Heart of Worcestershire College

Access and Participation Plan

2025-26 to 2028-29

Contents

1. Introduction and Strategic Aims

Heart of Worcestershire College, HoWC, is a Further Education College and Higher Education Institution which recruits across Worcestershire, and less prominently further afield, 67% of full-time enrolments have a local address. The majority of learners are recruited from the localities of Worcester, Redditch, Bromsgrove and Malvern with some students coming from southern areas of Birmingham. The College specialises in vocational and technical education across a range of subject sector areas. The largest cohorts of under-graduates are on HND and Foundation Degree programmes.

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.

Heart of Worcestershire College has well established links with University of Wolverhampton 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.

College Strategy

The College's Higher Education Vision is to "***nurture the brilliance of every student & address the skills needs of local and regional employers through innovative & impactful education"*** **That vision is embodied in the 7 Strategic Themes we have.**

- **Purpose** - Providing very high quality curriculum offer and student experience, with very high student continuation, completion and progress rates.
- **Place** - Delivering from inspirational, higher level and professional learning environments.
- **People** - Providing an inclusive scholarly culture that fosters supportive and engaging environment for staff and students.
- **Prosper** - Increasing access and participation opportunities for the community to inspire, support and champion higher-level learning. Increase participation in Higher Apprenticeships, short courses and modularised programmes.
- **Partnership** - Bringing HE partners, employers, and communities together to share and collaborate.
- **Potential** - Preserve and innovate today to thrive tomorrow, ensuring we meet skills needs and have a reputation for technological advancement whilst providing accessible HE offer.
- **Planet** - Raising awareness across the HE community by delivering on our sustainability commitment.

Under these strategic intents are individual targets that focus the strategic implementation plan.
- **Purpose** - To be above threshold for all Teaching and Excellence Framework metrics. Continuation rates to be 5% above benchmark. To achieve TEF Silver for Student Satisfaction and Student Outcomes in 2027.
- **Place** - Across all campuses we will continue to improve our dedicated HE LRC/social space, to bolster HEI Worcestershire's identity, creating stronger brand awareness.

internally and externally within three years. Develop our online capabilities to embrace micro-credentials for all current provision within three years.

- **People** - All HE teachers will be supported through HE Learning Walks and Peer Reviews championing scholarly activity and industry updating. We will create opportunities for 50% of HE teaching teams to achieve Advance HE Fellowship over a three-year period.
- **Prosper** - We will engage with technologies to enhance TLA and support online deliver modes. Enrol 30% of HE students onto short courses (Adult Skills) pre or post HE study increasing income by £15K over a three-year period. Increase enrolment numbers by 15% across all programmes.
- **Partnerships** - We will build on current employer engagement in every curriculum area for design, development, and delivery. Embedding Advance HE employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship toolkit into cross-HE tutorial programme. Creating a forum for stakeholder feedback to inform on future curriculum planning.
- **Potential** - Be recognised as a leader for local higher-level skills and pioneers in technology, (progression routes for STEM at L4,5 &6) with 30% of course delivery to be available in modularised format for Engineering, Computing and Business subjects.
- **Planet** - We will support the College-wide goal to reduce carbon footprint by 50% by 2030. Lead on green themes through HE delivery, recognise local and global impact. Create two sustainable student awards within three years.

1.1 – Learner Context - Enrolment Pattern Analysis – 2019/20 – 2022/23

Over the 4 years period from 2019 to 2022-23 the college FT population has decreased by 50%, (OfS registered student numbers), from 160 in 2017 to 80 in 2022/23. PT enrolments have declined from 1100 to 840. This change is mainly related to the FD Payroll Management. The new HTQ in Digital is noted for new 2022/23 enrols. Apprenticeship offers at higher levels have declined and currently do not have any enrolments.

At the start of the 2023/24 year the college has around 85 FT Enrolments and an expected 350 PT students mainly; on FD Payroll Management. The largest subject areas over the period are Health and Social Care, Computing and Sport and Exercise Science.

The Age profile over the recorded period, shows an equal balance of younger and Adult students, compared to a national rate of 71% for Under 21 age students. 20%, (18% nationally), report a disability, showing good progress on raising this rate. 14% are from non-white ethnic groups, which is above local measures for participation.

As indicated by the EDI Dashboard analysis above, the percentage of students from the most deprived areas is the largest single student group, 23% as compared to 32% nationally. 44% of students enrol from addresses in TUNDRA Quintiles 1 and 2, which is twice the national rate of 22%.

The larger majority of learners, 38%, enrol onto their higher education at Heart of Worcestershire College course with a BTEC Qualification at less than DDM. This is 8% nationally. 25%, (17%), enrol with an Access qualification.

The College mission to "improve lives through learning", encompasses all parts of the curriculum offer. The values of being collaborative, empowering and respectful, are the foundation of the

college's approach to equality and diversity work and the delivery of teaching and learning in higher education. In partnership the college will foster ambition towards higher education study and provide supportive and challenging learning and study environments that enable all students to achieve equitably.

1.2 - Curriculum Changes 2024/25

At the start of the 2024/25 academic year the college will be beginning a Teach Out phase of the FD Payroll Administration as the partnership around this qualification comes to an end and a new qualification is launched. This will significantly impact on the colleges PT cohort and so there is no analysis of performance or access in that area, due to this lack of access to cohorts to support. However, actions around improving access for Adult students identified part-time routes as possible interventions.

The College will also end its only First Degree programme, (BA (Hons) Social Work), as of the end of the 2023/24 Academic Year.

2. Risk to Equality of Opportunity Across the Student Lifecycle.

2.1 - Assessment of Performance

The approach adopted for the assessment of performance section, was to collate and analyse data across three main external sources to highlight the context for future targets. Analysis will be added to with the use of college internal data where cohort sizes are too small to show on the "Dashboards" below.

- Office for Students, (OfS), Access and Participation, (APP) Dashboard - Data dashboard - Office for Students,
- Office for Students Size and Shape Dashboard, - Size and shape of provision data dashboard - Office for Students
- Office for Students TEF Data Dashboard - TEF data dashboard - Office for Students.

All national averages used in commentary below have been obtained from the OfS APP or Size and Shape dashboard apart from ethnicity. The internal data tables provided have been calculated from ILR data using the published methodology and matched to the OfS dashboard. This also gives access to more recent access and performance data.

In the analysis below, each EDI Theme will be reviewed for examination of the most significant gaps, over repeating information available through the links above. These then links to themes will feed into strategic objectives for the strategy.

These risks have been evaluated as at each part of the "Student Lifecycle" that the APP Dashboard sets out. Attainment is not covered as data is not available for the College.

2.1.1 - Access

Overall, the figures taken from the OFS APP data dashboard show the college has maintained recruitment patterns, that support widening participation in higher education. This is across the period 2017 - 2023.

The indicator gaps for rates of participation in HE, by TUNDRA and deprivation indices, shows that students from postcode areas with the least amount of historical participation in higher education have increased slightly over the last two years but should still remain a focus for further improvement.

Rates of mature students as against younger students remains around 20%, although part-time and full-time rates will differ vastly, due to the nature of the work-based part-time FD Payroll programme. Free School Meal rates have stayed the same across the six-year period.

Research continues to show that insufficient prior knowledge and limited access to good information and guidance that motivates candidates to achieve at higher levels, are key factors in influencing decision- making by students and their families.

Student Target Cohorts: -

- Adult
- Free School Meals
- All College Student and External Audiences - Maintain work on Careers guidance around the impactful and beneficial components of higher education. Outline the array of options from apprenticeships to part-time study as access to higher education. Liaise with partners on collaborative partnerships, with a focus on Redditch based on TUNDRA data.

2.1.2 - Continuation rates

The APP dashboard shows there are some gaps indicating that disadvantaged groups have lower continuation rates than their peers, a gap of around 10% across the data set. This impacts on those with higher levels of deprivation and low TUNDRA participation rates as there are often inter-sections of disadvantage in these characteristics.

Not all years or student categories have sufficient data to support datasets on the APP Dashboard, thus inhibiting broader analysis, across all student characteristics. Using the information available, students who were eligible for Free School Meals, those with a disability and older students do perform better than comparable peers. These student groups have some of the highest continuation rates, across the college, at 85%. Suggesting that where there is a specific learning or additional need these students benefit from services in college that support them. This is relevant for the analysis of what actions could be taken to support wider cohorts such as the TUNDRA classification above.

The TEF Dashboard shows that Continuation rates are above the 4-year aggregate benchmarks across the OfS TEF Indicators, for all groups. This indicates that the impact of college support measures and student own drive to achieve and progress in their studies is high.

Information from College records for the Year 2022/23 show that mature full-time students have higher rates of continuation that younger students and that students with a White ethnic classification

have higher rates of completion than BME classified students. This indicates a manifestation of risk for non-white ethnic students. Contrastingly, students with disabilities outperform their peers by around 9% and deprivation is not a distinct factor in lowering continuation rates.

This suggest that whilst the targeted work the college is doing with other groups of students showing signs of risk of non-continuation, these are not being as impactful in other, at risk groups.

Student Target Cohorts: -

- Quintile 1/2 TUNDRA
- BME Students

2.1.3 - Completion

Unlike Continuation rates, there are achievement gaps, on the APP Dashboard, that suggest the performance of students is less equitable, across all types of learner cohorts. The data suggests that all types of supported student groups, including those who have previously had high continuation rates, are not being as similarly positively impacted on in relation to completing their programme and certification. The APP Dashboard shows 4 Year Aggregate Gaps exist across different groups and range from around 20% to 3%. The key focus and thus premise for action in this area is to build greater links between HE Support Schemes and personnel and the teaching teams to ensure the availability of support through all parts of the college services are readily accessed. This should lead to prompter identification of concern, targeting of behaviour triggers, such as all students who don't hand in or pass are followed up for support.

In understanding the extent of the above picture, it is also important to note than none of the above groups by age, disability, socio-economic criteria have completion rates below the national comparator benchmarks set in the OfS TEF Dashboard. However, the college will still focus on this aspect of providing equality of access to the opportunity to complete students' studies.

The College internal data indicates that student with disabilities will benefit from more support around successful completion, and that students that come from areas with high levels of deprivation, succeed better than their peers. Completion rates by ethnicity, show improved rates against the lower continuation rates mentioned above, but completion rates are still lower than White counterparts.

Whilst the broadly positive performance by all groups of disadvantaged learners is noted, the college still wishes to improve this feature to provide further equity. It is felt that the demands of the final year, are causing further strain and concern for learners with additional needs, thus greater focus prior to the start of their studies and throughout can help to identify possible support requirements and put them in place in a timely manner.

Student Target Cohorts: -

- Disabled Students
- FSM Students
- Adults

2.1.4 - Progression

The EDI dashboard has limited information on gaps due to the size of the datasets. However, there is an indication that learners from disadvantaged groups do not perform as well across a range of metrics in the APP Dashboard. Information from comparison from 4 year and two-year aggregates suggest the progression rate is improving for the most disadvantaged learners, but a gap remains.

There is a 67% 2-year aggregate progression rate to Graduate level jobs for the most deprived student groups, which has risen from 65%. This is now in line with national indicators. 64%, up from 62%, of the ABCS group, the group least likely to achieve and progress, which is a strong indication of how well the college impacts on this most disadvantaged group. This is 2% above the national indicator rate.

Student Outcomes data from the OfS TEF Dashboard, shows that progression rates across a number of groups are above benchmarks over a four-year aggregate. However, although 47% of the most deprived student progressed, to a Graduate level or higher education this is 8% below the benchmark.

More research into these reasons for lower progression rates by set target groups, will help to formulate and focus the strategy as the timeframe develops. The target group below have lower rates of progression nationally. This is likely due to a mix of variable preparations for job openings, or a reduced ambition for higher level positions.

Student Target Cohorts: -

- Female Students

2.2 - Equality of Opportunity Risk Register Analysis

In addition to the use of the above statistical data sets to identity targets and student characteristics that have higher risk to equality of opportunity to them, the college has also used the EoRR, to review the experiences and possible risks for all learners and other groups. In compiling the EoRR Matrix below, the college has taken the above statistical information into account, comparisons with national data that indicates groups that experience lower access and performance outcomes and information from internal reviews like equality and diversity reports, student feedback and self-evaluation documents.

The Chart below shows the Sector Process risks mapped against key student characteristics. Where boxes are red, these areas are seen as being significant risk to equality of opportunity, risks in range/gold, represent a likely risk and those in yellow a potential risk. White boxes show where there are no more significant risks at College than found for other groups.

This following chart shows that the four main sector risks are Risks 1-3 around awareness of and ambition towards higher education and Risk 10 – The impact of costs pressures to continuation.

As has been shown above, in the Learner Cohort context section, the college population, come from largely low prior attainment groups, from areas of deprivation, manly White, but representative of the

local population and distinctive numbers of disabled students on a regular annual basis. This is why providing more information and targeting these groups who have lower level of participation nationally are seen as key EORR for the college.

Equality of Opportunity Matrix – Student category /Sector Level Risks	Risk 1: Knowledge and skills	Risk 2: Information and guidance	Risk 3: Perception of higher education	Risk 4: Application success rates.	Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery model.	Risk 6: Insufficient academic support	Risk 7: Insufficient personal support	Risk 8: Mental health -	Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus	Risk 10: Cost pressures –	Risk 11: Capacity issues -	Risk 12: Progression from higher education
Free School Meals	Red	Red	Red						Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange
First Gen. HE	Red	Red	Red		Yellow	Yellow		Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
Care Exp.	Red	Red	Red					Orange	Yellow	Red	Orange	Yellow
Mature	Yellow	Red	Red		Red		Yellow	Yellow		Red	Orange	Orange
Specific Learning Difficulty	Red	Red	Red		Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Male	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow		Yellow		Yellow					
No Qualification on Entry	Red	Red	Yellow							Red		Orange
Black (all)	Yellow	Red	Yellow				Yellow			Red		Orange
Socioeconomic Factors	Red	Red	Yellow						Yellow	Red	Orange	Orange
Total Risk Analysis	6/9	8/9	5/9	0/0	2/4	0/1	0/4	0/4	0/5	6/8	0/0	0/0

3. Equality of Opportunity Risk Register – Key Cohorts

The potential risks to equality of opportunity rising from the above analysis, have been collated under the specific themes to show the link to the original Higher Education Equality Risk, (HEER).

Equality Risk	Student Group
HEER 1 - Access	Adult Student eligible for Free School Meals Under-represented Groups; Quintile 1/2 TUNDRA
HEER 2 - Continuation	Quintile 1/2 TUNDRA
HEER 3 - Completion	Students with a declared disability status Free School Meals Adult Learners
HEER 4 - Progression	Quintile 1/2 Deprivation – (Females)
HEER 5 - EoRR Sector Risk 1: Knowledge and skills - Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions	Students who do not achieve GCSE English and maths at school.
HEER 6 - EoRR Sector Risk 2: Information and guidance - Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambitions, or to make informed choices.	School Age Pupils 16-18 Year Olds Cohorts Care Experienced Students with Education and Health Care Plans.
HEER 7 - EoRR Sector Risk 3: Perception of higher education - Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.	School Age Pupils 16-18 Year Olds Cohorts Care Experienced Students with Education and Health Care Plans.
HEER 8 - EoRR Sector Risk 10: Cost pressures – Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.	Disabled Students Care Experienced FSM Quintile 1/2 Deprivation

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3.1 - Specialist Student Group - Care Experienced

The College has a long history of successfully supporting 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 and Education and Health Care Plan Reviews Plans 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 group. Each learner studying qualifies for a bursary. The welfare team liaise with the student finance team to support the learner to make the application and receive payment.

The College's careers strategy supports raising aspirations for all learners, whilst also recognising that for some learners there are more system barriers and manifestations of risk than peers.

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 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.

4 - Equality and Diversity Objectives

This part of the report shows how the EDI analysis and identification of the Key Higher Education Equality Risks, (HEER) above has been considered holistically to create the Strategic Objectives for this Access and Participation Plan. Broad themes relating to each Objective are made below and further in the Intervention Actions, section. The specific action plans will be created in association with students, and paying attention to the feedback and impact arising from any evaluation and sector good practice that emerges over the timeframe.

For each Objective, the main thrust of evaluative strategies are described. However as is seen in more detail in the Evaluation Section this area is one that new practices and approaches will influence the confirmed process taken annually. This will include sharing data with other providers and adopting evaluation approaches identified and proposed by organisations like TASO.

4.1 Strategic Objective 1 – Rise Up. (HEER1, HEER6 and HEER7)

Support targeted work in collaboration with other higher education providers to raise participation rates, specifically those of areas of higher rates of deprivation, and low historic HE participation rates.

Risk to Equality of Opportunity

This area is considered as a risk, from analysis of then long-standing patterns of low participation in this group both regionally and nationally. Whilst college has significant population from these districts this remains a risk to their access to equality of opportunity. Evidence suggests residents in these low participation and high deprivation areas have little or restricted knowledge of higher education nor clear pathway plans to progress to higher education. Rates of students from Quintile 1 and 2 TUNDRA fluctuate over the 6 year period but show that there is still room for further improvement and that there are indications that actions around countywide careers initiatives are having an impact, when examining four trends Aggregate Gaps. Thus, the strategy is to build further on the impactful work being achieved.

Objective

To close the access TUNDRA gap for young Quintile 1 FT students (12% 2 Year APP aggregate), and Quintile 4, to a gap of 5% or less by 2028-29 using the APP Dashboard as a measure. Yearly progress targets of 2% per year are set as milestone targets, using college internal data.

Intervention Strategy

1. Launch collaborative partnerships on agreed Access and Participation Plan objectives with local HE Providers.
2. Recruit 100 participants annually from local targeted areas. Liaise with schools, colleges, voluntary groups and other agencies.
3. Specifically target students on FSM and Care Experienced at College and those in schools. Identify through evaluation of distinct campaigns strategies are needed for different groups.
4. Create Impact Measurement Tool, building on good practice used in previous Uniconnect initiatives, to identify key processes that made an impact on raising HE enrolments and interest in higher education.
5. Review termly and build on analysis of impact and lower areas for participation.

Evaluation

In assessing impact and the breadth and scope of the initiative aspects like the number of participating schools, (and especially those targeted), will be measured to assess the effectiveness and draw of the interventions offers.

Work to identify students in Aimhigher/Uniconnect programmes as people who later enrol; in higher education has proved difficult to track and monitor regionally, so attitudes and propensity for Action will be measured in oppose to monitoring actual destinations over the course of the APP. If practice develops to make this lifespan monitoring more readily accessible and successful, this measure will be introduced.

Impact will be compared between two of the target groups – School Pupils and College Students, for example what are the different messages or other communications that will have impact on that group. What are the similarities? how do they differ? This is to inform future strategies and national research. work

4.2 - Strategic Objective 2 – Join Up. (HEER1)

Support targeted collaboration work with other higher education providers to raise participation rates amongst adults.

Risk to Equality of Opportunity

As mentioned at the start of the report, the college's change in recruitment to the PT, mainly Adult programme, presents a risk to Adult groups locally to accessing flexible higher education. The College is also aware that these Adult PT, (and FT), rates are low at other local providers. Adult participation in higher education is declining nationally. The College has also noted this decline. College has recorded an average of 28% of each cohort is classed as an Adult across the 4-year period and most recently this has remained stable. In relation to the college strategy and based on information of local labour markets and job demand, this area provides a significant opportunity to raise the access to higher education for all ages. Existing research suggest that Adults have biased opinions on what higher education is, need flexible models and use higher education manly to forward their work and career plans.

Objective

To increase adult participation rates from 28% to 32% of all HE enrolments by 2028-29.

Intervention Strategy

1. Increase the availability of careers advice for adults through partnerships with a range of agencies and college services.
2. Create a credit-based offer for adults to study part-time, based on micro-credentials on 2 separate HE programmes. Gain acceptance of credit value as a feature for RPL in applications to HE study, with other HE providers.
3. Raise adult awareness of higher education and professional courses through increased access to adult guidance and course information available across the County.

Evaluation

In assessing impact of this initiative, a quicker pace of impact can be assessed as most Adults will either enrol immediately or within a year. Capturing destinations of adults who progress away from local providers will be challenging, but where these are between two local providers, this can be monitored internally.

As with other areas, assessment of the correct medium and messaging will be reviewed to see if Community -based groups respond to different messaging to students who attend an Open Event for example.

The College will also be able to measure continuation and completion rates over the time period for learners, who enrol at College. This could prove useful in providing insight into how well Adults

from specific disadvantaged groups in the local community, perform and maintain their studies once enrolled.

4.3 - Strategic Objective 3 – Complete Agenda. (HEER2, HEER3)

To improve support available to and access by distinct learner cohorts that show less proactive approaches to support.

Risk to Equality of Opportunity

The gaps in completion rates for the identified groups below, exist over a 4-year period and so whilst annual numbers of students are low, this still represents an EDI gap, the college intends to reduce. Expand remit for focused support and intervention of HE Co-ordinator to include all groups in Quintile 1/2 TUNDRA and Deprivation, (use postcodes). Analysis of college data and information from the recent TEF Evaluation shows that college services to support vulnerable learners are effective, however the data from dashboards suggest this does not equally impact on all learner groups. Additionally target students from Black and Minority Ethnic heritage groups and those with a declared disability towards successful completion. Set benchmark for annual improvement and measure performance against this.

Objective

Disabled Students and BME students have a less than 5% achievement gaps between them and their peers, or they are 2% above any national measures as published in the Access and Participation Plan Dashboard.

Intervention Strategy

1. Identify all students in the above vulnerable groups in the first year and emphasise support. Identify and contact all students classed as BME or disabled in their final year to focus on completion.
2. Identify any particular barriers to this cohort and each individual, in order to reduce or remove those early. Support students in time management and assignment planning.
3. Review cohort monthly and report to Academic Board Termly.
4. Evaluate success factors in any improvement to identify system issues that can be removed for following years and the most impactful systems for support.

Evaluation

Assessment of the impact of this scheme will be seen immediately within the first year, as it will be possible to track the success; completion, attainment, progression to higher levels, of each student annually. This will be undertaken by the HE Engagement Officer.

Reporting structures and monitoring will be examined termly; and collated annually, to identify and expand practice that have a positive impact and receives high level of positive feedback from students.

A good practice handbook, with accounts from students that is adapted to each cohort will be part of the outputs from the research, take up and use of the guidance will be part of the evaluations.

4.4 - Strategic Objective 4 - Careers Compact. (HEER4)

To increase progression rates for female students to be more comparable with male students and national measures and to support those from areas of high deprivation.

Risk to Equality of Opportunity

This is a risk to progression from higher education into employment and thus presents a potential risk to the colleges strategic ambition to nurture all brilliance, including in employment. Evidence suggest that females are less likely to create letters of introduction or CVs that emphasise their strengths as well as some male groups, this the strategy will be to enhance services for all students, but target set groups. Ensure all HE students have had a careers intervention. Target female students and those from set postcodes for distinct job pathway planning. To extend service to these students to assist with CV writing, creation of Linked Profiles and preparation for employment activities.

Objective

Progression rates for students from the highest areas of deprivation rise to be in line with HoWC students from Quintile 3 by 2028/29 APP data dashboard published results, or above 55%, to compare positively against national benchmarks.

Intervention Strategy

1. Create careers packages that are specifically designed for and targeted at female audiences. Gather student feedback on preferred support mechanisms and gaps for securing employment.
2. Launch a HoW College "Education to employment" scheme, which includes a series of tutorial and targeted interventions for students in Year 1 and year 2 of their studies. Work should be targeted at those from set postcodes.
3. Liaise with local employers over the potential for a direct education to employment scheme, where they can advertise up-coming vacancies and meet potential candidates.

Evaluation

An Action-centred research approach will form the model of the main thrust of evaluation work in this Objective.

This will allow for both quantative data, (captured over the four-year period and confirmed via the APP and OfS TEF Metric Dashboard, as well as internal tracking, where possible for students who have participated.

Research with the participants, will especially focus on the female students in the cohort to see who the project has improved their confidence, their self-belief that will support careers progression and what activities where most pivotal in making this impact. Students, participant, feedback will inform the evolved development of the scheme.

4.5 - Strategic Objective 5 – 1 Grade Higher. (HEER5)

To assist other providers both in schools and those from the HE sector, to improve GCSE attainment rates. To focus support on college students where there are large numbers without a GCSE English or maths grade above 4 from school.

Risk to Equality of Opportunity

The most significant "Sector Risk" in the local area is the low GCSE attainment rate, whilst there are inter-sections of inequality that impact in this area, the OfS has placed specific focus on raising GCSE attainment as a key indicator of potential for success in higher education. The College has over 1200 learners every year who are seeking to improve their GCSE grade. Support targeted intervention work in schools and colleges for those candidates who may have a risk of not passing their English and Maths GCSE. GSCE attainment in the County is around the college average with some distinct under-performance in the north of the County. Some work in this theme has already begun from previous Access and Participation Plans.

Objective

GCSE attainment rates are above 50% for each of the individual intervention groups of learners being supported for this work.

Intervention Strategy

1. Liaise with University of Worcester to share out school providers for intervention work. To create a shared menu of intervention activities for schools to choose from.
2. Support 16-18 students who have low GCSE prior attainment and who are studying those subjects again in a college environment. This can include direct support in English and maths, access to remote support and awareness raising.
3. Establish a performance baseline at each provider being worked with to evaluate impact in the set groups being targeted.

Evaluation

Given the collaborative nature of this project both with other providers, and receiving institutions, the research methodology cannot be stated with clarity at the time of publication.

Evaluative strategies that are identified as robust, that are in place by another HE provider will likely be adopted across the scheme to benefit most from the comparisons of data. It is likely this type of intervention will commonly occur across a number of FE Colleges who are HE Institutions, due to a matching cohort, thus collaborative work with the Mixed Economy Group, that pulls information from a number of similar providers will provide positive insight into the efficacy and focus for this type of project.

As with Objective 1, the ability to track participants over their study cycle to ascertain if they do enrol into HE, the ultimate objective, has proved problematic and unwieldy for any one provider. It is envisaged that a collaborative approach will improve this.

4.6 - Strategic Objective 6 – Level Up. (HEER2, HEER8)

To increase the amount of financial support available to students on programme, in order to impact positively on participation, and completion rates.

Risk to Equality of Opportunity

Students feedback that the cost of living and study are key features that influence their decisions to study at HE levels, over entering employment at low skills levels and their ability to "stay the course" when times become more difficult outside of college. This presents a distinct barrier to completion and progression from higher education.

Objective

Completion rates for disabled students and BME groups increase to be within 5% of the highest performing student group at the College or 2% above national measures. Increase participation rates for student groups under-represented in higher education by 5% across each cohort – Q1/2 TUNDRA, Q1/2 Deprivation, BME Groups and Adults.

Intervention Strategy

1. Liaise with student representative groups to identify possible forms of financial and other support like mental health, that are helpful to raise access and maintain focus on completion. Build those proposals into plans for 2025 onwards.
2. Review and re-launch the funding thresholds for all bursaries to take account of current economic situation.
3. Evaluate the impact of financial support and different bursary types against completion and participation by set cohort groups like Care Experienced, BME and Adults.

Evaluation

The College already has extensive data that shows the students that receive financial support, have higher rates of completion and continuation than those that do not. This shows that the targeting of financial support at lower levels is having an impact and so opening up the access to the support for more students, (by lowering thresholds), has the potential to have a greater impact on a wider cohort of students.

The College will extend the research undertaken in this arena but adding more feedback from students about the format financial support, (release periods, amounts provided), can help meet need quicker and more effectively. By understanding what learners benefit from with the financial support, will aid the direction of the fund in the future.

5. Strategic Measures

5.1 Whole provider Strategic Approach

Widening access to the College's Higher Education offer and higher education more broadly, 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. The College prides itself on providing and 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. Annual CPD Events support the opportunity to share progress information and enhance contribution towards the long-term objective of the plan.

The College has a single Strategy that encompasses the support and needs of all student groups. This strategy has identified a growth in HER numbers as a target in line with the analysis above and also how curriculum should develop to meet employers needs and local skills gaps.

5.2 - 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.

5.2.1 - Equality and Diversity Strategic Group

Heart of Worcestershire College has an established EDI Strategic Group to lead on the Organisation's strategic approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Key post holders from across College attend these meetings each term.

This group will:

- Monitor, review and contribute to the College's Access and Participation Plan, in particular monitoring outcomes for cohorts of learners in HE where there is an identified need or achievement gap.
- Ensure the College meets its responsibilities with regard to its public sector general and specific duties.
- Ensure EDI is promoted effectively through teaching and learning.
- Ensure that information regarding EDI is communicated effectively to the College community.
- Monitor, review and contribute to the College's Equality and Diversity Objectives and Action Plan.
- Make recommendations as to how the promotion of the equality duties can be further enhanced and improved through the curriculum and service provision.

- Monitor Equality and Diversity meetings to share and develop best practice and ensure whole organisation 'buy in'.
- Review and revise the College's EDI Policy annually:
- Contribute to the College's annual Equality and Diversity Report, published in January. Monitor the progress made against College EDIMS.
- Monitor any complaints pertaining to Equality and Diversity.
- Champion inclusive practice.

5.2.2 Equality Policy

The College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2022-2025. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy sets out the values and strategic aims of the Heart of Worcestershire College with regard to Equality and Diversity. It outlines the commitments and responsibilities of all college members to fulfil its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination in line with the requirements of the Equality Act and how the College will further improve the service it offers to all to be truly inclusive.

5.2.3 Equality Annual Report

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.

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 College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Group.

5.2.4 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.   The Colleges Equality Action plan includes the targets and actions contained in the Access and Participation Plan.

5.2.5 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. These target student groups with under-performance in order to reduce gaps and improve outcomes in line with national benchmarks.

6. Student Consultation

Students have been directly consulted, through Course Representative meetings 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, TEF Submissions and course committees across a number of programmes to ensure that their feedback and suggestions are implemented in future practice.

Student feedback is gathered through multiple sources such as:

- The National Student Survey.
- On-programme "In House" surveys which are completed by all students not just final year.
- Student Representatives,
- Student focus groups hosted for each student group 3 times per year.

All information gathered is used to inform improvement planning and enrich the experience for future cohorts. 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.

In raising issues that reflect factors relating to access and participation students have mentioned the items mentioned below, which have been incorporated into action for this Plan:

- Childcare arrangements.
- Travel to Study Costs.
- Flexible Modes of study.
- Access to online resources.
- Careers advice and guidance and;
- Study Skills Support

Course Representatives will continue to be advised of the scheme and the targets met and impact made, so they can inform its progress over the time period and suggest changes in focus where this is felt to be necessary or helpful.

7. Evaluation strategy

7.1 - 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. In order to do this effectively and consistently the college recognises the need to evaluate the actions taken across this period to hone and re-target resources and activities that are right for the student cohort in scope.

Scope

Monitoring and evaluation 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. External data sources such as the APP and TEF Dashboard will act as national measures, over impact over a prolonged period, whilst college internal data gathering on continuation and completion will give helpful annual measures of progress. 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.

7.2 - Evaluation design and implementation

The evaluation of progress will be measured through embedded and effective monitoring and evaluation strategies employed at College. 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 a part of qualitative evidence collection tool.

The College will work in collaboration with other HE providers with which is it undertaking partnerships work, for them to include all data in a larger scale impact study. The University of Worcester has more long-standing practice in evaluating research outcomes and so the College intends to work with them, to provide independent evaluation. The College will also explore options for external private evaluation of research including organisation like SEER – Specialist Evidence Evaluation and Research and TASO.

The College is a member of the "Mixed Economy Group", a membership organisation for Further Education Colleges that deliver Higher Education, the group supports and develops good practice guidance for Further Education College with Higher Education provision. Through this membership group it is anticipated that cross-evaluation of projects will be possible which will also help develop good practice guidance for the sector. A group with this ambition has already been created.

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 collaborative partnerships
- Use of public/published data sources;
- The student voice.
- The voice of the employers with whom we work.

Work and outcomes of the Access and Participation Plan will be included on the College website and as mentioned above direct to students through Course representatives, Academic Board and other communications.

The College will work with the University of Worcester, the Mixed Economy Group and other private organisations where necessary on the optimal way to publish outcomes from the work and the ability to contribute to larger scale research that leads to good practice guides for the sector.

7.3 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, through both the EDI Strategy Group and the HE Academic Board 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 e.g.) 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. This includes EDI type targets that cut across the APP and the SED document.

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 Executive Leadership Team take responsibility for monitoring progress of the plan's objectives and maintain oversight of progress in-year. The Vice Principal – Higher Education within the College has responsibility for overall evidence gathering, reporting and recording of progress and will act as liaison 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.

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

8. 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 into 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 overseen by the Board of Governors. 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.

Additionally, students are advised of financial support available to them through a series of staged approaches.

- Induction – Students are advised about financial support from the first day of their studies through the Course Induction.
- Freshers Fayre – All students are invited to a series of presentations and activities around the support structure and learning assistance whilst they are at college. Financial support is mentioned through this loop.
- Tutorials – Tutors are regularly advised of any distinct or focused financial support for set students as well as the availability of funds and important deadlines. This information is passed to students weekly.

9. 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, 90% 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 evaluate impact of the different 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 2025/26, but the targeting of the scheme will respond to success across the 4 years.

Students will have access to financial support with maximum awards of up to £2000 for full-time students and £1000 part-time. 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

Bursaries can fall to £1500 in specific cases or can be lower is the support required is more targeted.

Under BOOST, a total of £25,000 is made available for all years of study, this will continue in future years.

Priority will be given to the following students:

- Looked after/Care Leaver
- Applicants with disabilities
- Resident of low HE participation neighbourhood
- Students with a BME background

Boost bursaries can be either £1500 or £2000 dependent on financial circumstances

The College also has a hardship fund available to assist students suffering severe hardship. A total of £10,000 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, the college will reduce the thresholds at which BOOST Awards can be allocated to take into account cost of living increase. 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. Information about fees is provided at the start of a students studies and the fee remains the same throughout their period of study.

10. Investment

Over the course of the 4-year Access and Participation Plan the college will seek to invest in the region of £464,800. The College will articulate this in detail as part of the follow on process for the publication of Access and Participation Plans, will requires provider once plans have been approved to create a more detailed Financial Information Template.

This significant investment shows the level of commitment and links to the strategic ambitions of the college through our EDI Strategy. Whilst some of this investment will be funded by around 20% of

the fess gathered above the basic cap, the larger investment ratio will be made by the College directly.

The Chart below gives an indication of where these costs will be focused and the type of activity they are covering. As can be seen almost half of all investment is in the form of financial support to students. The College will draw from its own reservices and income in order to deliver the Plan, as monies gathered from student fee income above the basic capped rate, will not cover all costs in this plan. As the activities are part of the college's strategic ambitions and mission for the local community, this work remains a core principle of the colleges own higher education strategy and engagement plans.

Total predicted costs over the 4-year course of this Access and Participation Plan are;

Objective	Project Delivery	Careers	HE Officer	Admin	Finance	Review	Total
APPSA1 - Rise Up	42,000	4,800		1200		1000	49,000
APPSA2 – Adult Join Up	14,000	4,800		1200		1000	21,000
APPSA3 – Complete Agenda	7,400		100,000	400		1000	108,800
APPSA4 – Careers Compact	2,800		100,000	400		1000	104,200
APPSA5 – 1 Grade Higher	28,000	4,800		1,200		1000	35,000
APPSA6 – Level Up	5,600			200	140,000	1000	146,800
	£99,800	**14,400**	**200,000**	**4,600**	**140,000**	**6,000**	**£464,800**

11. Intervention Plans

Activity	Description	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-Intervention Strategy	Partner Organisations
APPSA1 - Rise Up – (HEER1, 6 and 7) **EORR 1, 2, 3**	Build on existing good practice and links with other providers both school and higher education to expand current UniConnect activity and target schools in areas of lowest participation. Target groups are residents in Quintile a and 2 TUNDRA postcode areas. Likely to be 5 schools per year across the partnership.	**Management Time** – 150 Hours per year. 4 Years MT @ £70 ph. (600 hours x £70) = £42,000 **Careers Delivery Team** – 30 Hours per year. 4 Years CD @ £40 ph. (120 hours x £40) = £4,800 **Printed Resources and other Marketing Activity** - £300 per year. (300 hours x 4) = £1,200 **Evaluation** - £250 per year = £1,000 Cost over the course of the 4 Year Plan £49,000	Agreed 4 Year Collaboration Plan between the two main HE Providers in the County that offers services to all schools but has a tailored and targeted approach to intervention and liaison. 75 Participants annually, rising to 100 over the 4 Year Period. 5 Schools in First year rising to 10 in the 4th Year. 50% of participants are eligible for Free School Meals or have a Care Experienced background. Creation of an Impact Measurement Tool, that can be applied to other EDI Interventions and aids contributions to national or sector research. EDI Target met.	Impacts across HEER 1, 6 and 7. It also links with HEER 5 Outputs. This work will also target participation rates in Care Experienced	UniConnect University of Worcester Colleges West Midlands Worcestershire Area and South Worcestershire Area Secondary Heads
APPSA2 - Adult – Join Up – (HEER1) – EORR 5	Increase marketing activity specifically targeted at Adult and entry into higher education programmes. Enhance offers for Careers advice available to Adults. Adapt existing curriculum delivery to create entry module offers for Adults to undertake.	**Management Time** – 50 Hours per year. 4 Years MT @ £70 ph. (200 hours x £70) = £14,000 **Careers Delivery Team** – 30 Hours per year. 4 Years CD @ £40 ph. (120 hours x £40) = £4,800 **Printed Resources and other Marketing Activity** - £300 per year. (300 hours x 4) = £1,200 **Evaluation** - £250 per year = £1,000 Cost over the course of the 4 Year Plan £21,000	New Marketing strategy to target Adults for higher levels of study. New micro-credentials offer in Engineering, Computing and Business. New Careers Service available to Adults that work sain partnerships with existing services in the region to promote HE. 100 Adults receiving Careers Advice annually. Adult participation rates increase by 10% across the 4 years, (excl. the FD Payroll Management). Adults make up 40% of the student number cohort at Heart of Worcestershire College in 2028/9. EDI Target met.	Impacts on HEER1, but also HEER 6 and 7.	Department of Work and Pensions – DWP Job Centres Worcestershire County Council University of Worcester Specific Community Groups that serve Adults
APPSA3 – Complete Agenda – (HEER2 &3). **EORR 6, EORR 7, EORR 8.**	Build upon the good and impactful practice of the HE Engagement Officer, (HEEO) in supporting students on programme to raise continuation rates and completion rates in targeted group.	**Management Time** – 30 Hours per year. 4 Years MT @ £70 ph. (120 hours x £70) = £7,400 **HE Engagement Officer** – 50% of salary each year. £25k. per year, (inc. on costs) = £100,000	All disabled students have direct contact with HEEO in each year. All BME students are offered a scheduled support session.	This intervention work target two different Equality Risks, both for completion and continuation.	TASO for models of evaluation. Mixed Economy Group for examples of good practice and potential for cross-sector evaluations of activity.

		Printed Resources and other Marketing Activity - £100 per year. = £400 **Evaluation** - £250 per year = £1,000 Cost over the course of the 4 Year Plan £108,800	All Students who had re-submission in their first year approached to offer support. All students who fail to hand work in or require a referral are directly offered support. Annual evaluations of work undertaken and measured against success against continuation and completion rates. Annual report to include feedback from students who participated on what this gained them, insights into why other students don't participate and feedback on the ownership of transferable skills. EDI Target met.	Careers Work as outlined in APPSA4 may also play a part in raising ambitions towards success.	
APPSA4 – Careers Compact – (HEER4). **EORR 12**	Target female students who single gender sessions, they aim to increase their skills for CV and letters of introduction writing, but also how to self-promote to businesses through Linked In.	**Management Time** – 10 Hours per year. 4 Years MT @ £70 ph. (40 hours x £70) = £2,800 **HE Engagement Officer** – 50% of salary each year. £25k. per year, (incl oncosts) = £100,000 **Printed Resources and other Marketing Activity** - £100 per year. = £400 **Evaluation** - £250 per year = £1,000 Cost over the course of the 4 Year Plan £104,200	Offer Careers Advice and Guidance for all HE Learners. Both self-directed and individual sessions. Create a tailored Careers package for female students about how to promote themselves via social media and tips for Interview Skills. Offer these sessions as face-to-face work as well as individual requests. 50 Careers Interventions annually. EDI Target met.	This work will also impact on Continuation rates and completion for other groups of learners as the ambition is to make the service available across all cohorts, but to have targeted, specialist resources for set groups.	University of Worcester Mixed Economy Group for examples of good practice and potential for cross-sector evaluations of activity.
APPSA5 – 1 Grade Higher – (HEER5) **EORR 1**	To work in collaboration with schools and other HE Providers to assist in the improved GCSE attainment across the County. Inputs to include individual and group sessions.	**Management Time** – 100 Hours per year. 4 Years MT @ £70 ph. (400 hours x £70) = £28,000 **Careers Delivery Team** – 30 Hours per year. 4 Years CD @ £40 ph. (120 hours x £40) = £4,800 **Printed Resources and other Marketing Activity** - £300 per year. (300 hours x 4) = £1,200 **Evaluation** - £250 per year = £1,000 Cost over the course of the 4 Year Plan £35,000	4-year agreement with schools and University of Worcester for the model of intervention, preferred times, locations and content, set from the 1st two years of the plan and then reviewed and evaluated for impact over that period. 20 participants per year. Participants have a 40% GCSE attainment rate. 40% of participants progress to a higher level of study.	This works will cut across intervention strategies for HEER1, 7 & 8.	UniConnect University of Worcester Colleges West Midlands Worcestershire Area and South Worcestershire Area Secondary Heads

			80% increase their rating of higher education as a possible route for them. Baseline data for evaluation of progress towards GCSE 4-9 Grade created. EDI Target met.		
APPSA6 – Level Up – (HEER2 and HEER8) **EORR 10**	To support students experiencing barriers to continuing in education and completion due to financial pressures.	**Management Time** – 20 Hours per year. 4 Years MT @ £70 ph. (80 hours x £70) = <u>£5,600</u> **Financial Support** - Boost - £25,000. Hardship £10,000 per year = £35k x 4 = <u>£140,000</u> **Printed Resources and other Marketing Activity** - £50 per year. = <u>£200</u> **Evaluation** - £250 per year = <u>£1,000</u> <u>Cost over the course of the 4 Year Plan £146,800</u>	New Financial Incentive and Support model in place for 2025. Retention for supported students remains above 90%. Completion rates exceed 85% Gather information to support any regional or national analysis around the impact of financial support schemes. Continuation and completion rates for the targeted groups increase, thus impacting on completion rates and reduce gaps across student groups. EDI Target met.	This works will cut across intervention strategies for HEER2 & 8.	Mixed Economy Group for examples of good practice and potential for cross-sector evaluations of activity.

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Fees, investments and targets
2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Heart of Worcestershire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007977

Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

We will not raise fees annually for new entrants

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation degree		N/A	8500
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND		N/A	8500
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation degree		N/A	4250
Foundation degree	FD Early Years	N/A	4250
Foundation degree	FD Payroll Management	N/A	4250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

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

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

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Heart of Worcestershire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007977

Investment summary

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

Notes about the data:

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

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

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

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

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

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000	£35,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£21,000	£21,000	£21,000	£21,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£59,000	£59,000	£59,000	£59,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Access activity investment	**Total access investment (£)**	**£80,000**	**£80,000**	**£80,000**	**£80,000**
Access activity investment	*Total access investment (as % of HFI)*	47.1%	47.1%	44.4%	44.4%
Access activity investment	**Total access investment funded from HFI (£)**	**£25,000**	**£25,000**	**£25,000**	**£25,000**
Access activity investment	**Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)**	**£55,000**	**£55,000**	**£55,000**	**£55,000**
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Financial support investment	**Total financial support investment (£)**	**£35,000**	**£35,000**	**£35,000**	**£35,000**
Financial support investment	*Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)*	20.6%	20.6%	19.4%	19.4%
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Research and evaluation investment	*Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)*	1.2%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: Heart of Worcestershire College

Provider UKPRN: 10007977

Targets

Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets

Aim [500 characters maximum]	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
Support targeted work in collaboration with other higher education providers to raise participation rates, specifically those of areas of higher rates of deprivation, and low historic HE participation rates.	PTA_1	Access	Tracking Underrepresentation by Area (TUNDRA)	TUNDRA quintile 1	TUNDRA quintile 4	The baseline data is drawn from OfS's Access and Participation EDI Dashboard shows a 12% 2 Year Gap for participation rates between, young Quintile 1 FT students and Quintile 4. The existing 12% gap will reduce by 7% to 5% or less by 2028-29. The APP Dashboard will be the source to measure impact.	Yes	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage points	12%	10%	9%	7%	5%
Support targeted collaboration work with other higher education providers to raise participation rates amongst adults.	PTA_2	Access	Other	Other (please specify in description)		The baseline data is drawn from OfS's Access and Participation EDI Dashboard. It shows 28% of student cohort are Adult. Target is to increase adult participation rates from 28% of whole cohort to 32% of all HE HoW enrolments by 2028-29.	Yes	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage points	28%	28%	30%	32%	32%
To assist other providers both in schools and those from the HE sector, to improve GCSE attainment rates. To focus support on college students where there are large numbers without a GCSE English or maths grade above 4 from school.	PTA_3	Raising attainment	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible		Raise GCSE attainment rates to above 50% for supported cohort of learners. This is a cross sector priority as set out in OfS APP Guidance. Data source is from local school performance metrics from across Worcestershire.	Yes	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage points	0	12	15	25	35
	PTA_4														
	PTA_5														
	PTA_6														
	PTA_7														
	PTA_8														
	PTA_9														
	PTA_10														
	PTA_11														
	PTA_12														

Table 5d: Success targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To improve support available to and access by disabled learner cohorts that show less proactive approaches to support.	PTS_1	Completion	Reported disability	Disability reported	No disability reported	The baseline data is drawn from OfS's Access and Participation EDI Dashboard. This shows that Disabled Students have a 5% completion gap, between them and their peers, as confirmed by the Access and Participation Plan Dashboard. Target is to reduce this to 0 by 2028.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage points	4.7	4	3.5	1.5	0
To increase the amount of financial support available to students on programme, in order to impact positively on participation, and completion rates.	PTS_2	Completion	Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD])	IMD quintile 1 and 2	IMD quintile 5	The baseline data is drawn from OfS's Access and Participation EDI Dashboard. Completion rates for Adult learners have a 3.1 gap between them and their peers for completion. This will reduce to under 2% by 2028.	No	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage points	3.1	2.8	2.0	1.5	0

Aim	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To increase the amount of financial support available to students on programme, in order to impact positively on participation, and completion rates.	PTS_3	Completion	Eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM)	Eligible	Not eligible	The baseline data is drawn from OfS's Access and Participation EDI Dashboard. This shows that Non FSM Students have a 5% completion gap, between them and their peers, as confirmed by the Access and Participation Plan Dashboard. Target is to reduce this to 0 by 2028	No	The access and participation dashboard	2022-23	Percentage points	4.7	4	3.5	1.5	0
	PTS_4														
	PTS_5														
	PTS_6														
	PTS_7														
	PTS_8														
	PTS_9														
	PTS_10														
	PTS_11														
	PTS_12														

Table 5e: Progression targets

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Lifecycle stage	Characteristic	Target group	Comparator group	Description and commentary [500 characters maximum]	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2025-26 milestone	2026-27 milestone	2027-28 milestone	2028-29 milestone
To increase progression rates for female students to be more comparable with male students and national measures and to support those from areas of high deprivation.	PTP_1	Progression	Sex	Female	Male	Progression rates for students from the highest areas of deprivation rise to be in line with HoWC students from Quintile 3 by 2028/29 APP data dashboard published results, or above 55%, to compare positively against national benchmarks. OfS Data suggest this is more pronounced for females. To increase HE graduation Progression rates for females to 56% by 2028.	No	Other data source (please include details in commentary)	2022-23	Percentage points	47	49	52	55	56
	PTP_2														
	PTP_3														
	PTP_4														
	PTP_5														
	PTP_6														
	PTP_7														
	PTP_8														
	PTP_9														
	PTP_10														
	PTP_11														
	PTP_12														