity and aspirations of HE learners currently in employment and for those looking to progress into employment or further higher study.

The HE Strategic Plan for 2019-21 will prioritise the following objectives:-

Resourceful – leverage the benefits of the Microsoft 365 suite; further embed AR/VR applications across the HE portfolio; enhance the e-resources, e-books and e-portfolios available to support HE study; enhancing on-line resources available to 'distance learning' CIPP students; enhance learning and social spaces for Engineering and IT HE students; to expand and enhance 'showcasing materials' eg) education





and employment progression maps, on-line bite size HE courses that provide an 'accessible taste' of HE opportunities; to enable more partners from local business and commerce to contribute, either in-person or virtually, to the delivery of the HE portfolio; to further develop and celebrate the ethos and culture of research and scholarly activity that underpins the higher education curriculum and experience.

The resourceful theme ensures that there is a high-quality virtual learning environment that enables access, especially supporting those in work and who have complex lives they need to 'juggle' with their higher study.

Innovative - to target key local/regional employers to explore how 'levy funds' could enable more of the workforce to benefit from higher study; to design and offer a number of 'cross-cutting enabling modules eg) research methods, career management, work-based project/experience, digital futures; to refine the HE curriculum content so that it is cognisant of the changing higher knowledge, skills and behaviour needs of the workplace; to explore ways of enhancing adult student feeder routes eg) HE Access courses, AEB funded higher study experiences.

Higher quality on-line support, both academic and pastoral, being a key element that will drive improvements in continuation rates for all, but particularly important for the distance learning HE students the APP identifies.

Accessibility for those students with specific learning needs is crucial and assistive technologies will be provided and developed to reduce any potential barriers to learning.

The Innovative theme contributes to progression by aligning the curriculum to the higher skills needs employers and professional bodies identify. It also looks to combine higher study with work via higher apprenticeships and this can help reduce financial pressures that can adversely impact on HE access and continuation rates.

Stimulating - to evolve the HE student support system to further help improve engagement, retention, progress and amplification of the student voice; to provide relevant and challenging graduate activities and vocational work experiences/projects to equip and stretch HE students; to develop and promote HE support services designed for the distance learning HE student body; to further leverage digital resources to bring more of the business world into the classroom to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and career planning; to ensure that effective student and staff 'communities of practice' are created, or enhanced, to motivate, support and stretch higher learning.

The Stimulating theme is key to all but is crucial for Part Time students who can feel isolated and may become disengaged.

Employable - to enhance the opportunity and value of work experience and/or work based projects available to HE students; to augment the 'soft skills' development/reflection opportunities across the HE portfolio; to expand the support and resources available for HE students preparing for promotion, employment or further study; to ensure that there is a systematic and creative commitment to the application of the business voice and labour market information when evaluating, refreshing and renewing the HE portfolio; to highlight professional study opportunities that could further increase the career opportunities for HE students.



The Employable theme encourages the soft skills development, such as team work and resilience, which are critical in empowering students to achieve their HE and career ambitions.

3.2 Student consultation

Students have been directly consulted about the ethos in the College's Access and Participation Plan. The College collects and acts on student views at all stages of their learning, including accessibility of publicity materials, standards of teaching, academic support, accommodation and teaching resources. HE programmes have course representatives who ensure that students' views are shared with managers and actions followed up. Students have participated in course boards, periodic reviews and course committees across a number of programmes to ensure that their feedback and suggestions are implemented in future practice.

Particular detail is paid to key indicating factors relating to access and participation such as:

- Marketing information;
- Interview arrangements;
- Application accessibility;
- Mode of study and attendance patterns;
- Access to resources;
- Careers advice and guidance and;
- Student support.

Changes implemented as a result of consultation include:

- Further promotion of the BOOST financial support scheme advertised during the application process via the College website and information provided by course tutors during the induction period.
- The redevelopment of the Blue Lamp Café to provide a social and flexible space for students.
- The redevelopment of the study spaces supporting Social Work students and the introduction of a quiet social/work space for Computing learners.
- The introduction of the Jumpstart programme of academic skills support delivered during induction.
- In computing, taster sessions have been introduced in the current academic year to support transition to HE, which includes level 4 lectures. This is followed by a 4 day induction programme.
- Changes to the curriculum have been introduced as a result of student feedback including the
 introduction of two modules, pitching & negotiating and innovation and commercialisation on the
 HND Business. Following consultation with learners on the FdA in Sport Leadership and
 Management a change has been made to the module outcomes for an academic study skills unit
 from September 2019.
- Two start points have been introduced on the HND business to provide a more employer responsive offer.
- Other changes include improved books and access to university resources including reading lists and amendments to timetabling.

Relating in particular to how student feedback/insights have influenced access and participation outcomes/planning:-

Reforms to financial support, including how, where and when this is communicated, is aimed at
widening access and helping continuation rates by providing a more responsive/bespoke safety
net.



- Continued provision of more flexible College based nursery provision.
- HE personal, as well as academic, tutorial support to help with problem-solving and ensuring HE students can access all support that is available both within and without.
- Improved timing, scheduling and launching of assessments with more milestone points has helped reduce the 'assignment element' that impacts on continuation rates particularly for parttime learners with complexed working and family lives.
- Improved on-line resources, including on-line tutoring and facilitation of virtual HE communities
 of learning, particularly for those students who study part-time and are on 'heavily blended' HE
 programmes.

Student feedback is gathered through multiple sources such as:

- The National Student Survey;
- On-programme surveys which are completed by all students not just final year;
- Student lunches hosted by an independent staff member;
- Student Representatives, and;
- Student focus groups hosted within each student group 3 times per year.

All information gathered is used to inform improvement planning and enrich the experience for future cohorts. In addition HE Student Representatives are members of key College management committees such as the HE Academic Board and the Governing Body, where matters are reported and discussed in more detail.

This ensures monitoring and review of the APP throughout the academic cycle.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

The overarching goal is to enhance the access and participation of all Higher Education students at Heart of Worcestershire College through the removal of barriers. The College offers predominantly skills based Higher Education study and actively maps its provision in to the Local Enterprise Plan strategic objectives, growth areas and skills shortages of the area and wider region focussing on long term employability for students.

Scope

Monitoring and evaluation is focused on the measurement and assessment of outcomes and impacts following the implementation of the plan will be on-going throughout the next 5 years using quantitative and qualitative information and data sources. It will cover all key performance and reportable indicators and respond to emerging trend data and new themes/priorities which are identified during the term of the plan.

Evaluation design and implementation

The evaluation of progress will be measured through embedded and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies employed at the organisation. The proven Quality Assurance processes and practice implemented such as programme review, annual self-evaluation at programme level and whole College self-evaluation will form the qualitative evidence collection tool.

Data will be used to evidence progress and trends as this provides greater accountability and a strong evidence base for future decision making. The following factors will be critical to the success of the Plan:



- Comprehensive data collection at organisation level;
- Use of public/published data sources;
- The student voice;
- The voice of the employers with whom we work.

Learning to shape improvements

In addition to the above the College has made a conscious decision to combine the future Higher Education Strategic Plan and the whole College Strategic Plan ensuring that the provision, although only a small part of the overall work of the College, has a raised profile and promotes progression and long term success for all future higher education students.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Quality enhancement is central to the philosophy that underpins the management of the APP at HoW College.

Monitoring against targets that draws on quantitative and qualitative information is necessary but using this to drive up quality and standards is what leads to positive student outputs.

Multi-disciplinary teams from both the academic and student/business support communities meet to evaluate performance against the APP and then explore ways that might further improve impact.

As well as drawing upon internal expertise and experience the HoW teams are connected to key external groups eg) HE AoC, QAA and MEG, that also helps identify actions that might further support APP ambitions.

The Governing Body receives regular reports on performance and standards across higher education provision. These reports include information on enrolment, progress against strategic aims and objectives, self-evaluation and financial stability. The Corporation approves College higher education fee rates and overall strategy.

Progress and outcomes are presented for discussion and review to the Academic Board, which has an HE Governor representative who then reports to the full Corporation Body on items that were discussed and any policy proposals that require approval.

Governors annually approve the College's HE Self-Evaluation Document and resulting action plan. Progress against this action plan is presented to the Academic Board, with information then provided to Governors by the Governor Representative.

Students are involved in monitoring progress against the strategic objectives of the plan through membership of Academic Board and Corporation. Information regarding key elements of the plan are also fed back to students through Student Representatives to forum groups.

The Principal and Governing Body take responsibility for monitoring progress against the plan's objectives and maintain oversight of progress in-year. A nominated senior person within the College has responsibility for overall evidence gathering, reporting and recording of progress and will act as advisor to the Principal and Corporation Board.

Progress against the plan is measured and monitored through multiple sources as described above and fully embedded within current evaluation and quality assurance mechanisms. Where monitoring identifies that targeted areas are not showing the progress that was planned the teams will be required



to propose alternative interventions. This will be led and managed through the HE community structure that is explored in section 2.

If the gap is worsening and has reached serious levels Corporation/HE Academic Board will establish a short-term task and finish group with Governor over-sight to help prioritise and support progress.

4. Provision of information to students

The Governing Body has oversight and accountability for all Office for Students matters. The board is engaged with the monitoring of performance and provisions of the plan and other strategic aims through differing mechanisms including:

- Formal progress reports built in to the cycle of business for the Corporation
- Representation at the HE Academic Board
- A dedicated HE Link Governor
- Representation at Annual Monitoring and Review (self-evaluation) activity

Student representation and engagement is multi-tiered and includes:

- Representation at Corporation meetings
- Representation at Academic Board
- Representation at Annual Monitoring and Review (self-evaluation) activity
- Contribution to the student voice through surveys, forums and dedicated meeting activity

Monitoring of the plan is the responsibility of the Board of Governors supported by the Principal. The College has robust progress monitoring and reporting processes in place which apply across all provision such as Curriculum Reviews and Quality Reviews providing a sound reporting point at appropriate points in the academic cycle. Progress against key strategic aims will be measured against identified and agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) supported by SMART targets. Dependent upon the agreed KPI the SMART target may be owned by an individual, programme team, department or the College. This will influence the monitoring plan and frequency and all information regarding progress will be reported to the identified individual responsible for strategic reporting of progress. Should a target fail to progress then this will be re-assessed through improvement planning procedures.

Fee information is available to all applicants via our website, the total fees are detailed on each course information sheet. All applicants receive an offer of place which includes additional information on fees and financial support available to them. There is also a dedicated area on our website detailing Financial Support information.

5. Financial support for students

The College fully recognises the challenges faced by local prospective students and has a strong record of attracting local people into further and higher education from widening participation backgrounds.

Many HE students at the College have progressed internally from FE courses and have built up confidence in the College and its staff, enabling them to overcome barriers to progression to HE such as



low confidence and low aspirations, whilst avoiding the costs of living away from home that would be incurred if they studied elsewhere.

The College recognises that the national increase in higher education fees is having a significant impact on local people who are considering higher education, particularly those in Redditch area where there is a history of low participation in higher education.

The College has created a "BOOST" financial bursary scheme, to raise participation and to impact upon student support. On average, over three years, 89% of students who receive financial support continue in their studies, which indicates a positive beneficial outcome of the "BOOST" scheme. Qualitative feedback shows that students value the support and the termly payments. The College will increase in evaluation of financial support schemes to examine their impact on retention, success and the impact on participation from non-traditional backgrounds. In order to build on this success, £40,000 will be made available to support the BOOST scheme in 2020/21, but the exact nature of the scheme will be based on analysis of success in the 2019/20 year.

New and existing students will be offered financial support with maximum awards of up to £2000. The College's eligibility criteria for a Boost award is as follows:

- Normally resident in England
- Studying on a Heart of Worcestershire College validated Higher Education course
- Have a household income of less than £25,000
- In receipt of Student Finance England Funding

Under BOOST, a total of £40,000 is made available for all years of study, this will continue in future years. The maximum award is £2000.

Priority will be given to the following students:

- Looked after/Care Leaver
- Applicants with disabilities
- Resident of low HE participation neighbourhood

The College also has a hardship fund available to assist students suffering severe hardship. A total of £16,000 is made available for all years of study, this will continue in future years. The award is dependent on support requested and individual circumstances.

Students will be asked to demonstrate their level of need against set criteria. A panel of staff from the College will evaluate the applications and allocate the bursaries according to need. It will be made clear to students that this is a one-off payment and there is no guarantee that a student who receives a bursary in 2020/21 will be allocated a bursary in future years.

The bursaries will be advertised as an integral part of the application and admissions process; information for potential students will be available on the College's website, marketing and at induction.



6. Appendix

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

- 1. Targets (tables 2a and 2b in the targets and investment plan)
- 2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
- 3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)





Appendix 1

This plan will be presented and evaluated at the HE academic board bi annually. It will be monitored by the HE Coordinators and Managers at monthly meetings.

Targets for monitoring and evaluation

Aim 1 (PTS_1)

Improve continuation rates for part time mature students

Continuation rates for part time mature students have been below their under 21 counterparts for several years and was 16% for 2015/16 starters (OfS APP Dashboard) due in part to the impact of the CIPP provision (but also a significant number failing to complete HND study in engineering and leaving with a reduced award). The unique nature of CIPP delivery impacts on data collation and analysis but the College recognises that through enhanced partnerships there is potential for impact and improvement. Our aim is to close the gap, whilst maintaining the continuation rates for young students. After the current APP timeframe, we will review the impact of our planned improvements and in particular continue to explore how technology better enables us to track, engage and support students on distance learning programmes; with a view to reduce this gap to zero.

Measure

To reduce the continuation gap for mature PT students, by at least 50%, from 16% for 2015/16 starts to 8% or less by 2024/25 using the OfS measures for continuation.

Aim 2 (PTS_2)

Improve continuation rates for part time disabled students

The OfS APP dashboard shows that the continuation rate gap for part time starters in 2015/16 was 7% lower for disabled students than for students who had not declared a disability, so our aim is to close this gap. After the current APP timeframe we will review the impact of our planned improvements and in particular for those students on CIPP provision consider how improvements in technology and distance learning pedagogy and pastoral support will allow us to reduce this gap to zero during the next APP timeframe.

Measure

To close the continuation gap for mature PT students, by at least 50%, from 7% for 2015/16 starts to 3.5% or less by 2024/25 using the OfS measures for continuation.

Aim 3 (PTA 1)

To reduce the gap in access for POLAR Quintile 1 and 2 PT students

The College's part time HE portfolio excluding the CIPP is relatively small with the vast majority of students employed. Worcestershire is a relatively affluent part of the West Midlands. Given this context it will be challenging to reduce this gap during the 5 year period of the APP. Over a longer period circa 10 years the work the College is doing to widen participation as part of NCOP and local enterprise partnership initiatives should help to reduce the gap further.

Measure

To reduce the current gap by 36% (from 12.5% for 2017/18 starts to 8%) during the APP period.

In addition to these aims we will continue to monitor where gaps have been identified, and to incorporate new aims into the plan if appropriate in the future.

An area we have identified to be monitored is:

• Care Leavers – To monitor numbers of L3 care leavers who progress to HE courses at the College, and monitor their success once enrolled. We can use this information to create a formal plan and set targets.

RED	o progress/ Not Achieved/ Significantly behind target				
AMBER	imited progress/ Partially Achieved/ Behind target				
GREEN	Good Progress/ Achieved/ On target				
CA	Complete and Achieved				



			Joint working							
1	rates for part time	Strengthen assessment screening prior to enrolment for part time applicants	group from HoW and CIPP teams during Jan-August 2020 to use historic student data to profile characteristics and explore reasons for PT student continuation issues on targeted courses Draw on this information and vicarious learning to inform reforms in assessing	Review implementation and ensure lessons are learned with modifications in place for Spring recruitment. Draw on learner voice to gauge how effective the recruitment process is at setting expectations/ requirements.	For new students recruited in 2020/Spring 2021review continuation rate impact. Modify protocols considering own experiences and any lessons from MEG partners and/or OfS What's Working insights that might be imitated.	the improvement signs in reducing the continuation rate gap showing as targeted? If not is there scope for further improvements in screening or does the issue lie	During this period if impact is not showing positive signs against targets consider if this variable is failing or if it is as effective as it can be? Other actions needed or fundamental contextual reasons eg) turnover of staff in payroll and pensions sector?	Maintain/ evolve or total refresh.		Sue Smith (CIPP) Peter Robinson (HoW)



	Work with professional bodies and university partners to enhance formal support for distance learners (CIPP)	engineer the existing academic and pastoral support training for key tutors. Augment on-line resources that tutors and students can draw upon.	Implement ongoing training for tutors during the 20/21 academic year. Face to face and virtual input. Assess implementation against agreed quantity and quality service levels. Timely, decisive interventions	Review student and staff experiences and augment. Draw on MEG networks and OfS What's Working insights. Assess impact against service metrics and against target for gap reduction.	Continue implementation and learning iterations. Review service metrics.	During this period if impact is not showing positive signs against targets consider if this variable is failing or if it is as effective as it can be?	Maintain /evolve or total refresh?		Sue Smith CIPP Link Tutor (Uni.) Peter Robinson	HE Managers and Coordinators HE Academic Board
	Develop and implement triangulated monitoring processes supporting early intervention	engagement and support student ILP monitoring. Training for tutors on how to identify early warning signs from student behaviours. Set performance	Implement. Capture behaviours and relevant service measures. Support real and virtual local student 'communities of practice' for distance learning programmes	Judge whether the various 'early warning' approaches are helping expose likely drop-out. Augment the monitoring after considering evaluation against performance.	Continue implementation and learning iterations.	Assess if the monitoring is focussed and timely. Is the gap reducing closing against targets? If yes continue. If no and the view is the monitoring is good focus on the effectiveness of interventions and/or recruitment practices.	Maintain /evolve or total refresh?		Sue Smith Claire Beaman (HoW) Marc Harvey (HoW)	HE Managers and Coordinators HE Academic Board



		Increase the number of review meetings – virtual and face to face. Use Microsoft 365 Teams to improve digital dialogue between the	Review effectiveness of milestone 1 reforms. Learn and continue to improvements. Check that timely, robust and secure data on student and staff		Is communication more effective and efficient?					
	Enhance the capacity within the CIPP/HoW management and tutor team/system to identify students who are showing 'problem signs' and improve support capabilities.	teams. Training in place. Explore the historical practices around giving students 'time out' from study – this complicates monitoring and the longer the programme the less likely completion	performance is being acted upon. Monitor to see that an improved balance between support verse 'time out' is being realised. This may involve educating employers, so they continue to commit to the learning investment they and their employees are making.	continue to iterate considering experiences.	Is data being leveraged effectively and efficiently to inform decisions? Are decisions leading to fewer extensions in study programmes?			Sue Smith Claire Beaman Heather License (HoW)	HE Academic Board *Equality and diversity committee	



2	Improve continuation rates for part time disabled students	Targeted DSA awareness for all part time students	Improve the online information available to staff and students on support for students with a variety of disabilities. Measure quality of on-line materials. Enhance the training input on this for tutors. Both on-line and face to face. Measure knowledge and understanding.	Draw on relevant evidence to judge whether students are aware of support available and how effectively this is being leveraged to help learning. Learn from this and staff reflections to drive next iterations in developing materials.	Continue with the cycle of improvement. Draw on MEG and OfS vicarious learning to help inform imitation of best practice from the sector.	Assess performance against targets. Is the gap starting to reduce? In light of these reflections consider how much this may be down to the challenges of supporting distance learners, most of this cohort, by comparing with students on College based programmes (smaller numbers on the College based programmes may limit the usefulness of this)	Maintain/evolve or total refresh? Is there value in improving this action further or are the other actions more likely to reduce		Sue Smith Julia Breakwell (HoW) Heather License	Equality and diversity committee



			Ensure that all CIPP students are made aware of the importance of declaring a learning difficulty or disability when they enrol	Share best practice in encouraging distance learning students to declare and consider how to best support any specific learning / disability need they have. Stress the additional support that is available to them. Stress how this will be managed sensitively. Assess knowledge and understanding of why it is important to declare and how safe students	Use CIPP communication channels to keep promoting the message to both students, prospective students and employers. Measure the numbers declaring. Build in systems so if latent specific learning needs manifest themselves students can be supported after enrolment to help understand how they can be best	Continue to promote this and refine. Measures the numbers declaring and draw upon learner voice to gauge that learners are being empowered in relation to their learning support.	Promote good stories to encourage declaration and learn from theses	impact the actions are having against the target for this aim. Maintain/evolve or total refresh? Is there value in improving this action further or are the other				Sue Smith Marc Harvey Julia Breakwell	and diversity committee
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	Increasing the availability of support on offer to students who have declared a specific learning need/disability	from HoW and CIPP to improve advise available. Enhanced staff development on how to use assistive technology within vle and, Microsoft 365. Establish baseline on where staff are and set milestones for improvement. Consider possible additional sources of funding to help drive improved	employers to help them to support their employees with specific learning needs so they can achieve their potential. Draw from own and MEG and OfS vicarious learning. Include input from employers in the payroll/pensions sector. Continue assistive technology training and explore teaching, learning and assessment	employers to adopt best practice behaviour/ become more proactive in supporting inclusive staff	Do a full audit of staff/virtual capability in both supporting learners with a declared learning need/disability.	Evidence based judgments on the impact the actions are having against the target for this aim. Maintain/evolve or total refresh? Is there value in improving this action further or are the other actions more likely to reduce the gap?		Sue Smith Marc Harvey Julia Breakwell	HE Managers and Coordinators HE Academic Board



			Given the nature of the PT offer/cohort, the						
3	To reduce the gap in access for POLAR Quintile 1 and 2 PT students	Explore the key factors that could be inhibiting access for Q1/Q2 PT students	vast majority who are employed adults, assess where there might be an opportunity to increase access for students from POLAR Q1/Q2 segments. Nearly all the higher education portfolio at the College, excluding CIPP and Social Work, is fed from within. So existing initiatives to increase widening participation into FE, including raising aspirations to aim higher, will be targeted.	groups with HoW students from the Q1/Q2 cohorts on both FE and HE courses to get a better understanding of what are the real barriers to accessing further and higher education and what was it that has enabled them to overcome them?	Continue to monitor within and without to identify those factors inhibiting and enabling access for the targeted student segments. Report to appropriate internal and external groups.			Marc Harvey Adrian Price (HoW College) Julia Breakwell	Equality and diversity committee



Drawing from ow experiences and vicarious learning identify suitable a feasible ways to reduce access ga	OfS: What Works Centre work. Share the findings and thoughts with key local stakeholders – IAG networks, schools, university partners and Constraints. Constraints. Constraints. Constraints. Constraints. Consider what additional funds resources might be identified to support this widening access agenda.	Might changes in what or how HE is offered impact? For example monitor whether higher/degree apprenticeships are proving a more attractive offer for these student segments. If apprenticeships appear to be attractive and there is a viable local market, consider additions to the portfolio	Is the gap reducing closing against target? If yes continue. If no and the view is the context is such that there is always likely to be a small gap (8%+/- 2%) against national data, then continue. If no but the view is the implementation is not yet right or				mittee	
	IAG networks, schools, university widening access	attractive and there is a viable local market, consider additions to the portfolio.	is the implementation is			Peter Robinson Claire Beaman Julia Breakwell	Equality and diversity committee	



Additional	themselves for a next	Understand why there has been such fluctuations in the PT student progression gap.	Research both within and without to understand why this metric has been so volatile. Feed in findings to inform planned corrective strategies and tactics.	If this volatility seems 'natural' it will be important to use a moving average to gauge impact of any intervention aimed at reducing any underlying factors.	Revisit and compare and contrast with partners from MEG colleges. Is there anything emerging from OfS What Works?				Julia Breakwell Peter Robinson Marc Harvey	HE Management Group HE Acad. Board Equality and diversity committee
		Track new progression metric, some 15 months after completion, to see how this impacts on the historical PT progression gap.	The hypothesis is that the nature of the Payroll and Pensions sector means return on higher study investment is more likely to show given the longer gap between end of study and the progression survey.	Monitor – is progression improving	Monitor – is progression improving	Monitor – is progression improving	If yes maintain strategy. If not then revisit the other actions and review effectiveness. The decide if a small gap is likely given the nature of the student cohort.		Peter Robinson Marc Harvey	HE Management Group HE Acad. Board Equality and diversity committee



			Staff development and on-line						
	To improve PT students' awareness of career opportunities and capacity to identify and apply for their next career step.	Develop a bank of	interactive resource development aimed at improving the students job search abilities. Improved on-line resources and personal tutor input on how to successfully network with and without your current organisation. Resource bank to help students apply for and prepare for interviews in targeted sectors. Bespoke input from payroll and pensions employers. What they want? What they don't want?	factoring in student evaluation of the effectiveness of	Judge whether this appears to be contributing to a reduction in historical gaps in PT student progression.			Sue Smith Julia Breakwell Peter Robinson	HE Management Group HE Acad. Board Equality and diversity committee



Additional	Care Leavers – To monitor numbers of	To monitor and study College based L3 care leavers who progress and succeed in College based HE programmes.	Identify the L3 care leavers, both current and recent past, who have unsuccessfully studied on HE at the College. Identify L3 care leavers who could	at understanding their journey into HE, or not. Compare and contrast.	Based on ongoing research and monitoring identify augmentations in the service that might help attract more Care Leaver student to study HE at College. Why might ease their transition into higher study and help them succeed once there?	improving the numbers of Care Leavers	Implement growth strategy irrespective of whether there are gaps against national measures or not.		Julia Breakwell Peter Robinson	HE Acad. Board Equality and diversity committee

^{*} Equality and Diversity monitoring and reporting will feed into the HE Management and Coordinators Group Operation Group and Academic Board

^{**} Milestones 9 and 10 for the 2024-25 academic year will also involve developing a new Access and Participation Plan.





The college has already developed data capabilities to use the OfS methodology to match the OfS published continuation figures, whilst enabling the analysis of data in different ways, e.g. by course, or by CIPP/non-CIPP routes. In addition, we have access to ILR data in year prior to submission, which enables us to estimate continuation levels well ahead of OfS publication.

These capabilities can be used to provide the following data to improve evaluation:

- 1. Draft continuation figures for PT students who start in September 2017, for example, can be provided by November 2019 and draft continuation figures for PT students who start in April 2018, for example, can be provided by June 2020. This would be over a year ahead of the official OfS figures and would give us much earlier indications of where we may have problems meeting targets.
- 2. Simple calculations of the proportion of students who start in September 2018, for example, and do not return in September 2019 can be produced by November 2020, giving us very early indications of where issues might arise, a further year earlier than the continuation figures in paragraph 1.
- 3. When providing the measures in paragraph 1 and 2, we have the capacity to analyse the data any way that we wish. This would include looking at this data by course and enables us to concentrate our resources on areas of the college where it is needed.

These measures would be provided for evaluation at the milestone meetings specified in appendix 1.

The HE learner voice is critical. As well as drawing upon NSS survey information the College utilises module and course level student feedback.

Peer observations also provide a rich source of information about the impact teaching, learning and assessment is having on learners. These peer observations also provide another opportunity to talk to learners.

HE students participate in College wide student forums where group representatives explore key themes. Access and participation is always an area that is considered.

Employer input and feedback is also drawn upon to consider ways of evaluating and improving the quality of the student experience.

UCAS insights are valuable in relation to learning about student progression behaviours. Similarly the Mixed Economy Group (MEG) of Colleges and the OfS What Works insights will help shape strategy and tactics needed to impact positively on any identified gaps or priority improvement targets.



Access and participation plan Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: Heart of Worcestershire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007977

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

The courses that are not subcontracted are not subject to an inflationary increase.

The foundation degree, which is part time, Payroll/Pensions is subject to an annual increase.

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	BA Social Work	£8,650
Foundation degree		£8,000
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£8,000
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual 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	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Business Management Top Up	£4,000
Foundation degree		£4,000
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£4,000
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	IPP Education Limited 10003336 - Foundation	62.400
Foundation degree	Degree in Payroll	£3,400
Foundation dograp	IPP Education Limited 10003336 - Foundation	£3,400
Foundation degree	Degree in Pensions	15,400
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*



Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Heart of Worcestershire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007977

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year								
, , ,	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25				
Total access activity investment (£)	£90,000.00	£90,000.00	£90,000.00	£90,000.00	£90,000.00				
Access (pre-16)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00				
Access (post-16)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00				
Access (adults and the community)	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00	£30,000.00				
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				
Financial support (£)	£56,000.00	£56,000.00	£56,000.00	£56,000.00	£56,000.00				
Research and evaluation (£)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00				

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year									
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25					
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£758,600.00	£750,600.00	£746,600.00	£746,600.00	£746,600.00					
Access investment	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%					
Financial support	7.4%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%					
Research and evaluation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%					
Total investment (as %HFI)	10.0%	10.1%	10.2%	10.2%	10.2%					



Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Heart of Worcestershire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007977

Targets

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Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly mile	Yearly milestones				Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
	number			collaborative?				2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Our aim is to close the gap for Polar Quintile 1/2 students	PTA_1	Part-time	To reduce the current gap by 36% (from 12.5% for 2017/18 starts to 8%) during the APP period.	Yes	HESA T2b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4) (All, part-time, entrants)	2017-18	12.5%	11.5%	10.5%	9.5%	8.5%	8%	This will need to involve work with both multi-disciplinary and multi-agency groups. The sociocultural and socioeconomic barriers to entry are complex and difficult to change.
	PTA_2												
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference	Target group	Description	Is this target	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly mile:	stones				Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
	number			collaborative?				2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Our aim is to close the continuation gap between mature and young PT students		Part-time	To reduce the continuation gap for mature PT students by at least 50% by 2024-25 using the OfS measure for continuation	Yes	Other data source	2015-16	16%	14%	12%	10%	9%	8% or less	We will use OfS continuation figures for % gaps in continuation between young and mature PT students. Data source - This will be suplemented with our own analysis using the same methodology but accessing more recent ILR data and breaking it down into groups which will enable us to identify where issues occur
Our aim is to close the continuation gap between disabled and nondeclared PT students	PTS_2	Part-time	To reduce the continuation gap for disabled PT students (7% for 2015/16 starts) by at least 50% (a gap of 3.5% of less) by 2024-25 using the OfS measure for continuation	Yes	Other data source	2015-16	7%	6%	5%	4.5%	4%	3.5% or less	We will use OfS continuation figures for % gaps in continuation between disabled and non-disabled PT students. Data Source - This will be suplemented with out own analysis using the same methodology but accessing more recent ILR data and breaking it down into groups which will enable us to identify where issues occur
	PTS_3												
	PTS_4												
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference	Target group	Description	Is this target	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
	number			collaborative?				2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
	PTP_1	Other											
	PTP_2												
	PTP_3												
	PTP_4												
	PTP_5												
	PTP_6												
	PTP_7												
	PTP_8												