New College of the Humanities Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Introduction

Founded in 2012, New College of the Humanities (the College) is a relatively young institution. Based in central London, the College provides high quality education in the humanities and social sciences. Small by design, the College offers a unique curriculum with integrated employability outcomes, highly personalised teaching and one-to-one tutorial system. National Student Survey (NSS) 2019 results demonstrate outstanding performance for student satisfaction in a number of areas including 100% overall satisfaction rate.

The College's students are talented, ambitious and passionate about the humanities. The current (2018-19) student population (UK, EU and international) is 210, (made up of 116 UK students, 78 EU and 16 international students; of which 197 are undergraduate and 13 are postgraduate students), from a diverse range of schools and backgrounds, and around 40% of students come from outside the UK. The College welcomes students from all backgrounds and celebrates its rich diversity as a valuable attribute of an exceptional learning experience. All students are supported, enabled and stimulated through their learning and broader student experience. Leveraging the diverse talents, voices and experiences of our student body as partners and contributors to the College's development, particularly in the access and participation agenda, is a focus area in this Plan.

From 2019-20, the College will deliver its first Access and Participation Plan. The College has a notable contribution to make to the sector due to its specialisms. In 2019-20, the foundations for practice in relation to the College's access and participation activity will be built, having a clear focus on the identified gaps in participation with a view to setting a trajectory for continuous improvement over the longer term, as detailed in this Plan. This particularly recognises gaps in access for underrepresented groups and building institutional capacity and expertise in relation to strengthening data, governance, leadership and practice. As such, the College will seek to collaborate with, and use sector examples of best practice, research and evidence, applied to its context. This will inform the development of effective new initiatives intended to increase the engagement of potential students from underrepresented groups and support their progression into, through and beyond higher education.

1 Assessment of performance

The first students enrolled at the College in September 2012. Between 2012-14, students were prepared for the University of London International Programmes (ULIP) and the available student profiles data for this period was less than that required in this Plan. In 2015 most of the College's undergraduate programmes (except LL.B, which stayed with ULIP until 2017) moved to validation by Solent University (Solent). The limited data available therefore differs over each aspect of the three stages of the student journey, for example seven intake years versus four graduating classes, and only two DHLE returns (2016 and 2017 graduates).

The College remains a small provider with a total student body of 210 students (UK, EU and international), with large proportions of EU (40%) and a small number of international students. The College's data relating to access, success and progression deal with small groups of students, which leads to volatility in percentage data and makes it challenging to meaningfully assess trends and determine targets. This is particularly true in terms of the ability to set gap targets; however, we have nevertheless sought to set appropriate targets to the College's context which achieve the performance improvement outcomes required, based on our assessment of performance.

> ***Notes on the data sets*** – Analysis is based on internal data for success and progression analyses (due to significant gaps int eh OfS data), and the OfS Access and Participation dataset for Access analysis. Where internal data is used, the College has **consistently used the Year of Entry cohort population only** (all students entering in a particular academic year) as a standard population across the whole student lifecycle, except where noted otherwise. The College has also drawn on the Office for Students (OfS) dashboards, comparator datasets for other providers, and other third party and sector analyses where possible and available, although it is to be noted that this data is very limited in respect of the College. Also, as a smaller provider, some of the College's data relating to access, participation and success deal with small cohorts of students, which leads to volatility in percentage data and makes it challenging to assess trends and determine targets. Where appropriate, the College has therefore applied multi-year averages and cohort groupings to mitigate the effect of small cohorts and has not been able to provide some data where data protection principles apply. For clarity of context, where cohorts are particularly small the College has denoted size by "N=<5". Analysis of internal data has followed the OfS methodology, to allow comparison to sector data and in particular the OfS datasets. Therefore, EU student data has been omitted from the performance assessment. The assessment has been made based on all available data, and total English students with data.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

1.1.1 ACCESS - POLAR4

Analysis from the OfS Access and Participation dataset (A&P dataset) shows that the College consistently attracts more students from POLAR4 Quintiles 4 and 5, with lower proportions of students from Quintiles 1 and 2. Given the small cohorts, trends are difficult to assess and therefore groupings and averages have been applied to help mitigate volatility.

Gap trend: POLAR4 Q1 - Q5 and Q1&2 - Q5

POLAR4 Quintile	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Quintile 1	N/A	N/A	3.7	0	3.2
Quintile 2	N/A	N/A	7.4	3.6	9.7
Quintile 3	N/A	N/A	18.5	14.3	19.4
Quintile 4	N/A	N/A	25.9	21.4	9.7
Quintile 5	N/A	N/A	44.4	60.7	58.1
Quintiles 1&2	N/A	N/A	11.1	3.6	12.9
Quintiles 3,4&5	N/A	N/A	88.9	96.4	87.1

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Gap Q1 - Q5	40.7	60.7	54.9
Gap Q1&2 - Q5	33.3	57.1	45.2
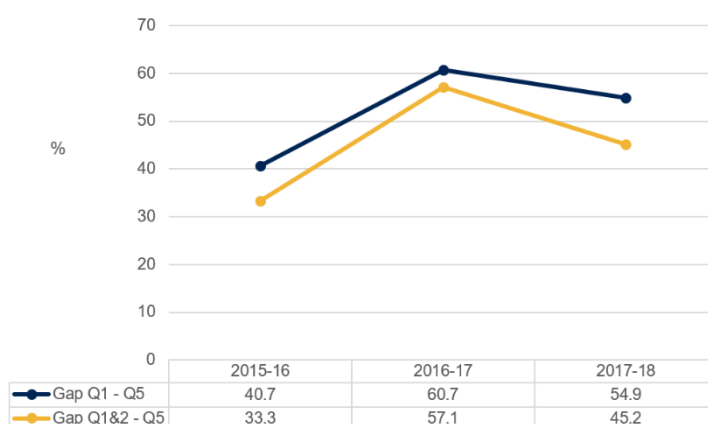
Participation of POLAR4 Quintile 1 students has remained relatively steady for 2015-16 and 2017-18, averaging 2.3% over a three-year period. When aggregated into POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2, the College's average percentage intake over the same period is 9.2%. This compares to an average POLAR4 Q5 intake of 54.4%. While intake of POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 remain relatively low, the College notes a positive trajectory in closing the gap in participation between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 in 2017-18, following a spike in the gap in 2016-17.

In 2017-18, the College's performance for POLAR4 Q1 access was 3.2%, compared to an average of 12.0% for the sector (all English providers). However, given the College's attributes of small, specialist, high-tariff and located in London, more relevant comparators have been considered. This considers findings from a number of studies, which have raised concerns that the POLAR measure is not appropriate for London due to demographic changes and the heterogeneity of most areas[1]. When compared to a range of similar providers (who have also been delivering on previous Access Agreements pre-2019-20), the College's performance shows a lower level of deviation from the average.

HE provider	2017-18 % POLAR4 Quintile 1
Regent's University London	1.2
Greenwich School of Management (GSM) London	2.4
Royal Academy of Music	3.1
SOAS University of London	3.2
New College of the Humanities	3.2
City, University of London	3.4
Brunel University London	3.7
Kings College London	3.8
University College London	3.9
St George's, University of London	4.4
London School of Economics & Political Science	4.7
Royal Northern College of Music	4.8
Guildhall School of Music and Drama	4.9
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance	5.6
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama	6.5
Royal College of Music	6.5
University of the Arts, London	6.6

[2] While this goes some way to situating the College's performance in context, the College recognises it needs to improve its performance, and is committed to doing so; particularly in terms of contributing to the national Key Performance Measure (KPM) of reducing the gap in participation between students from the most and least represented groups at high-tariff providers.

Therefore, and considering the impact of small cohort sizes, performance gaps have been explored for aggregate groupings of POLAR4 Q1+2 against Q5. This is an area that the College is addressing within this Plan.

1.1.2 ACCESS - IMD

The OfS dataset includes IMD data for 2015-16 to 2017-18, and this (while it relates to small cohorts) has been applied to explore performance for this target group. The College has generally recruited higher proportions of students from IMD Quintiles 3-5. Participation of IMD Q1 is relatively low (4.7%), when compared to the sector average at 21.6%.

IMD Quintile	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Quintile 1	N/A	N/A	14.3	6.3	4.7
Quintile 2	N/A	N/A	21.4	21.9	20.9
Quintile 3	N/A	N/A	14.3	28.1	27.9
Quintile 4	N/A	N/A	39.3	12.5	18.6
Quintile 5	N/A	N/A	10.7	31.3	27.9
Quintiles 1&2	N/A	N/A	35.7	28.1	25.6
Quintiles 3,4&5	N/A	N/A	64.3	71.9	74.4

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[1] E.g. Atherton and Mazhari 2019a; Atherton and Mazhari 2019b; Harrison and McCaig 2015)
[2] Source: https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/ukpis/experimental/table-t1

While the impact of small cohorts makes analysis difficult, the gap in participation between IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 seems to have stabilised between 2016-17 and 2017-18, at 25% and 23.2%, respectively. When IMD Q2 students are included, the gap significantly reduces in these years, to only 3.2% and 2.3%, respectively.
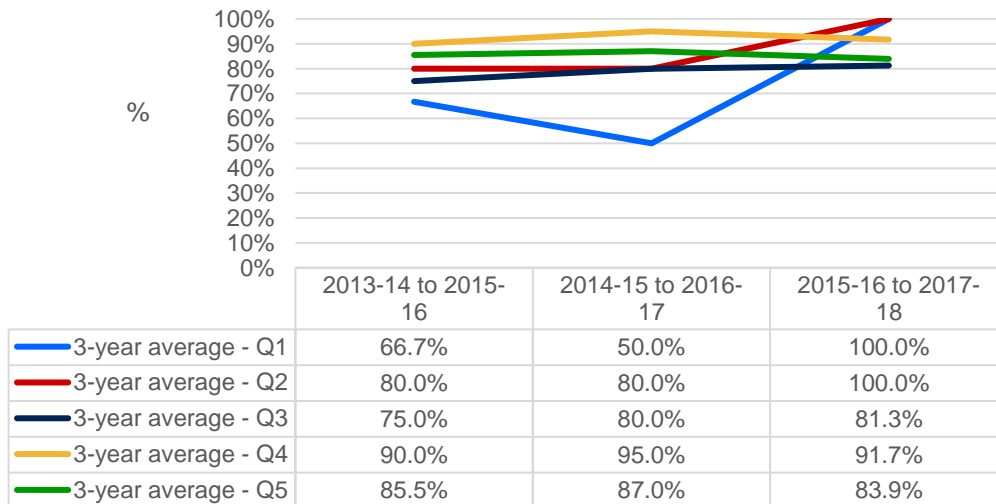
Gap trend: IMD Q1 - Q5 and Q1&2 - Q5

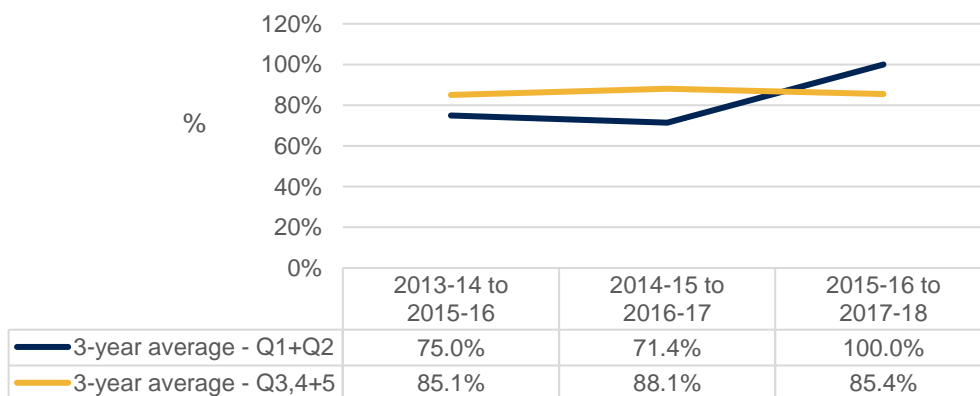|	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Gap Q1 - Q5	-3.6	25	23.2
Gap Q1&2 - Q5	-25	3.2	2.3
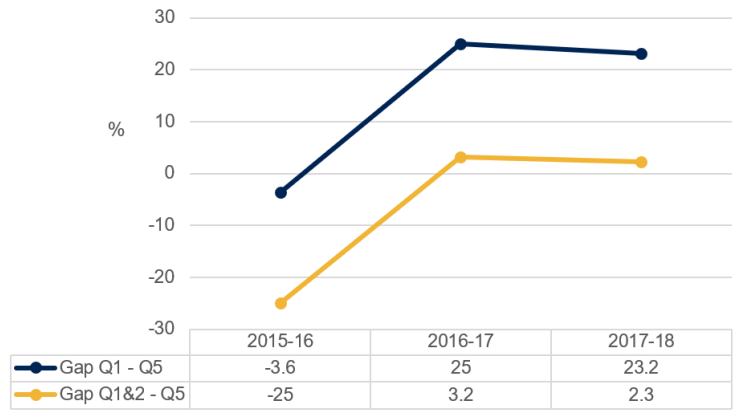
1.1.3 CONTINUATION – POLAR4

It is particularly difficult to make assessment here due to the size of cohort, and data available. Even when analysed using a 3-year rolling average with aggregate groups of Q1+Q2 and Q3,4+5, the percentage data is still susceptible to small base cohorts. Given additional internal data and considering the effect of small cohort sizes, the College considers it performs well in continuation for POLAR4 Quintile 1 students, with a general trend that shows 100% completion for both Q1 and Q2 learners over the 2015-16 to 2017-18 3-year average, which outperforms the averages for Q3,4+5. This is in comparison to the sector, which observes a 4-5% gap (2012-13 to 2016-17) between students from POLAR4 Q5 and Q1 areas. However, it is worth noting that the size of the Q1 and Q2 cohorts is much smaller than the Q3, Q4 and Q5 cohorts.

% Continuation by POLAR4 Quintile 3yr average

	2013-14 to 2015-16	2014-15 to 2016-17	2015-16 to 2017-18
3-year average - Q1	66.7%	50.0%	100.0%
3-year average - Q2	80.0%	80.0%	100.0%
3-year average - Q3	75.0%	80.0%	81.3%
3-year average - Q4	90.0%	95.0%	91.7%
3-year average - Q5	85.5%	87.0%	83.9%

% Continuation POLAR4 Aggregated (Q1+2; Q3,4+5) 3yr Av.

	2013-14 to 2015-16	2014-15 to 2016-17	2015-16 to 2017-18
3-year average - Q1+Q2	75.0%	71.4%	100.0%
3-year average - Q3,4+5	85.1%	88.1%	85.4%

1.1.4 ATTAINMENT – POLAR4 and IMD

Data is based on classification at Exit Award, where 'attainment' means achievement of a First or 2:1 degree outcome. Again, due to small datasets for both POLAR4 and IMD, rigorous analysis to determine trends and performance is difficult.

In relation to POLAR4, the College's internal Exit Award data, which details students' degree classification, has been considered for those who first registered in 2013-14 and 2014-15. In 2015-16, a high number of students were still studying ("Active") and therefore this data has not been included in this Plan. While average performance is provided for 2013-14 and 2014-15 starters, percentage data remains subject to the challenges of a small cohort size, <5 students and is not reportable here. Given this point and considering additional internal data regarding individual student progress, it is determined that there are no statistically significant gaps between attainment outcomes for POLAR4 Q1 (50%) and Q5 (59.9%) learners. The sector average gap, which has remained steady around 10% over the last 5 years, also provides broader context.

For IMD data, the OfS dataset, while dealing with small cohorts (n=<5) and only across 2015-16 to 2017-18, reveals no gaps in attainment for IMD Quintile 1 students in comparison to Quintile 5, and in fact shows the Quintile 1 learners out-perform.

Although percentage gaps for attainment for these target groups are not present, or not considered material, the College will closely monitor these areas and emerging data over the life of this Plan. Should further datasets indicate a material gap, the College will consider setting targets in future years and seek to agree this with the OfS in any amendment to this Plan.

1.1.5 PROGRESSION – POLAR4 and IMD

The OfS dataset has been used to explore progression outcomes, that is, the proportion of graduates progressing to further study or highly skilled employment. Again, analysis is in the context of small cohorts (n=<5) and available only for 2015-16 and 2016-17. Although specific data cannot be reported here, the available data show that POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 students, and IMD Quintile 1 and 2 students, consistently out-perform other POLAR4 and IMD Quintiles in progression. The College will monitor outcomes as it diversifies its intake.

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students

1.2.1 ACCESS

The College performs very well in attracting BAME students, particularly at 18 year-old population, and is performing well above the sector average (27.4%) in 2016-17 and 2017-18. This is also broadly true for disaggregated ethnicity groups.

BAME 18-yr-old population	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17	2017-18
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%	%
White_Age18							71.4	64.3
Black_Age18							0	7.1
Asian_Age18			*No data*				14.3	7.1
Mixed_Age18							14.3	14.3
Other_Age18							0	7.1
All BAME_Age18							**28.6**	**35.6**

HE Provider	2017-18 % BAME students	2017-18 % White students
Ravensbourne	40	60
University of the Law	35.4	64.6
New College of the Humanities	35.6	64.3
Leeds Trinity	21	79
London Bridge Business Academy	20	80
Rose Bruford	13	87
Arts University Bournemouth	11.9	88.1
Bath Spa	10.6	89.4
Falmouth University	10.1	89.9
Writtle College	7	93
Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts	6	94
Plymouth College of the Arts	6	94
Bishop Grosseteste	1	99

Compared to a sample of similar providers from the GuildHE membership, the College out-performs the average of the group and is significantly better than most.

1.2.2 CONTINUATION

The BAME continuation rate is consistently and broadly in line with white continuation levels. These are comparable to wider sector performance. 3-year averages for BAME and white continuation are only 0.2% different, with BAME continuation slightly ahead at 87.5%, against 87.3% for white continuation.

% Continuation UK BAME and White students

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
■ % BAME Continuation	100.0%	83.3%	87.5%
■ % White Continuation	84.2%	100.0%	82.4%
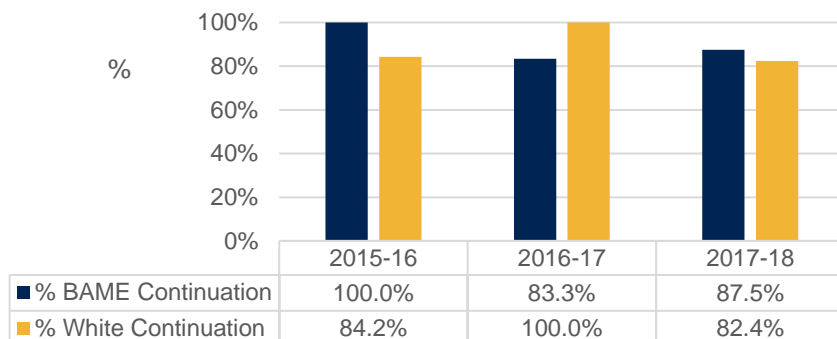
Non-continuation data for disaggregated ethnicity is too small to make any further assessment; however, even small datasets do not illustrate any particular issues.

1.2.3 ATTAINMENT

Data is based on classification at Exit Award, with 'attainment' means achievement of a First or 2:1 degree outcome. Data for BAME attainment is too small to make any meaningful assessment. However, internal records currently show no concerns, with all BAME graduates with available data achieving First outcomes. The College will continue to monitor and build a data picture across the life of this plan.

### 1.2.4 PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT

Data is not available for BAME progression. The College will explore and develop capacity in this area in 2019-20. Should gaps appear as the emerging data is analysed, the College will seek to agree appropriate targets.

1.3 Mature students

1.3.1 ACCESS

The College performs well in terms of intake of mature learners, and the data suggests a positive trend in access. By 2017-18, the College's performance is comparable to the sector average for the same year, at 27.9% and 27.8%, respectively.
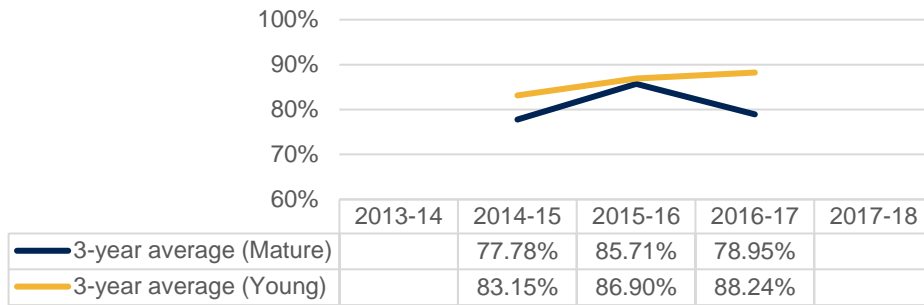
% of Young and Mature learners

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Young (<21)	90	87.9	72.1
Mature (21 and over)	10	12.1	27.9
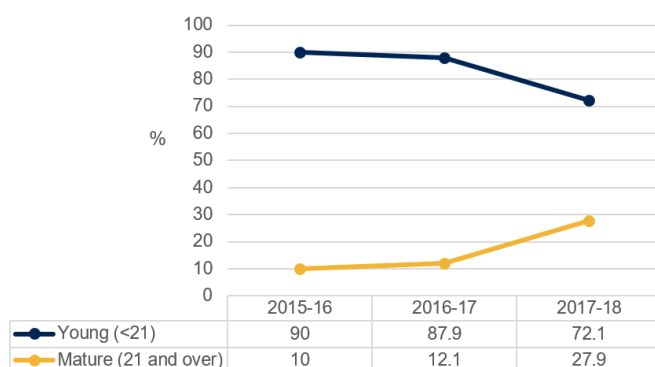
1.3.2 CONTINUATION

Datasets for continuation for the mature target group are too small to report over the annual timeframe. 3-year average figures illustrate that continuation for mature learners stays slightly below young continuation. This is comparable to average sector performance where there is a consistent gap. However small cohort sizes make it difficult to rigorously assess performance.

Mature and Young continuation (3-yr average)

|	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
3-year average (Mature)		77.78%	85.71%	78.95%	
3-year average (Young)		83.15%	86.90%	88.24%	

Although the percentage gap is not considered material, the College will closely monitor this area and relevant emerging data over the life of this Plan. Should further datasets indicate a material gap, the College will consider setting a target in future years and seek to agree this with the OfS in any amendment to this Plan.

1.3.3 ATTAINMENT

Data is based on classification at Exit Award, with 'attainment' means achievement of a First or 2:1 degree outcome. Attainment outcomes for mature students are consistently above young attainment rates (there were no mature students in 2014-15). There is a positive gap for mature learners, demonstrating excellent performance in contrast to the consistent average sector gap of 9-9.9% between 2013-14 and 2017-18 for mature attainment. Over a 3-year average, mature learners slightly out-perform young attainment levels, by 3.75% (66.7% and 62.9%, respectively).

Percentage Mature v. Young attainment

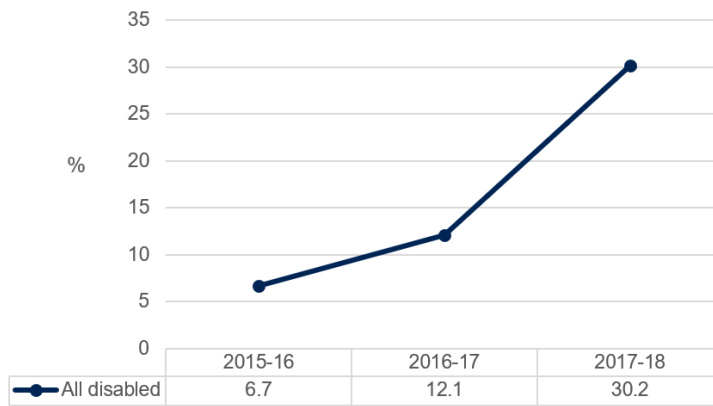|	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
% Mature attainment	66.7%	0.0%	66.7%
% Young attainment	60.6%	63.3%	65.4%
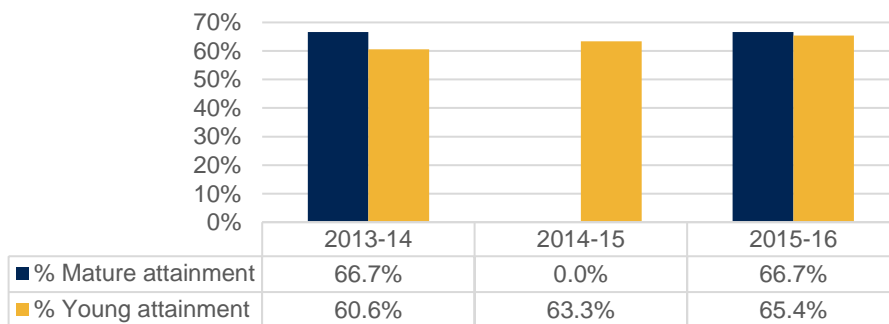
1.3.4 PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT

Again, the OfS dataset has been used to explore progression outcomes, although these are small cohorts and available only for 2015-16 and 2016-17. Although specific data cannot be reported here, the available data show a gap in progression outcomes between mature and young cohorts, where mature learners generally seem to progress into graduate study or highly skilled employment outcomes at lesser rates than their young counterparts. However, given the very limited data it is difficult to assess whether this is a trend or due to percentage volatility. Therefore, the College will monitor this from 2019-20 and set future targets if appropriate.

1.4 Students with disabilities

1.4.1 ACCESS

While cohorts are small, and proportions are subject to volatility, the data suggests a strong continuous positive trend in participation of disabled students, increasing from 6.7% to 30.2% between 2015-16 and 2017-18. By 2016-17, and thereafter, the College outperforms the sector average in recruitment of disabled students. This is in common with many other small and specialist providers, which tend to recruit higher proportions of disabled students.

% of students with declared disability

|	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
All disabled	6.7	12.1	30.2

The majority of disabled students at the College have cognitive or learning difficulties, although the College also notes a small proportion of students with mental health conditions.

Disability type %	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
All disabled	N/A	N/A	6.7	12.1	30.2
No known disability	N/A	N/A	93.3	87.9	69.8
Cognitive & Learning	N/A	N/A	3.3	6.1	25.6
Mental Health	N/A	N/A	3.3	6.1	4.7
Sensory Medical & Physical	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
Multiple Impairments	N/A	N/A	0	0	0
Social & Communication	N/A	N/A	0	0	0

1.4.2 CONTINUATION

The average continuation for disabled students (3-years averages, 2015-16 to 2017-18) is slightly higher (+2.2%) than continuation for non-disabled students, at 89.5% and 87.3%, respectively. This is also very slightly above the sector average of 89.4% (2016-17). While small cohorts make rigorous assessment and trends difficult to determine, the gap in continuation between disabled and non-disabled students is eliminated, turning to a positive gap in 2016-17 and 2017-18 (+4.8% and +12.3%, respectively).

% Continuation Disabled and Non-disabled students

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
% Disabled Continuation	50.0%	100.0%	92.3%
% Non-disabled Continuation	90.0%	95.2%	80.0%
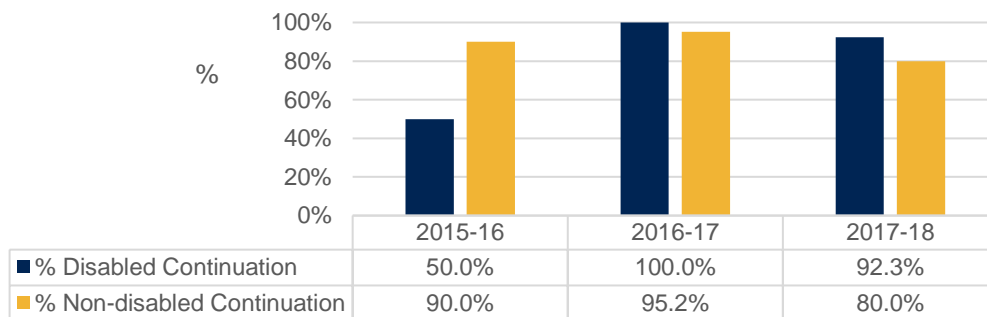
Continuation data for disaggregated disability is too small to make any further assessment. While data is too small to specifically report, in 2017-18, 61.5% of disabled students claimed DSA. The College will ensure that support is provided and accessed as appropriate.

1.4.3 ATTAINMENT

Data is based on classification at Exit Award, with 'attainment' means achievement of a First or 2:1 degree outcome. Data for disabled student attainment is too small to make any meaningful assessment. However, internal records currently show no concerns, with all disabled graduates with available data achieving First outcomes. The College will continue to monitor and build a data picture across the life of this Plan.

1.4.4 PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT

Data is not available for Disabled student progression. The College will explore and develop capacity in this area in 2019-20. Should gaps appear as emerging data is analysed, the College will seek to agree appropriate targets.

1.5 Care leavers

1.5.1 ACCESS

Data for care leavers is too small to make any meaningful assessment. However, internal records currently show an average 2.8% participation rate over a two-years of available data. Nationally, young participation rates are approximately only 6% (2017-18), while this figure doubles by the age of 23. This is low when compared to a young participation rate of 42%. The College will its performance, and work to improve its data capacity, as it is currently difficult to assess any trend or draw conclusions from its limited data. In particular, the College's excellent bursary scheme will provide support for care leaver participation, as one of the main barriers is financial stability, particularly relating to living costs in London. This follows Council measures for care leavers in London, which include exemption from council tax[3].

1.5.2 CONTINUATION AND ATTAINMENT

Data for care leaver student continuation is too small to make any meaningful assessment. However, internal records currently show no current concerns or gaps. Similarly, data for attainment is not currently available. The College will continue to develop its capacity and build a data picture across the life of this Plan. While the notes no current gaps in continuation and attainment, it acknowledges that national data suggests that a higher proportion of care leavers do not complete their course. Therefore, as further data emerges (and potentially targets are set), the College will ensure appropriate support is provided across the lifecycle.

1.5.3 PROGRESSION TO EMPLOYMENT

Data is not available for care leavers student progression. The College will explore and develop capacity in this area in 2019-20. Should gaps appear as emerging data is analysed, the College will seek to agree appropriate targets, again taking a lifecycle approach. Nationally, the College is aware that the disadvantage that care leavers experience often follows them through to later life, affecting their life chances and careers[4]. The support and opportunities the College provides in relation to employability and careers, in partnership with employers, are well-placed to enable care leaver students to develop the skills, experience and confidence they need to gain, stay and progress in work. The College will ensure this is key to the lifecycle approach for this group.

As part of a broader Strategic Measure, the College commits to improve the collection, accuracy and evaluation of care-leaver data for prospective and current students. The College will engage with care leavers and local authorities, as well as ensuring effective, early use of UCAS data in the application process to identify care leavers before they enrol.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

Currently the College's cohort sizes and therefore available data is too small to point to, or conduct any meaningful assessment of, intersections of disadvantage. However, following national priorities and concern[5] the College has reviewed its limited data in relation to participation of white males from POLAR4 Quintile 1 backgrounds. While data cannot be reported here due to small data sets and possible identification of learners, the College generally notes that, in contrast to the years 2015-16 to 2017-18 which revealed no gaps in participation of this group, in 2018-19, emerging data indicates there are no white males from POLAR4 Quintile 1 or 2 backgrounds. It is impossible to interpret trends from the small cohort to which this observation relates, however, the College is committed to monitoring performance for this group over and beyond the life of this Plan.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The College does not currently propose to consider any further groups at this time. Across the life of the Plan, the College will build its understanding and data in relation to other emerging target groups and consider particular barriers and opportunities to address these that may occur in its context.

2 Strategic aims and objectives

The strategic aims and objectives in this plan respond to all gaps in performance that the College has identified in its performance assessment, which are concentrated in the access area. In considering these gaps, one of the four OfS national Key Performance Measures (KPMs) is represented; this is KPM 1 regarding elimination of the gap in participation at higher-tariff providers between the most and least represented groups (Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) quintiles 5 and 1 respectively) by 2038-39.

In setting the level of ambition in the College targets, the College has considered the extent of the gaps in performance, setting higher ambition in areas with the widest gaps; and, the particular context of the College and its challenges and opportunities to achieving milestones, overall targets and ambition. Although the College recognises its performance gaps are concentrated in the access area and has set targets accordingly this year, it

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[3] https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/news-and-blogs/our-blog/is-london-caring-for-care-leavers
[4] Learning and Work Institute (2017) Building Successful Careers: Employer guide to supporting care leavers in the workplace.

is committed to monitoring performance and enhancing data capture and capability over the long term and, should other gaps emerge over the life of this Plan, there is commitment to considering setting and agreeing further targets with the OfS.

2.1 Target groups

The following table provides key target groups across the lifecycle, based on the assessment of performance.

Target group	Access	Success (continuation)	Success (attainment)	Progression
POLAR4 Q1 & Q2	X			
IMD Q1	X			

2.2 Aims and objectives

The College is committed to promoting and ensuring equality of opportunity for all prospective learners to participate and succeed at the College, regardless of background. Broadly, the College aims to ensure it supports and facilitates access and success for all learners who meet admissions criteria and wish to study at the College, and to do so in ways that promote equality and overcome potential barriers caused by disadvantage.

2.2.1 Access Targets

Following the College becoming part of Northeastern University's[6] (Northeastern) global network (2019), it is anticipating and preparing for growth and development. This, along with the limited data relating to access and participation, makes it particularly difficult to determine targets over the longer term, as the College is in a state of change, with already limited baselines or trend data. Therefore in the short term, the College is using proportional increase targets for its identified gap areas. While gap targets are not formally being set, the College will remain vigilant of, and will continue to monitor, the gaps between target groups (being POLAR4 Quintiles 1&2 v. Quintile 5; and, IMD Quintiles 1 v. Quintile 5). This is to ensure that equality of opportunity is maintained and further gaps do not emerge.

Further, the College commits to exploring emerging data, with a view to setting, gap targets from 2023-24 where appropriate. This timeframe will allow a three-year trend to emerge over the life of this Plan (covering 2020-21 to 2022-23), which will allow more robust assessment of performance and trajectories, allowing the College to set, and manage, more appropriate gap targets.

As determined by its performance assessment, the College's targets are:

1. **Aim:** To increase the proportion of undergraduate students who are from lowest participation neighbourhoods. **Objective**: increase the percentage of POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 (aggregate) students by 10.8% (from baseline of 8.3%; the 2-year average of 2016-17 to 2017-18), to reach 20% by 2024-25.

Baseline average 2016-17 to 2017-18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
8.3%	10%	12%	14.5%	17%	20%

Longer-term, the College's objective is to eliminate the gap between POLAR4 Q1&2 (aggregate) and Q5 by 2038-39, reflecting the OfS KPM. However, to set such a target performance needs be monitored, and progress better understood as we see the 3-year average trends emerge over the life of this Plan.

2. **Aim:** To double the proportion of undergraduate students who are from the most deprived backgrounds. **Objective**: double the percentage of IMD Quintile 1 students (from baseline of 5.5%; the 2-year average of 2016-17 to 2017-18), to 11% by 2024-25.

Baseline average 2016-17 to 2017-18	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
5.5%	6%	6.7%	7.6%	9%	11%

Longer term, the College's objective is to ensure further improvement in relation to access for students from the most deprived backgrounds (IMD Quintiles 1 and 2), eliminating the gap between IMD Q1&2 (aggregate) and Q5 by 2038-39. Further targets may be established as performance is monitored, and progress better understood as we see the 3-year average trends emerge over the life of this Plan.

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[6] https://www.northeastern.edu/

2.2.2 Success and Progression Targets

The College notes no material gaps in performance in the areas of continuation, attainment or progression and therefore does not propose to set targets in these areas at this time. Data will be monitored through the life of this Plan. Should gaps emerge, the College will seek to set additional targets in agreement with the OfS.

3 Strategic measures

In 2019, the College became part of Northeastern University's[7] (Northeastern) global network. Northeastern is a highly ranked US teaching and research institution based in Boston, with campuses in Charlotte, Seattle, Silicon Valley, Toronto and Vancouver. Becoming part of the Northeastern network opens up enormous opportunities for the College's students and graduates, including the possibility of studying in the US. Furthermore, the College benefits from the educational expertise of Northeastern, widely viewed as a global leader in experiential learning.

At the College, integrated employability outcomes are coupled with highly personalised teaching and a one-to-one tutorial system. These attributes help to ensure that all students are supported and stimulated through their learning experience. Teaching through small seminars gives students unique opportunities to explore the curriculum in-depth, at a level of engagement with other students, tutors and lecturers that is second to none. The College's major/minor degree combinations offer students a choice of combined honours degree programmes. This is complemented by the College's enriching Diploma[8], which equips students with an understanding of the core concepts and theories that underpin the study of the humanities; and the College's LAUNCH programme, which aims to ensure that every student achieves their full potential and leaves equipped to enter the workforce. These 'value added' components provide excellent opportunities for students, and particularly for those students who are less likely to have ready access to such professional and employer networks and experiences. For example, underrepresented students from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2, and lower socio-economic backgrounds.

The College, in partnership with Northeastern, has an ambitious plan for growth over the next decade including expansion of the curriculum. New provision and increased capacity will specifically seek to attract a more diverse market. It is therefore an exciting time of change and development for the College, with significant opportunities to integrate, and set a trajectory of continuous improvement in, access and participation outcomes.

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

The College is committed to improving access and maintaining excellent standards in success and progression outcomes for an increasingly diverse student body. The College's mission and related strategies demonstrate a commitment to increasing diversity of its student (and staff) base, as a valued component of educational excellence and more broadly as a commitment to social mobility. The College's work will focus on increasing access for students from the most underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds (POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2; IMD Quintile 1). Engagement with these target groups is proposed to be through continued development of school, community and other key stakeholder relationships and partnerships.

The College will also maintain a focus on success, attainment and progression outcomes, ensuring that excellent outcomes continue and gaps between target cohorts do not emerge. Maintaining an outstanding personalised learning experience is a central part of the College's mission. "Outstanding" includes the "placement of academic study into a framework of additional skills that forge outward-looking connections from students' specialist knowledge to the wider world"[9]. Support and guidance in study methods, research, writing and presentation skills, together with support for student well-being and welfare, also underpin the pedagogical approach. In order to achieve these goals, the College is committed to institutional development and capacity building that will continue over the life of this Plan. This builds on commitments in 2019-20, particularly relating to continuous practice improvements in strategy, leadership and governance; data and evaluation capacity; and, systems, people and resource developments. In 2019-20, the College has provided the OfS with long term Evaluation and Outreach Strategies and Action Plans. Reference will be made to these documents throughout this Plan.

3.1.1 Whole Provider Theory of Change

Strategic Theme	Inputs	Change	Impact
Developing Institutional Capability	Effective governance, leadership and resource allocation	Institutional practices & outputs are coherent and aligned to mission; staff supported & developed; active performance monitoring is in place	Increased performance outcomes across Access, Success & Progression. Increased practice standards – effectiveness and efficiency
	Building data and evaluation capability	Increasingly evidence-led and data-driven practices, continuous improvement	

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[7] https://www.northeastern.edu/

[8] The Diploma consists of Applied Ethics, Critical Reasoning, Science Literacy and LAUNCH development programme, which introduces professional skills and behaviours identified by the Confederation of British Industry as valuable to employers across a range of professions.

[9] https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NCH-Teaching-and-Learning-Strategy-2014.pdf

	Building institutional understanding	Staff informed and aware of best practices; are more engaged	
Access measures to diversify the student body	Early, progressive outreach framework and experiential HE activities with target learners	Stimulates confidence, awareness, interest and passion for HE. Students more likely to consider and apply to HE and to the College	Students are equipped to progress to HE. Students successfully apply and enrol
	Intensive, relevant outreach programmes with target learners	Stimulates confidence, awareness and ability; interest and passion in the specific discipline areas	
	Effective Partnerships and Collaborations	Improves activity reach & effectiveness; increases teacher & key influencer engagement	Target groups more likely to apply; enabled by their school's key influencers
	Supporting access, admission and transition-in, including affordability measures	Enables target students to successfully participate in courses, access programmes and be successful in admission	Target students are offered places and confidently enrol in HE
Maintaining performance in teaching & learning, support & development, and the student experience	Personalised teaching & learning; challenging and rewarding curriculum	An inclusive and challenging curriculum and opportunities appeal to more diverse student groups. Inclusive curriculum supports the ongoing success, & participation of all students	High proportions of student continuation, attainment and graduate-level progression, with comparable rates of success in all areas across cohort & target groups
	Integration of curriculum, employment experiences, and employability / career development	Students are more likely to be retained, engage & achieve higher degree & satisfaction outcomes; Students more likely to enter employment	
	Embedded, student-centred support and community of practice	Students are more likely to be retained, engage & achieve higher degree & satisfaction outcomes	

Setting and delivering this framework is a long-term commitment, involving a range of key stakeholders across the College in an embedded, whole-provider approach. Capacity will be built at the centre, creating a core of capacity and developing expertise into which colleagues across the institution (faculty, professional staff and senior management) can seek guidance, contribute and engage[10].

3.1.2 Alignment with other strategies

This Plan is closely aligned with the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy 2018-19[11]. The executive team at the College enables a joined-up approach to the intersection of access and participation EDI agendas. The College's EDI Policy includes, for example, commitments to fair admissions which have due regard to protected characteristics, as well as merit. This reflects contextual admissions commitments in this Plan (Strategic Measure 7). Access targets are also supported by the broader aim in the EDI Policy to, "develop diversity and inclusion as a widely recognised area of competitive strength." Finally, in the whole provider approach the College has aligned its EDI and access and participation commitments in its focus on effectively integrating and mainstreaming these agendas into broader academic and services strategies and practices.

This Plan is also aligned to, and leverages, the College's new Teaching and Learning Strategy (2019-2024), and this has been referenced throughout the strategic measures. Also, of relevance, the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy[12] commits to monitoring the effectiveness of the College's new governance structures and monitoring and enhancing the students' experience while at the College. This links to the Retention Strategy[13], which is clearly aligned to commitments in this Plan in its aims to:
- Have a coordinated and systematic approach pre-enrolment that ensures that students are enrolled onto the most appropriate programme for their aspirations.
- Provide a learning environment that is welcoming and ensures a smooth transition.
- Have appropriate monitoring, support, and intervention mechanisms so that students' attendance, progress and achievement are promoted.

Finally, the College's Student Voice Strategy[14] is aligned to the student collaboration and engagement commitments in this Plan, in particular ensuring student voice is valued, encouraged and captured; student feedback and input is applied to improving College practices; and, a range of students are involved in monitoring, and know how their feedback has driven change.

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[10] Aligned to the Staff Training and Development Strategy, under Dimension 2: "Provision of formal and informal training, and facilitation of independent development (induction and training sessions, opportunities to take on new roles and responsibilities, pastoral care, research leave and budget)". See https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Staff-Training-and-Development-Strategy-July-2016.pdf
[11] https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/1.1-Equality-Diversity-Inclusion-Policy-1.pdf
[12] https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Quality-Assurance-and-Enhancement-Strategy-26.04.17-1.pdf
[13] https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Student-Retention-Strategy.pdf
[14] https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Student-Voice-Strategy-June-2018.pdf

3.1.3 Strategic measures

In view of the performance assessment and context, 10 Strategic Measures have been identified to improve performance and achieve the targets in this Plan. They are aligned to the Theory of Change detailed above.

Strategic Measure 1: **Effective governance, leadership and resource allocation**

Context, targets and outcomes

Effective leadership, coordination and resource allocation is considered essential for continuous practice and performance improvement across the whole lifecycle, in a whole-provider approach[15]. It therefore relates to all targets, aims and objectives. Over the life of this Plan, the College will strengthen its leadership, expertise and practice in access and participation. It will secure systemic and collaborative development across the core and academic teams[16] and will allocate additional resources and grow key capacities to accelerate performance outcomes. It will further integrate student collaboration and partnership working into core streams of activity. The College expects to achieve these outcomes over the first two-three years of this Plan.

Activity and Evaluation Measures
- Strengthening governance and capacity is of key importance. The College has established a Fair Access and Participation Strategy Group (FAPSG), that includes an independent external adviser,[17] to drive, lead and monitor widening participation agenda work across the institution. FAPSG reports directly to Academic Board and Executive Committee. Access and participation is a theme in early and continuing discussions at NCH at Northeastern Limited Board.
- Building on the governance structure and increased data capability (see Strategic Measure 2), the College's FAPSG will provide leadership, advice and guidance related to planning, evaluation and monitoring for outreach and access performance. Central resources, such as evaluation, Theory of Change, planning, reporting and monitoring materials, are being developed and will be available to staff across the College. These capabilities and associated metrics benefit from close attention and manageability, given the size of the College.
- FAPSG and the executive team will use this Plan and its targets to drive the implementation of a whole-student-lifecycle, embedded institutional access and participation agenda.
  - Targets will be used to set KPIs and milestones across the academic and service units.
  - Further alignment of admissions, marketing, recruitment, employer and community engagement activity, with access and outreach objectives, is in progress from 2019-20.
  - Evaluation of the success and progression areas will monitored in 2019-20, and initiatives will be implemented accordingly over the life of this Plan.
- A full time Widening Participation Officer has been appointed (July 2019).
- Improvements in engagement and development of key stakeholders across the institution will be realised, through strengthened communications, an embedded leadership model and ongoing staff development opportunities. This includes an annual series of workshops, providing introductions to access and participation (including data and targets), and particularly outreach practice, rationale and good practice.

Evaluation measures include:
- Clear progression of the fair access and participation agenda, including evidence of consideration and integration of access and participation KPIs in existing strategy and planning.
- Annual milestones and 5-year targets met.
- Staff engagement in development.
- Staff feedback and consultation.

Strategic Measure 2: **Building data and evaluation capability**

Context, targets and outcomes

The College recognises its current data limitations, and the need to grow monitoring and evaluation capacity[18] across the lifecycle, relating to all aims, objectives and targets. Developments will enable the College to explore and monitor gaps in all underrepresented groups and intersections of groups while remaining cognisant of the challenges and impact of small cohorts. While in the immediate phases small cohort numbers mean that the College will not have access to statistically significant data, it will be able to begin to identify some correlations and suggested trends and will draw on nationally available datasets the analyses of other providers. By December 2019, it is envisaged that key data gaps will be identified and processes for building capacity will be put in place. Longer-term, the College's overarching outcomes will be:

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[15] https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf
[16] "Action by core and academic teams" is one of the four areas in the approach used by "What Works?2" Model of Working https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf
[17] The appointment of the independent adviser was one of the College's specific conditions under the 2019-20 APP. The appointment was made in collaboration with the OfS and the College has welcomed the expertise that that the independent external adviser has provided and continues to provide to the College.
[18] "Use of data, evaluation and feedback" is one of the four areas the approach used by "What Works?2" Model of Working https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf

- Improved understanding of the student body and performance /gaps for underrepresented groups.
- More effective and nuanced targeting of activity.
- Improved understanding of performance in context.

Approaches to evaluation are also being strengthened, both at activity level and strategic measure level, underpinned by a new Evaluation Framework[19]. See further details in the Evaluation Strategy section, below.

<u>Activity and Evaluation Measures</u>
- Progress in data capture, collation and analysis has already been made, with investment in Quercus and a CRM system to support enhanced data capability over the long-term. These systems will be further developed to ensure continuous practice improvement and increasingly data-driven, evidence-based activity and monitoring. They will also support effective outreach and evaluation practices.
- The College will collect qualitative data about the impact of the activity through student interviews and focus groups, as well as collecting structured reflections from faculty. Topic guides and data collection templates will be stored in the central system.
- The College is currently building data and evaluation capacity in-house and through the support of external advisors. Ongoing development of outreach approaches and activities provides an opportunity to consider and build evaluation into practice from the outset. For example, from 2019-20, the College is implementing a new Outreach Strategy and Action Plan[20], with evaluation fully embedded in its activities.
- FAPSG and WPO has set an expectation to see robust data-driven and evaluation approaches built into proposals and plans for access and participation activities. An internal community of practice is envisaged that will be facilitated through the central leadership, to ensure good practices are shared.
- As data capacity builds, further work into a range of key data measures will deepen understanding of:
  o Target student experiences, barriers, and effective support and development measures to improve outcomes.
  o Targeting outreach activity, including at individual learner and whole school/ community level, and for planning and further developing activity.
  o Effective and required practices internally (success and progression measures); and, externally with partner schools and other third parties (access measures).

Evaluation measures include:
- Evidence of building data sets, available to and utilised by key stakeholders across the College.
- Stakeholders can increasingly make decisions on the basis of consistent, detailed and up-to-date data.
- Staff feedback and participation in the continuous development of data across collection, collation, analysis and interpretation/ implementation.

Strategic Measure 3: **Building institutional understanding**

<u>Context, targets and outcomes</u>
This measure is considered as part of a cross-College 'change programme[21]' for access and participation, in recognition of the need to establish systemic understanding and cultural change. This work relates to all aims, objectives and targets. Outcomes anticipated include:
- Raising the College's understanding of the access and participation agenda.
- Understanding the College's performance gaps.
- Increased awareness of what is required at the College based on current performance, Theory of Change and good practice/ research.
- Improved understanding of the College's market in relation to increasing access for target groups.
- Engaging staff across the College to in specific programmes and in an integrated practice approach.

<u>Activity and Evaluation Measures</u>
- The College has already made progress in this area through the establishment of the FAPSG, engagement of an independent external advisor and sector experts to help build immediate capacity and understanding at the centre. This is being disseminated through a range of briefings, papers and presentations to, and engagement with, faculty and professional staff. This activity is a whole university approach including the Board, faculty staff, professional staff and the student body. The College has also made significant progress through its integrated approach.
  o For example, access measures have been specifically explored and considered in alignment with the developing marketing and recruitment strategy and plans, resulting in changes to targeting for a number of existing activities, such as the Essay Competition which this year has received 266 applications from POLAR4 Quintile 1 students; an uplift of 98.5% on 2017-18, which had only four POLAR4 Q1 applications.

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[19] Access and Participation Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan, New College of the Humanities, 2019-20
[20] Access and Participation Outreach Strategy and Action Plan, New College of the Humanities, 2019-20
[21] "Extended change programme" is one of the four areas in the approach used by "What Works?2" Model of Working
https://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Summary-report-final-no-crop-1.pdf

- o Similarly, Academic Board has received and approved the new Contextual Admissions Policy, designed to reduce the barriers to entry specifically for students from target backgrounds, recognising those from the most deprived and underrepresented areas are more likely to have experienced prior educational disadvantage, which may be reflected in their grades.
  - o In addition, the creation of the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan and the associated detailed Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan, and Outreach Strategy and Action Plan, has significantly built the College's understanding of best practice, Theory of Change and effective outreach and evaluation measures. This increased knowledge has underpinned the College's approach going forward, with a repository of materials, practice and knowledge accumulating at the centre for dissemination and access by cross-College stakeholders.
- The College will continue to build this expertise and provide internal briefings, presentations and committee updates on how the access and participation agenda applies in context, covering institutional considerations such as strategic alignment, whole institution approach, practical examples of good practice, and how stakeholders can engage and contribute.
- The mechanisms to ensure continuous practice improvements will be in place in 2019-20. This includes gathering, receiving and developing understanding from others in the sector, including the OfS and TASO-HE; and applying this understanding and evidence to the College's activity, in context.
- Staff development will also be rolled out, and in 2019-20 this will include a series of workshops, introducing access and participation, and Outreach strategy, rationale, contextual relevance and good practice. A minimum of three workshops or training sessions will be delivered. Thereafter, ongoing annual training and workshops will ensure that staff are kept up to date. Information and training regarding access and participation will be included in induction for any new staff (professional and academic).
- The College commits to undertaking at least two pieces of research or market insight study in the first two years of this Plan, which, given the performance gaps in the access area, may include key school stakeholders. Results of the market research or market insight will be reviewed, analysed and applied to develop more effective practice.
- Also, in the first two years of this Plan, it is the College's ambition to contribute at minimum one piece of evaluation/ insight or research to the TASO-HE (or other network) in respect effective access and participation activity relating to small, new providers.

Evaluation measures include:
- Evidence of a building understanding and awareness among staff across the College, evidenced for example by effective strategy and planning including access and participation considerations; staff contribution and engagement with discussions about access and participation measures.
- The College and its staff can increasingly make informed and more effective decisions and practice improvements on the basis of deeper understanding and knowledge.
- Staff feedback and participation in training and development.

Strategic Measure 4: **Early, progressive outreach framework & experiential HE activities with target learners**

Context, targets and outcomes
The College is committed to exploring ways to attract students from a wider range of backgrounds and schools; particularly students from target POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 areas and IMD Quintile 1 students. Attention to the OfS national Key Performance Measure (KPM) 1 is also represented in this measure, which seeks to eliminate the gap in participation at higher-tariff providers between the most and lower represented groups (Participation of Local Areas (POLAR4) Quintiles 5 and 1 & 2 respectively) by 2038-39.

Outreach activity is integrated with the College's marketing and recruitment business plans, which are review annually. The College will build on effective existing work, strengthening practice and developing new activity in response to targeted performance gaps; an increased understanding of good practice and what works in its context; and through its developing collaborations with schools, colleges and other partners (see Strategic Measure 6). Evidence from the data, good practice, and emerging priorities will further direct practice.

In 2019-20, foundations for effective practice in relation to the College's outreach activity are being built, with a clear focus on the identified gaps in participation and with a view to setting a trajectory for continuous improvement over the longer term. The College will use sector examples, research and evidence, in context.

Activity and Evaluation Measures
- **Strengthening and increasing existing activity:** A significant number of outreach events have been undertaken by the College to promote access and raise awareness of the advantages of study at HE level to underrepresented groups. These activities match evidenced good practice approaches and are in line with other higher education providers. These programmes provide a foundation and will expand as the College's outreach activity develops. In the short term it is intended to offer these activities to an increased number of schools with student cohorts from underrepresented target groups.
  - o Activities include information provision and targeted communications, external visits and talks; visits to and experiences at the College; collaborative "university experience" and awareness raising events; and, school competitions. For example:

- The College's current outreach activity includes welcoming schools, students and school staff into the College to hear about university courses, life and learning or to participate in workshops on a given subject. For example, the London School of Excellence (a school with a higher than average cohort of minority ethnic backgrounds and POLAR3 Quintile 1-2 students) and students via IntoUniversity have attended subject taster talks by the College's visiting professors and faculty on a wide range of topics, from competition law to philosophy. In addition, students have had presentations on more general topics such as 'what it is like to study at university' and 'how to apply'.
- In 2019, UCAS Pre Applicant Data (PAD) emails specifically targeted to students in POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 proved successful in driving click through and conversion activity. As a result, the College will focus its UCAS PAD activity on students in Quintiles 1 & 2 for 2020 entry. In addition, POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 applicants and prospects have been sent emails reminding them of the College's bursary offers.
- In 2017 the College jointly hosted with University College London, University Celebration Day in collaboration with the Transformation Trust. The College will continue such types of engagement and in 2019 will be exhibiting at the Rock Assembly - an annual Futures Fair which attracts 10,000 students from schools nationwide to maximise outreach.

- **Implementing the College's new Outreach Strategy and progressive framework of activity:** In 2019-20 and over the life of this Plan, the College will deliver a new progressively intense framework of outreach activity to increase participation from targeted groups. This includes earlier provision (Y7 upwards); increased outreach activity in target areas and with target groups; and activity with collaborators (e.g. schools, colleges, third sector organisations – see Strategic Measure 5). The College has considered a range of evidence-based practice in order to formulate its strategy and framework.
  - **Key objectives are:**
    - Enhancing communications and provision of information
      - The College needs to ensure communications are effective for all target groups.
      - Outreach information in all formats will be reviewed on an annual basis and where practicable will be developed continually throughout the recruitment cycle. This update will be informed by schools, colleges and other key stakeholders, including feedback and development from students as part of the broader student consultation agenda (see section on Student Collaboration).
    - Increasing the range of activities offered in outreach, developing more, appropriate, activities for working with target underrepresented groups.
      - This includes the development of an enhanced, evidence-based activity service 'menu' and design / implement related activity programmes & resources, based on the Progressive Outreach Framework (below).
      - Regular outreach activity will take place with schools identified as partners (see Strategic Measure 5). Activity development is continuous, informed by partner school and college input and the results from evaluation practices.

  - The College's new outreach model sets out the strategic framework and Theory of Change for the College's outreach work. It reflects practice that will commence in 2019-20 and continue over the life of this Plan. It details the evidence base for activity, aligned to more detailed aims and outcomes the College intends to influence over the shorter and longer term. Details of the evaluation measures are also provided.[22] The full model is provided at Annex 1. In summary:
    - The first series of Inputs deal with activity themes, of the "5 As" of raising and supporting Aspiration, Awareness, Access, Affordability and Achievement[23] to higher education. The latter part of the table details Inputs by activity types to evidence the importance of methods such as on-campus experiences and use of student ambassadors.
    - Activity (inputs) are:
      - Delivery of "Introduction to HE" and "HE Life and Learning" aspiration, awareness and confidence raising sessions with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Y7-11.
      - Delivery of "HE Access and Pathways" sessions with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Y9-13.
      - Delivery of "Affordability" sessions, exploring the cost of study and financial support available, with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Years 10-13.
      - Delivery of sessions to support achievement and study skills with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Y10-13.
      - Delivery of a range of on-campus experiences and HE 'life and learning' tasters
      - Provision of a range of opportunities for target learners to engage with current HE students (ambassadors / HE 'Buddies' / Student or Staff Mentors).

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[22] OfS (2019), Regulatory Advice 6 (setting a Theory of Change or logic model)
[23] Adapted from Anderson and Vervoon (1983); used in the [Uni]FIT resource (Applied Inspiration, 2014-2019)

- **Focus on targeting:** In order to ensure that investment is directed in accordance with the performance gaps and target cohorts in the Plan, the College will maintain a critical eye on targeting, with reviews over the life of this Plan. At minimum, monitoring of targets will be conducted annually. This includes local schools and communities as well as national targeting for existing activity and the new outreach framework. The College will also broaden its targeting to identify key community and school stakeholders for collaboration and partnerships that support the targets in this Plan. See Strategic Measure 5.

Evaluation measures
- From 2019-20, the College is implementing its new Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan which specifically strengthens evaluation in respect of outreach measures, and includes student surveys and feedback across the themes of the Kirkpatrick Model, and formal evaluation measures (surveys and focus groups) for teachers and student ambassador feedback. See the Evaluation Strategy section for further details.

Strategic Measure 5: **Intensive, relevant outreach programmes with target learners**

Context, targets and outcomes
The College is committed to delivering broad messages and opportunities in respect of general higher education outcomes, for target groups. However, as a specialist provider of the Humanities, the College will align broad messages with specific focus on its offer and experience. This will provide the best chance of progress towards access milestones and targets set in this Plan, stimulating interest and support pathways particularly for POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 and IMD Quintile 1 learners. The College has built a Theory of Change Model to underpin practice, which is detailed at Annex 2. In summary:

Input	Outcomes	Impact
Provision of intensive support to target learners – incl. Study Support, Skills Workshops, Residential opportunities, Study Days *"Masterclasses, Open Days, Taster Days raise awareness and achievement, giving students an insight into academic and vocational subjects but also key skills necessary to succeed in HE. Delivered by academics and experts, they can stimulate interest and open learners to the possibility of engaging with hitherto unconsidered pathways of study as well as their current subject areas (Action on Access, 2006e). On campus, intensive activities help overcome the fear of the unknown, giving learners a 'feel' for what university life and learning might be like, introducing them to campus geography and demystifying the HE experience". (Church and Kerrigan, 2011)*	Learner awareness about higher education, including the College offer and opportunities available The above builds learner confidence, awareness and understanding, 'demystifying' higher education generally Learners develop secure understandings of academic and vocational study programmes and outcomes; their entry requirements; and their progression criteria, empowering them to make informed choices about their HE pathway Learners supported and empowered to make informed choice to apply to HE, and specifically to the College	Learners are provided with the necessary tools and qualifications to make successful applications to the College Increased applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1

Relevant outreach practice
The College will leverage its specialisms and excellence in teaching and learning to provide specialist outreach activity, showcasing the value of higher education through the lens of specialist Humanities disciplines. In line with the Progressive Outreach Framework, it will deliver discipline-specific enrichment with teachers and schools, and other relevant stakeholders, aligned to school curriculum and learning outcomes; and, targeted at learners with education and career interests and ambitions related to the College's offer. In relation to students from the most deprived and least represented backgrounds, considerations include vocational relevance and career outcomes; employer experiences and engagement; and prior educational disadvantage, targeting areas for support. The College is developing with Northeastern further capacity linking academic programmes with employment outcomes.

This will build on the outreach and evaluation strategies being implemented in 2019-20, where development will include a series of subject specific and skills-based workshops. These activities will also provide targeted support for relevant subjects in schools, and seek to develop teachers' pedagogy and curriculum practice, knowledge about HE pathways, the College's offer, the value of a degree and related career opportunities. Such activity, with iterative review and development processes (based on evaluation and feedback) are envisaged over this Plan.

Intensive outreach practice
Long-term, sustained engagement with target pupils (DBIS 2014; Younger et al 2018; Crozier et al 2010) is provided in this measure. Activity is underpinned by effective school and college partnerships (see Strategic Measure 5), building understanding of target learner barriers and disadvantage at the partner level (Gorard et al 2006; Banerjee 2018; Thomas 2012). Activity development will be co-designed with school, college and third

parties, and will involve the College's students ambassadors. As a key component, the challenges facing target groups will be explored with key stakeholders, and these data will directly inform practice.

- While projects will be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders over 2019-20 and beyond, practice builds from the 2019-20 activity, and the sector evidence base and includes, for example:
  - Development of targeted residential schools and other multi-day on campus programmes.
  - Extended Ambassadors/ Role Models programme, with potential to extend to mentorship activity.
  - Focused activities for application to HE, student challenges, and employer engagement.
  - Continuation of the Essay Competition, which will be increasingly targeted.
  - Teacher professional development series, including briefings, networking and workshops which include on-campus experiences, and enhancing in- and out-of-classroom teaching and learning.

POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 students and IMD Quintile 1 student target groups will be considered in the placement, delivery and evaluation of activities. In respect of target students the College is informed by the literature, which considers that inclusive teaching and learning practices in the classroom, setting high expectations for all learners are critical for access and success; and, early experiences and integration with HE helps to build a sense of belonging[24]. In respect of learners from the most underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, interventions should start early and involve appropriate mentors in delivering targeted information, advice and guidance. The role of key influencers, such as parents, community and employers are also particularly important, and they should be engaged in delivering and participating in activity.

The College will therefore seek to increase engagement with, and provide experiences for, a range of key influencers, including teachers, parents and carers. The evidence base suggests that the biggest driver of student aspiration and achievement is parental expectation and support. First-generation applicants (more likely to be those from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2), and attendees have to overcome significant cultural and expectation barriers to engage with HE. Effecting a culture change whereby the opportunities and possibilities offered by HE are recognised by families, schools, teachers and universities is critical in creating improved outcomes. The College will leverage its developing relationships with schools to conduct this work, in recognition of good practice evidence, which suggests that programmes need to start early in schools, and involve whole schools rather than individual classroom projects to be fully effective. In development, these programmes should engage with existing curriculum materials, be developed with the school leadership as part as the school's overarching strategic development and work in tandem with school-community partnerships (Gale et Al, 2010). Activity will include:

- College staff and student attendance at school parents' and carers' evenings and open days.
- Parent and carer invitations to College campus to experience College life and learning.
- "Intro to HE and to the College" events either in-school or on College campus.

Over the longer-term, from 2023-24, the College will use learning and experiences from its developing outreach practices to consider the further impact it might make on supporting and raising attainment in schools and colleges. Through better engagement and understanding of our school and college collaborators, the College aims to consider and set an appropriate target relating to raising attainment from 2025-26.

Evaluation measures
- As previously noted, from 2019-20, the College is implementing its new Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan. See the table above and Evaluation Strategy section for further details.

Strategic Measure 6: Effective Partnerships and Collaborations

Context, targets and outcomes
Building on the 2019-20 Plan, the College will seek to deepen, strengthen and create new, relevant partnerships and relationships with target schools, colleges and other organisations. This is a key measure in the College's new Outreach Strategy and Action Plan[25]. These partnerships are critical in establishing early, sustained outreach programmes, necessary for impactful outreach practices with schools and colleges (OfS, 2018; OFFA, 2015; Bowes, 2013, Moore, 2013, Gale, 2010). This measure relates to all the aims and targets in this Plan, given that partners will be targeted for access to and engagement with the most underrepresented and disadvantaged students. The College has set its Theory of Change, provided at Annex 3.

The primary outcome is the building of networks and partnerships with key stakeholders, including schools and colleges, organisations and communities, to advance outcomes in participation at the College from underrepresented groups, including:
- Increasing opportunities for networking and sharing good practice.
- Dissemination of College information and increased visibility to a wider audience (through the networks).
- Provision of activity to groups which are harder to reach.
- Increased access to target learners for engagement through collaborative events.

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[24] Masika, R., & Jones, J. (2016). Building student belonging and engagement: Insights into higher education students' experiences of participating and learning together, *Teaching in Higher Education,* 21(2), 138-150; Mere Berryman & Elizabeth Eley (2019) Student belonging: critical relationships and responsibilities, *International Journal of Inclusive Education.*
[25] Access and Participation Outreach Strategy and Action Plan, New College of the Humanities, 2019-20

There are two key areas of work under this measure:
1. Building partnerships with schools and colleges: Closer partnerships with schools and colleges are desirable to ensure that the College is included in information given to students and outreach messages are consistent, and to allow for longer term and more intensive work with outreach target groups.
2. Collaboration with other stakeholders: Collaboration opens doors to a wider range of outreach work with a broader focus, some of which may not be viable for a small provider on its own.

Activity and Evaluation Measures: Partnerships with schools and colleges
- In 2019-20, the College is targeting approximately 20 schools and colleges for collaboration, using information about the numbers and proportions of students from underrepresented groups (using POLAR4, Pupil Premium, ESL data and other relevant targeting criteria).
- Development of effective partnerships with targeted schools and colleges will be underpinned by process guidance provided by the Department for Education[26], which highlights teaching, curriculum, leadership and targeted activities as key areas for collaboration. The College also has regard for key factors for creating successful and sustainable partnerships highlighted by the 2014 School-University Partnership Report[27]. These are also embedded in the College's approach, which therefore specifically includes:
  - o Linkage and knowledge exchange between school/ college teachers and the College's academic staff, supporting and enhancing the curriculum and teaching.
  - o Provision of curriculum activities, including subject taster, enrichment, lessons and materials.
  - o Supporting school leadership through, for example, College staff becoming school governors, and training and development events.
  - o Development of targeted activity responding to the target groups under this Plan, aligned to school/ college priorities for supporting all learners, from all backgrounds.

- The Gatsby Benchmarks[28] for effective careers and education information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools and colleges will also inform the approach. This provides a natural place of alignment, in particular Gatsby Benchmark 7 dealing with "Encounters with further and higher education"[29], is particularly relevant. The College will explicitly identify alignment with the Gatsby Benchmarks and provide evidence and practice that can inform school and college reporting, e.g. to Ofsted and Governors.
- The resulting communications, partnership process and activity model (offer) will be developed (using the Framework for Outreach) for rollout to target schools, and new activity and partnerships will be explored.
- It is anticipated that, by 2020-21, the College will have two schools/ colleges selected for formal and more intensive partnership and activity; and up to 10 partner schools / colleges by 2024-25.
- Developments will remain integrated with current schools' practice, in the UK recruitment team.
- Outcomes are that messages about higher education and the College become embedded in target schools; and collaboration with target schools, students and staff are improved, and target students experience the College and HE life and learning.

Activity and Evaluation Measures: Partnerships with other stakeholders
Other providers, industry and third sector organisations have a role to play in contributing to the access agenda, through partnerships that maximise use of resources and help to provide equitable opportunities to access higher education (Moore et al, 2013). In 2019-20, a variety of organisations will be considered for potential collaborative activity, particularly those which are a good 'fit' with the College, for example London Higher, NCOP (Linking London), IntoUniversity, the Brilliant Club, and Brightside. The College has already undertaken some collaborative practice, which provides some understanding in this area. For example, it has worked with IntoUniversity, a charity supporting students in achieving their potential by informing, mentoring and tutoring them throughout the student cycle. The latest event was in February 2019, where the College along with SOAS and Birkbeck hosted a primary student council trip for students of age 8-10. The event focused on raising aspiration through workshops and interactions with current university ambassadors.

In the first three years of this Plan, the College will build its collaborative partnership activity so that it is established and features annually in the College's outreach planning. Regular review of partnership activity, including evaluation of events and the developing strategic needs and efficiency considerations of the College, will inform further and ongoing work with a range of partners. As such:
- Collaborative activity will be taking place on a regular basis with one or more organisations.
- Information about and ongoing consideration regarding further potential partners/ collaborative activity is updated to account for organisational change and budget.
- The College participates in a range of collaborative activity (target min. five events per year).
- College outreach and leadership staff attend partner workshops/ meetings to further understanding about access and participation and outreach best practices, and to contribute to the discussions from the College's unique perspective, including provision of feedback into evaluation processes.

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[26] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-school-partnerships/guide-to-setting-up-partnerships
[27] https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/supi_project_report_final.pdf
[28] https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance
[29] Benchmark 7 states: All pupils should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them. This includes both academic and vocational routes and learning in schools, colleges, universities and in the workplace.'

- The College is able to apply learning to its practice, in context.

Considering the College's focus on employability, it will also explore how employer partnerships can be further developed as part of the outreach agenda. It is envisaged that this will provide authentic early experiences of the embedded employability teaching and learning style at the College, which better equips students for study and participation in the co-op and other employer-related programmes.

Evaluation measures include:
- Number of collaborators and the strength of partnerships.
- Engagements and activity accessed and delivered as a result of partnerships.
- Learner, teacher and other stakeholder surveys and feedback.
- Applications and enrolments from target learners who have been involved in collaborative activity.

***Strategic Measure 7:* Supporting access, admission and transition-in**

The fundamental challenges faced by the College in recruitment of student from lower socio-economic backgrounds have been fees and funding. These issues have been addressed over recent years, to the point where with the granting of Approved (fee cap) status, students can obtain loans for the full tuition fee. The full impact of these developments will be felt in 2020 when the availability of full loans will be communicated to prospective students within a timely manner throughout the recruitment cycle. Significant supporting Bursaries, which are combined with effective transition-in strategies and support, also enable and provide confidence to target students and their key influencers (particularly those from IMD Quintile 1 areas, but also POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 learners, who are more likely to be financially disadvantaged), of the affordability of studying. This is a particularly relevant in London where living costs are significantly higher; particularly for students coming from outside London and therefore needing to relocate. Because of the level of Bursary the College offers, for some target learners this could be the decision between being able to enrol, or not.

Context, targets and outcomes
The College recognises the potential challenges that its offer and entry requirements provide for target learners, particularly in terms of the non-vocational nature of the Humanities and relative lack of understanding in schools and colleges about, for example, studying Philosophy or Politics. These challenges are more likely to present for target learners from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 and IMD Q1 learners, given they are most likely to be in areas of educational or economic disadvantage. The College has therefore identified four key practice improvements to support access pathways and transition-in:
1. A developing course and pathways programmes offer.
2. Implementing contextual admissions processes.
3. Ensuring effective transition and building sense of belonging.
4. A range of financial Support to facilitate, and raise confidence for, participation.

The College already interviews all undergraduate applicants, and provides travel fund support to disadvantaged students so they can attend interviews and other offer-holder on-campus events (see Strategic Measure 10, under Financial Support). Over 2019-20, interviewing staff will undergo unconscious bias training. This practice provides a good foundation for the implementation of a formal contextual admissions process, and particularly seeks to reduce potential barriers.

Activity and Evaluation Measures
- **Developing course and pathways programmes offer:** New pathways programmes can open access to a more diverse market. Learners from underrepresented backgrounds are most likely to benefit from approaches that allow progressive pathways and engagement with higher education. This recognises that these target learners are less likely to have the existing social capital[30] for higher education, and are more likely to require further exposure to a range of discipline areas and HE learning experiences to make informed choices[31] and build their confidence and effective learning and study skills[32].

  The College does not currently offer pathway programmes. However, it will audit Northeastern's numerous programmes, some of which are specifically targeted at low participation communities in North America. The aim of this audit is to establish which element or elements of Northeastern's pathway programme could be adapted and implemented into the College's widening participation strategy. This audit will be planned from 2021-22, with the intention that the College will have a pathway programme up and running by 2024-25.

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[30] E.g. Simmons, O. (2011). Lost in Transition: The Implications of Social Capital for HE Access. *The Notre Dame Law Review, 87*(1), 205-252; Fuller, C. (2014). Social Capital and the role of trust in aspirations for higher education. *Educational Review, 66*(2), 131-147.
[31] Diamond, A., Vorley, T., Roberts, J. and Jones; S. (2012) *Behavioural Approaches to Understanding Student Choice* York: HEA; Ball, S., Davies, J., David, M. and Reay D. (2002) 'Classification' and 'Judgement': Social class and the 'cognitive structures' of choice of Higher Education, British Journal of Sociology of Education, 23:1, 51-72.
[32] Krutkowski, S. (2017). A strengths-based approach to widening participation students in higher education. *Reference Services Review*, 45(2), 227-241; French, A. (2013). 'Let the Right Ones In!': Widening Participation, Academic Writing and the Standards Debate in Higher Education. *Power and Education*, 5(3), 236–247.

In addition to specific pathway programmes, the College is in advanced preparation of becoming the examining board for a new GCSE in Philosophy. This initiative will also provide opportunities to promote the College and its programme portfolio to a wider audience including schools and colleges targeted for widening participation outreach activity. More generally, this initiative will enhance the opportunities to all secondary school students and therefore their opportunity and interest in accessing higher education.

- **Implementing contextual admissions processes:** In 2019-20, the College approved a new Contextual Admissions Policy[33]. The objective is to help reduce prior attainment (entry qualifications) as a potential barrier to admission, which is more likely experienced by target learners due to prior disadvantage. This acknowledges that GCSE/ A-level grades are not always an effective predictor of success in higher education, particularly where disadvantage is experienced; and that learners can be better assessed through rounded consideration of their context, achievements and skills, as a measure of potential.

  This reflects sector good practice and evidence that supports the use of contextual data and information[34]. This will also be considered as part of the developing school and college partnership arrangements, for example using contextual admission practice, guarantees and Headteacher recommendation practices to target pupils in partner schools. In 2019-20, the College's Admissions and Recruitment policies will be reframed to ensure timely communication of the new Contextual Admissions Policy. Over the life of this Plan, contextually based offers will be increasingly and routinely made to appropriate applicants. Alternative Level 3 routes will be built into the admissions system.

  The admissions processes are reviewed annually at the end of each academic year. As part of this annual review, an admissions forum is held, where admissions tutors and the admissions and recruitment team members discuss the current process and consider improvements in terms of streamlining, fairness and effectiveness. The group also reflect on students who may be at risk, and the admissions data are able to provide some background context. Learning is applied to ongoing practice. As part of broader feedback, the College's student ambassadors who work on the interview days provide input and feedback regarding admissions processes, which is also considered in practice improvements. The new Contextual Admissions Policy and its implementation is subject to such review over the life of this Plan.

  As part of the extended outreach offer (Strategic Measures 4 and 5), the College will provide support and advice on admissions and the application process, including support for personal statement writing and other skill-building opportunities that better prepare learners for admission and transition-in.

- **Ensuring effective transition and building sense of belonging:** The College acknowledges that low levels of participation from target groups amongst its existing student and staff community is likely to affect a sense of belonging. This has been raised by some members of the student body and Students' Union, who have agreed that partnership working would be a particularly valuable approach[35]. Effective and supported transition, facilitated in partnership between the College and the Students' Union, and incremental changes to the College demographics and culture, will be required over the life of this Plan.

  In 2018, the College's Freshers Week evaluation revealed that 93% of respondents felt that they were offered enough support during the application and admissions process; while 82% felt well-informed about enrolment and only 73% felt that the introduction to College (Freshers events) helped their transition into student life. The College will seek to further improve the transition experience, particularly ensuring target POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 and IMD Quintile 1 students are supported.

  Developing practices therefore will specifically address belonging and transition-in support (Kift, 2014), taking into account the specific barriers more likely to be faced by these groups, such as belonging and identity, alternative entry qualifications, financial hardship, mobility and competing responsibilities / pressures (family and/or employment). These practices are relevant for effective longer-term impact on retention and attainment outcomes[36], as well as promoting access.

  This acknowledges the importance of the transition-in phase of the student lifecycle as a critical juncture for student participation and ongoing success. The College's approach reflects good practice, which advocates early integration into an institution's culture and creating sense of belonging as critical at the

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[33] Contextual admissions enables assessment of an applicant's prior attainment and potential, in the context of their individual circumstances, and is an evidenced method of increasing, and making fair, access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (OfS 2019; HEPI and Brightside 2017; Boliver et al 2017; Gorard et al 2019).
[34] See for example, the Centre for Social Mobility, Exeter University (2018) Research into use of contextual data in admissions.
[35] Consultation and collaboration process with the College's Students' Union and student body, in relation to development of this Plan, 2019.
[36] Mountford-Zimdars, A, Sabri, D, Moore, J, Sanders, J, Jones, S, Higham, L (2015) *Causes of Differences in Student Outcomes*, Higher Education Funding Council for England, HEFCE; Leese, M. (2010) Bridging the gap: Supporting student transitions into higher education. J*ournal of Further and Higher Education,* 29(2), 103-110; Gibney, A., Moore, N., Murphy, F. and O'Sullivan, S. (2011) The first semester of university life; 'will I be able to manage it all?' Crozier, G. and Reay, D. (2008) *The Socio-Cultural and Learning Experiences of Working Class Students in HE: ESRC Full Research Repor*t; Meehan, C., & Howells, K. (2018). In search of the feeling of 'belonging' in higher education: Undergraduate students transition into higher education. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1-15.

access and transition phases for target students[37]. Building on its existing work increasing engagement through the applicant journey, the College will strengthen its transition-in activity, reviewing and mapping the current first-touch-to-transition-in phase of the student journey, with particular concern for barriers faced by target groups. The development of this programme will commence in 2019-20 and be implemented with continuous practice improvement and review over the life of this Plan. Development is expected to include learner and parent/ carer engagement and campus experiences.

- **A range of financial Support**: For 2020-21 the College has committed financial assistance to those target learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. In line with best practice, support is targeted at the learners who need it most[38], and is aligned with considerations for the costs of transition-in and settle-in, attending the College for interviews, etc, and/or learner confidence to participate against a background of disadvantage. Proposed awards[39] for 2020-21 starters are as follows. Any changes to the financial support model for future years covered by this Plan, as a result of further evaluation measures and targeted practice, will be agreed with the OfS in any amendment to the Plan, at least one year prior to changes being implemented.

Award	Description/ eligibility	Value	Type
Bursary	UK/EU full time, students with Household Income assessed by SFE at <£42,000	£2,000 p/a	Student choice: reduction in fees or cash amount. Flexible per annum

From 2018-19, students were given the option to take the bursary as a reduction in fees or a cash amount. This increased flexibility is being evaluated and adapted further, if and when evidence that changes need to be adopted. For target students from IMD Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 students, the option for a cash amount will support necessary commencement and transition-in costs, facilitating participation and also belonging. For students in these target groups who are relocating, this bursary will allow for accommodation deposits and/or associated moving costs, which may otherwise be unaffordable.

Given that the College interviews all prospective undergraduate students as part of its admissions process, and that early, on-campus experiences are critical to building a sense of belonging, the College will also provide a travel assistance fund. This fund is widely advertised and is aimed at any prospective student who cannot meet the costs of travel for interviews and/or other College offer-holder events.

Evaluation measures include:
- Courses and offer attracting target learners (i.e. applications and enrolments from target groups).
- Number of students given an offer, accepting, and enrolling, via the contextual admission process.
- Learner and teacher surveys and feedback on offer, financial support and admissions.
- Freshers' survey responses (in relation to building identity and belonging).
- From 2019-20, and throughout the life of this Plan, the College will evaluate the impact of the financial support package via the OFFA evaluation toolkit[40] (survey and interview tools, as there is insufficient data to apply the statistical assessment), and multiple feedback loops including student surveys, the Students' Union and student representatives focus groups. Via the FAPSG, the College will analyse and apply the findings and feedback from these evaluations to further development of the financial support model.

Strategic Measure 8: **Personalised teaching & learning; challenging and rewarding curriculum**

Context, targets and outcomes
While the data reveals overall good performance and no gaps in performance between target groups in the areas of success and progression, the College will continue to monitor outcomes as its student body grows and will ensure that gaps do not emerge. Strategic Measures 8, 9 and 10 detail activities the College undertakes to ensure its students are retained, achieve excellent degree outcomes, and progress into highly skilled employment and career options. These strategic measures are aligned to the College's broader work in teaching and learning, including rigorous curriculum and the one-to-one tutorial; the wellbeing approach which includes ensuring tailored, holistic and embedded support; and, to the College's focus on embedded employability outcomes, including the LAUNCH and co-op programmes.

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[37] Masika, R., & Jones, J. (2016). Building student belonging and engagement: Insights into higher education students' experiences of participating and learning together, *Teaching in Higher Education,* 21(2), 138-150; Mere Berryman & Elizabeth Eley (2019) Student belonging: critical relationships and responsibilities, *International Journal of Inclusive Education.*
[38] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/
[39] Final detail of awards for 2020-21 will published on the College's website.
[40] https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/financial-support-evaluation-toolkit/

Activity and Evaluation Measures

The College's mission is to provide "an outstanding personalised higher education experience to its students…achieved by providing a world-class education in the Humanities and related disciplines"[41]. The College employs a range of practices to achieve this mission, which will be leveraged to particularly support target students and ensure they continue to achieve comparable outcomes to their counterparts, across the lifecycle.

- **One-to-one tutorial:** the College's pedagogical model is the regular one-to-one essay-based tutorial, centrally placed among 'small group' sessions, seminars and lectures to ensure a high level of rich and genuine contact with teaching staff to support a personalised approach to the diverse needs, learning style and interests of each individual student. Support and guidance in study methods, research, writing and presentation skills, together with support for student well-being and welfare, underpin the pedagogical approach, to ensure that every student benefits from the College's approach to teaching and learning. This practice will be particularly important for ensuring effective and personalised support and development for an increasingly diverse student cohort, where increased academic contact time leads to better academic-learner understanding and improves the likelihood of good learner outcomes.

- **The College Diploma:** The Diploma consists of the *Core Curriculum* and *LAUNCH*. In the *Core Curriculum* students study (a) Critical Reasoning, which focuses the students' attention on first-order logic, ways of thinking and arguing, methods of enquiry, reason and right reasoning, rhetoric, and the fallacies of both formal and informal logic; (b) Science Literacy, an overview for non-scientists of major areas of contemporary science; and (c) Applied Ethics, raising and discussing the ethical dilemmas that face us as individuals and as a society in business, the environment, politics, conflict, and medicine. *LAUNCH* prepares students for the world of work after graduation, focusing on practical skills including financial literacy, entrepreneurship, teamwork, practical projects, and career advice. It is designed to provide the skills and aptitudes required in the employment market in the coming years. Not only does the additional College Diploma set students ahead in the job market, but the placement of academic study in the context of the world around us (general skills and awareness and specific career preparation) allows students to anchor learning in relevance to the world they live in. This connectivity ensures students, and particularly target learners for whom the value of the degree in terms of career and personal progression is generally more important[42], are more likely to be retained and engaged with study, leading to good degree outcomes.

- **Inclusive curriculum principles:** Inclusive practice contributes to building a sense of belonging and engagement with the learning experience[43]. The College's first aim in its Teaching and Learning Strategy (2019-2024) is to, "create a safe, diverse and inclusive collegial environment in which intellectual endeavour flourishes.". Key components of this commitment are to:
  - Make explicit in its literature and at events that the College is a diverse and inclusive community.
  - Support members of the College who initiate and run societies, open lectures, debates, subject outings, interdisciplinary residential reading weeks, and other extra-curricular events.
  - Encourage and support the Students' Union in fostering a collegial and co-operative atmosphere of mutual respect, inclusiveness, engagement and collaborative endeavour in the student body.
  - Invite alumni to major lectures and academic events and (where relevant) to share experiences and mentor current students.
  - Assign personal tutors to all students and provide all staff with counselling and support training.
  - Make financial and other practical support available to disadvantaged students so that all may participate as fully as possible in College life.

  The College will continue to strengthen inclusive curriculum and pedagogical practice, seeking to better understand its growing student body and ensure everyone is welcomed, supported and enabled. For example, the College recognises its staff base is relatively heterogeneous, which naturally has implications for the curriculum and pedagogy. Student representatives and the Students' Union have raised this point as part of evaluation and feedback practice, and have worked with the College to provide some solutions. This has included ensuring a range of external diverse speakers from different backgrounds are contributing the curriculum and delivering masterclasses, as well as other out-of-curriculum speakers, secured by the Students' Union. The College has recently implemented an External Speakers Fund to facilitate this activity. Access to the fund requires that the speakers to be engaged contribute to recognising, understanding and representing key underrepresented target groups. The fund is available to the Students' Union and all Faculties.

Evaluation measures include:
- Student engagement with learning (attendance and performance).

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[41] Teaching and Learning Strategy, 2019-2024

[42] Turner, N. (2014). Development of self-belief for employability in higher education: Ability, efficacy and control in context. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(6), 1-11; Cath Dennis, Vasilis Louca, & John Lemon. (2018). Term-time Employment and Student Attainment in Higher Education. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice, 6*(1), 28-38.

[43] E.g. Pridham, B., Martin, D., Walker, K., Rosengren, R., & Wadley, D. (2015). Culturally Inclusive Curriculum in Higher Education. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 44*(1), 94-105; Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2007). Improving student outcomes in higher education: New Zealand teachers' views on teaching students from diverse backgrounds. *Teaching in Higher Education, 12*(5-6), 655-668.

- Student satisfaction scores (student satisfaction survey and NSS).
- Student course reps and broader student feedback, e.g. via focus groups and committees.
- Student retention and degree outcomes, by target group.

Strategic Measure 9: **Integration of curriculum, employment experiences and career development**

Context, targets and outcomes
A focus on employability and career outcomes not only addresses a key concern of target groups regarding the value of a degree (and particularly those without easily recognisable professional pathways, like Humanities) in terms of career outcomes[44]; but further, has positive impact on attainment and retention outcomes[45]. As previously noted, the College places significant emphasis on its embedded employability practice, enshrined in *LAUNCH* and co-op programmes.

The Northeastern co-op programme provides positive and affirmative experiences and engagements with employers, which would be valuable to the College's students and particularly those target students under this Plan, who are less likely to have the existing professional networks[46]. Over the life of this Plan, the College's ambition is to incorporate Northeastern's co-op programme to provide experiences for its students, particularly with London employers. The co-op programme will be explored, developed, planned and piloted in the UK context from 2020-21, with the intention that the College will have this fully operational by 2022-23.

Evaluation measures include:
- Student participation in the co-op programme.
- Student engagement and feedback from the *LAUNCH* programme.
- Student satisfaction scores (student satisfaction survey and NSS).
- Student course reps and broader student feedback, e.g. via focus groups and committees.
- Student retention, degree outcomes and progression outcomes by target group.

Strategic Measure 10: **Embedded, student-centred support and community of practice**

Context, targets and outcomes
The College provides a range of student support for its cohorts of learners. While support appears to be effective given the College's performance in the success and progression measures, it is important that the high standard in performance in provision continues as the student body increases and diversifies, and over time this may require more targeted, specific response to needs and challenges for target learners under this Plan. Embedded support in curriculum is also a focus, leveraging the personal tutor system. The College will be informed and directed in its practice developments by emerging data and the evidence base from internal and sector evaluation and research into best practice.

In partnership with the Students' Union and a group of broader student representatives, including students from low participation neighbourhoods and BAME students, the College has also identified the need to address some issues relating to the existing community culture. This includes actively building a more welcoming, inclusive community of practice; one that celebrates diversity, and recognises and respects all of its members, regardless of ethnic background or socio-economic status. These measures will be critical to ensure the successful transition-in, experience and retention of target learners under this Plan.

Activity and Evaluation Measures – Student Support and Wellbeing
The Student Wellbeing Team, comprising two members of staff, plus other staff members of Student and Academic Services, have an open-door culture and provide a range of services to support students. A number of additional support initiatives have been introduced (in response to increasing instances of mental health issues across the sector), which include:
- A designated Mental Health Advisor was appointed (April 2019).
  - Responding to the challenges students are facing, the College has also implemented a Assessment Planner for students (2018-19), which helps students organise and plan workloads, to reduce workload stress.
- An arrangement with PAUSE therapy is also in place for additional student triage and counselling.
- Accessibility support, including funding support for Specific Learning Difficulty diagnostics, is provided.
- Bursaries and other financial support are administered (see Financial Support section, below).

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[44] Redmond, P. (2006). Outcasts on the inside: Graduates, employability and widening participation. *Tertiary Education and Management, 12*(2), 119-135; Budd, R. (2017). Disadvantaged by degrees? How widening participation students are not only hindered in accessing HE, but also during, and after, university. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 21(2-3), 111-116; Andrewartha, L., & Harvey, A. (2017). Employability & student equity in higher education: Role of university careers services. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 26*(2), 71-80.
[45] Turner, N. (2014). Development of self-belief for employability in higher education: Ability, efficacy and control in context. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(6), 1-11.
[46] OfS: Addressing Barriers to Success Programme: Aston University, *Levelling the playing field through work-based learning*. Available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/addressing-barriers-to-student-success-programme/aston-university/

- Laptops are available for students to borrow.
- The College produces an online guide about budgeting and saving in London. This is complemented by liaison with the Finance Team to provide face-to-face ad-hoc financial advice to students need.
- Various study skills, for example exam and revision sessions, are scheduled.

The Team also provide a range of services to build cross-College understanding and capabilities in relation to effectively and holistically supporting its students. These include:
- A range of training and development for staff, such as updates on the student support services mental health awareness and support training (in partnership with the Samaritans); and equality and diversity training. The College will seek to develop this provision, being particularly cognisant of the particular barriers and challenges more likely faced by an increasingly diverse student body. Developments include:
  o Production of training guides as part of the VLE.
  o Further training and development to understand barriers and context of students.
  o Further tailored training relating to how to respond to mental health issues.
  o Training refresher sessions.
- Signposting service, where academic and other staff identifying students with support needs are able to effectively signpost students for specialist support.
  o Increasingly over 2019-20 and beyond, developments in data capabilities and associated evaluation, monitoring and tracking will enable improvements in identifying students for support at the access stage. While inclusive practice principles will be adopted, particular attention will be provided to target students, who are more likely to encounter barriers.

Activity and Evaluation Measures – Student Induction
The College provides a comprehensive induction programme to support transition. The induction programme gives new students a chance to meet the faculty, professional staff and their allocated personal tutors.

Students hear from a range of key external speakers regarding safety, health, and social experiences in London. They are also provided access to, and information on, "Student Central", which provides facilities such as sports, swimming and gym, and social bars.

While the College takes care not to provide too much information, an overview of available information, advice and guidance is given, including IT and web orientation. Further information is provided over the following few months, such as targeted sessions on organisation and time management. The Students' Union hold a welcome and introduction session and Freshers' Fair, where students can sign up to societies, etc. Various social and team events are held to build friendships and establish belonging and community. For example, all commencing students are allocated a 'buddy', and events such as family dinners are organised. These events will be strengthened and further targeted to address potential barriers for target groups, and to ensure an inclusive community, over the life of this Plan.

Activity and Evaluation Measures – Financial Support
See Strategic Measure 7 for Bursary offer, and financial support related to access, admission and transition-in.

A Hardship Fund is also provided to support students in financial distress. Students can apply for non-repayable financial support. Student and Academic Services (SAS) support students through the application. The College can also provide financial support should a student be identified as potentially having learning differences and require an assessment for a diagnosis. The Learning and Assessment Support Officer is responsible for managing and supporting students with learning differences and is the key contact for the assessment centre. A small number of students apply for DSA and support is provided through the application process by SAS.

Evaluation measures include:
- Student satisfaction scores (internal student satisfaction survey and NSS).
- Student representatives and broader student feedback, e.g. via focus groups and committees.
- Student retention and degree outcomes, by target group.

3.2 Student consultation

The College has a range of mechanisms for consulting with students, and is increasingly moving to a partnered, approach. Objectives are deepening student engagement and enabling meaningful student engagement[47] in the design of outreach practices and the student experience (academic, social and professional), and wider College community. Collaboration spans planning and development, delivery, evaluation and monitoring.

As part of the consultation process for this Plan and areas related to this Plan, a range of students provided input and feedback, including students who are from POLAR4 Quintile 1 areas and from BAME backgrounds. The Students' Union and broader student group notes that further work can be done in partnership, in a symbiotic

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[47] OfS Regulatory Advice 6: Co-designing approaches with students enables them to meaningfully engage in their own higher education experience.

relationship where the Students' Union operation can be enhanced through support from the College; and the College will benefit from further, and more effective, student engagement and voice.

The Students' Union notes its ability to particularly support students' sense of belonging, and an inclusive campus community. It is concerned to promote understanding, recognition, appreciation and celebration of diversity, rather than competition between the many cultures, countries and individuals represented at the College. The Students' Union and representatives see this as a core mission for the College and the Students' Union to address in partnership as part of this Plan, and this is welcomed by the College. The student representatives would also wish for more accountability for the Students' Union in respect of delivering this agenda in partnership with the College. As such, the College agrees to provide further support in terms of training, standard reporting, and strengthening strategy, practice and communications.

The student body at the College was involved in the development of this Plan and will be involved in the iteration of future plans, and in evaluation and monitoring of Plans, in the following ways:

- As part of the College's internal quality assurance processes, the Plan has been approved by both NCHNL Board and Academic Board. A representative from the Students' Union for Academic Affairs (NCHSU OAA) is a member of Academic Board, the key point of major student consultation exercises.
- The NCHSU OAA representative was involved in the development of the Access and Participation Plan and will continue to be involved in the monitoring of the Plan.
- The FAPSG has been established and student members have been appointed, representing the student body. This includes BAME students. Broader student consultations will be incorporated in FAPSG activities, e.g. monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan, such as the use of bursary funds.
- Workshop to discuss and develop the Plan, including key challenges, concerns and opportunities for the College, the Students' Union, the broader student body, and College-Student collaboration and partnership over the next five years.

This is in addition to other committees and ongoing reflective groups on which SU representatives, and other students, sit and contribute. For example, the Accessibility Advocacy Group includes a student representative who is active in the development of support, activity and related monitoring for disabled students; course representatives attend Faculty meetings, Teaching and Learning Enhancement meetings and Student-Staff liaison committees; and students sit on the Health and Safety committee.

Over the course of 2019, student input has also driven changes to internships, where students suggested means-tested-internship bursaries, so that students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds could still participate in good quality, but unpaid, internships. These opportunities were otherwise being turned down due to financial constraints which meant these students took low-level paid work instead. The College has now implemented the means-tested internship bursaries, which means that these target students do not experience disadvantage when applying for graduate jobs in their third year due to lack of relevant work experience.

The College and students also work collaboratively in planning, delivery and evaluation of outreach work. For example, the College offers several taster days that have been designed and created by student ambassadors as part of their major. Workshops have been designed for History and Law, with current work being in Philosophy and further developments planned.

More broadly, College's annual student satisfaction survey is an opportunity for students to provide additional feedback on courses, programmes and services. Analyses and reports from the data in this survey is provided to Heads of Faculty, who are required to respond. The Freshers' survey is designed to specifically understand what students think about and experience in their recruitment and induction to the College, and this will be particularly useful in developing access and transition-in measures and exploring the experiences of target groups. The Fresher's Survey is followed up with more targeted focus groups. The College also run a "We're Listening" campaign, which invites student contributions, suggestions and feedback on a range of areas across the College. This is communicated via posters, Open Forum and through the formal committee structure. Student input is analysed and informs future practice.

As part of the collaboration and input to this Plan, the Students' Union and student representatives provided a number of considerations for what "success" would look like going forward, including increasing diversity of the student population, developing and celebrating an inclusive College community, learning from (diverse) peers as well as academics, fair admissions and maintaining the special, unique position of the College and its USPs. These points provide the basis of practice for College-Student collaboration over the life of this Plan and beyond.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

The College has used the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool to contextualise its current evaluation approach, which shows the College as emerging across all categories. While some components are in place, for example FAPSGhas been set up to receive and respond to evaluation data, others need to be established or strengthened. The College's 2019-20 Evaluation Strategy provides further detail on its plans for development. In summary:

- The evaluation approach will develop over this Plan and will be informed by OfS guidance in this area.
- The College will continue to design and develop an evaluation approach and capacity that:
  - Is embedded in the organisation and part of a culture of evaluation.
  - Is based on the collection and analysis of robust student data that aligns with regulator datasets.
  - Generates a robust institution-specific evidence base of impacts, outcomes and value for money.
  - Is designed to generate outcomes that feed into development and enhancement of our activities.
  - Has a feedback and review process at its core, to ensure that our evaluation activity informs and is informed by our access activity.
  - Draws on externally available research and evaluation outcomes to build broader evidence base.
  - Draws on and is informed by the practice and outcomes of others across the HE sector.
  - Generates outcomes that will be disseminated to sector colleagues, particularly those in similar small and specialist or new provider contexts.
- The College will continue to develop and enhance student data collection and monitoring to support analysis across the student lifecycle. In the immediate phases small cohort numbers mean that the College will not have access to statistically significant data, but it will be able to begin to identify some correlations and suggested trends and will draw on nationally available datasets (e.g. the OfS Access and Participation Dashboard) and the analysis of other providers.

Evaluation design and implementation

The College has invested in Quercus and a CRM system to support enhanced data capability over the long-term. These systems will be developed to ensure continuous practice improvement and increasingly data-driven, evidence-based activity and monitoring; and support the capacity for more effective evaluation.

As the College builds its evaluation capacity over the life of this Plan, most of the evaluations will be a combination of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) approaches, as described in the *Access and Participation Standards of Evidence*. The initial approach to evaluating access activities will consist of pre-/post-questionnaire designs, qualitative data collection via participant interviews and focus groups, and stakeholder interviews (e.g. teachers, parents) and practitioner / student ambassador reflections.

The College's initial approach to evaluating student success and progression activities will consist of monitoring assessment outcomes at levels from individual course level, to whole year and programme level, reflecting on student evaluation data with a focus on flagging areas that have implications for disparities in outcome, experience or attainment. The protocol for viewing this data will be shared with all relevant staff. The College will collect qualitative data about the impact of activity through student interviews / focus groups, as well as collecting structured reflections from faculty. Topic guides and data collection templates will be stored in the repository.

The College will make available the evaluation instruments used for each activity to relevant colleagues across the institution to ensure that thinking and best practice is available and consistent and feeds into a cycle of learning and development. Such documentation will include:

- Standardised and semi-standardised questionnaires, annotated to indicate the purpose and use.
- A library of standardised questions, annotated to indicate their domain of reference and the purpose
- Interview and focus group guides and templates for self-reflection – annotated to outline context and outputs they were designed to deliver.
- Descriptions of other evaluation tools used – for example, descriptions of visual data collection methods used with younger pupils and evaluation tools for learning and teaching activities.

Members of FAPSG will review and discuss the contents of the repository on an annual basis.

The following summary provides the range of evaluation measures that the College will implement:

Lifecycle area	Success / Evaluation Measures
All areas (institutional capability)	- Clear progression of the access and participation agenda - Annual milestones and five-year targets met - Whole institution approach assessed through staff feedback and consultation - New data provision rolled out to key stakeholders across the institution - Stakeholders can make decisions on the basis of consistent, detailed and up to date data - Staff focus group and survey feedback - Collaboration arrangements with students are in place - Formal feedback from Student Union Officers reviewing how effective collaboration has been
Access	- Increased number of partner schools - Increased number of pupil engagements - Pre-/post- questionnaire for participants. Assessing initial rates of aspiration / expectation about HE progression, test awareness of HE and application process, test knowledge of financial aspects of HE progression - Record of applications, offers and enrolments from partner schools - Surveys and focus groups/ interviews with teachers and school/college SLT - Record of successful relationship building - Increase in applications from target students
Transition-in	Introduction of contextual data process – increasing the proportion of offers to target students

	• Survey students to assess sense of belonging / transition process feedback • Student engagement levels along the applicant pipeline	
Success	• NSS and other student survey on student experience and teaching, learning and assessment, by target groups and programmes • Student satisfaction measures to assess academic engagement / learning and teaching • Focus group with sample of target students to assess sense of belonging and relationship to pedagogic aspects of course, and College community • Monitor support and development take up and engagement by student demographic • Focus group with participating students (support and development activities) • Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment as result of co-op programme and/or other work-related development activities • Regular review of student satisfaction survey – increased response rate	
Progression	• Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment as result of co-op programme and/or other work-related development activities or entering graduate studies	

Learning to shape improvement

The College is establishing a recurrent feedback cycle to ensure that evaluation measures used to assess the impact of activities are calibrated to reflect the scale of, and the Theory of Change assumptions about, the intervention. By reflecting on the impact of evaluation outcomes the College will ensure that they are meaningful, useful and informative to practitioners and support development and improvement of interventions. The College is establishing an annual internal evaluation forum to support staff and share thinking about the evaluation tools and approaches employed, as well as sharing, analysing and determining relevant outcomes from evaluation.

The College will continue to work with and draw on the expertise of external agencies and third sector organisations to expedite activity specific evaluation frameworks, establishing Theory of Change and undertaking rapid literature reviews to draw on existing expertise and good practice across the sector. The College will look to the sector and the Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) centre for best practice and use sector research, evidence and evaluation approaches, applied to its specific context, to develop our evaluation strategy. The College also endeavours to share its learning and outcomes through the sector, contributing to network and sector discussion. It anticipates its learning and evaluation outcomes will be particularly useful for other small and / or specialist providers.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the Plan

The main body charged with ensuring the monitoring, progress and delivery of this Plan is FAPSG. They will work closely with the WPO. The FAPSG reports to both Academic Board and the Executive Committee of the College, which in turn reports to NCHNL Board. There will be reporting on progress to the Board, minimum four times per annum. The Executive Dean will monitor expenditure in relation to the Plan and will also monitor risk.

The FAPSG will track, evaluate and enable sharing of best practice and strengthening of future activities. From 2019-20, the College is increasing monitoring and reporting on access and participation activity, and FAPSG will receive reports from the WPO and other key stakeholders and oversee progress. This reporting is supplemented by overall monitoring of institutional data as part of the annual programme monitoring cycle. As the College continues to build its data capacity and metrics for monitoring from 2019-20 onwards, monitoring capability will also improve. This will enable the College to develop a better understanding of how students from underrepresented backgrounds compare to their peers.

In 2019-20, the College, via FAPSG, will develop a formal and consistent reporting and planning model, led from the centre, to ensure consistency and quality in building a comprehensive annual programme monitoring regime, and will meet as a minimum once every two months, to develop, track and monitor practice and outcomes.

If it is discovered that progress is worsening in any area, the College will deploy its resources to targeting improvement in specific areas, accelerating action as per the strategic measures in this Plan and, where required, drawing from additional sector best practice and further deeper dives on internal data. Additional expertise or resource may be deployed if deemed required.

4 Provision of information to students

The College will ensure that all material is presented in a clear and unambiguous way that is accessible to all.

The College is committed to publishing clear, accurate, timely and accessible information for existing and prospective students on fees and financial support. This commitment extends to the provision of information on fees and financial support to UCAS and the Student Loans Company. This information is contained in the College's undergraduate prospectus and on the College's website as well as being communicated at educational fairs, school talks, Open Days, Taster Days and other relevant events.

In addition to information provided in the form indicated above, all suitable undergraduate applicants are interviewed (face-to-face or via Skype), where information on fees and financial support is also provided. In the event that a student is offered a place to study at the College, information on any academic-based scholarship

award is included in the offer letter, as well as details on the College bursary scheme and how to apply. Further information on payment plans – yearly, termly or monthly – is contained in the offer letter.

This Plan is to be placed on the College's website, in a position that will allow access from each page. Further, this Plan will be distributed electronically to all staff.

5 Annex

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, 2b and 2c 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)*

ANNEX 1: Progressive Outreach Model

THEME: Aspiration, Awareness
Activity / Inputs: Delivery of "Introduction to HE" and "HE Life and Learning" aspiration, awareness and confidence raising sessions with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Y7-11.
Evidence base and change theory: Best practice across the sector points to the importance of "starting early", setting long-term, sustained engagement with target pupils (DBIS 2014; Younger et al 2018; Crozier et al 2010). Krutowski (2017) and Reay et al (2009) underline the importance of confidence building and awareness raising to influence and achieve positive attitudinal change in HE pathways considerations. Students from more advantaged backgrounds benefit from more effective information and guidance from schools, parents and broader networks.[48] Finally, the Gatsby Benchmarks[49] 2, 3 and 7 recognise the importance of providing information about study and career choices; addressing the needs of each pupil; and, providing engagement with HE providers to inform choices.

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Raised awareness about higher education, including the College offer and opportunities available; building learner confidence, awareness and understanding about higher education generally	Learners apply information to personal context and can challenge misconceptions and make informed choices about HE pathways, knowing the benefits of choosing HE	Learners make choices to apply to HE, and specifically to the College, based on understanding of HE study, their aspiration to enter HE, and with confidence that they know what is expected	Increased applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College	**Short-term & Mid-term:** Aspiration and awareness surveys post-activities. **Long-term:** Number / % of applications to HE from target learners; Number / % applications to high-tariff providers; and, to the College; Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to the College from target groups

THEME: Access
Activity / Inputs: Delivery of "HE Access and Pathways" sessions with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Y9-13
Evidence base and change theory: Harrison (2017); Harrison and Waller (2018); Mangan et al (2010); and Whitty et al (2010) discuss developing learner's navigational capacity as a key component to accessing HE pathways and ensuring sustained progression along the pathway. Gatsby Benchmark 2 recognises the importance of providing information about study and career choices. Additionally, the Sutton Trust has repeatedly pointed to the need to support learners at the point of application and access, as for example, personal statement writing is a barrier to entry for some target learners, along with being unclear about application and access route requirements.[50] A range of sector best practice and research evidences the need to provide clear information and guidance about routes to HE to meet learner needs and particularly to support non-traditional entry routes (DBIS 2014; Sutton Trust 2008), providing a range of options to a diverse market. Also, to provide clear information about the entry requirements to enable learners to understand and achieve expected entry criteria.

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Increased awareness of and aspiration to HE as a viable	Improved capacity to	Supports learners make	Increased applications and	**Short-term & Mid-term:**

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[48] OfS (2019) A-Z of Effective Practice, https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/low-higher-education-participation-household-income-and-socio-economic-status/
[49] https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance
[50] https://www.suttontrust.com/newsarchive/admissions-process-barrier-poor-students/

choice; improved awareness of specific pathway opportunities and requirements at the college. Increased awareness of non-traditional entry routes increases in turn aspiration to HE from candidates who might otherwise not consider it as a viable life choice. Highlighting the available IAG programme and resources allows and supports students to make informed choices about viable pathways; and access available support at each stage of the process	navigate application process. Increased awareness of eligibility criteria allows students to make informed choices. Learners apply information to personal context and are able to challenge misconceptions and make informed choices about	informed choice in applying to HE, specifically the College, based on a secure understanding of the opportunities offered by HE programmes of study and its requirements	enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College. Improved retention and progression rates of enrolling students due to increased awareness of pathway requirements and suitability prior to application and enrolment	Aspiration and awareness surveys post-activities. **Long-term:** Number / % of applications to HE from target learners; Number / % applications to high-tariff providers; and, to the College; Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to the College from target groups

THEME: Affordability

Activity / Inputs: Delivery of "Affordability" sessions, exploring the cost of study and financial support available, with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Years 10-13

Evidence base and change theory: A range of research and literature provides strong evidence that, particularly for disadvantaged target learners and their influencers, finance is often a barrier to accessing HE (McCaig 2016; Callendar 2003; Hordosy and Clark 2018a; Hordosy and Clark 2018b; Clark et al 2017; Hordosy et al 2018; Crockford et al 2015).

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Increased awareness of financial requirements of HE and financing options to help remove the conceptual fear of the 'barrier'	Increased awareness of how to finance further study; improved capacity to navigate financial application process	Supports learners in making an informed choice in applying to HE, specifically the College, based on secure understandings of the financial requirements and financing opportunities	Increased applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College. Improved retention and progression rates of enrolling students due to increased awareness of financial requirements and financing opportunities	**Short-term & Mid-term:** Aspiration and awareness surveys post-activities. **Long-term:** Number / % of applications to HE from target learners; Number / % applications to high-tariff providers; and, to the College; Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to the College

THEME: Achievement /Attainment

Activity / Inputs: Delivery of sessions to support achievement and study skills with target schools and colleges, with target learners, particularly (but not limited to) Y10-13

Evidence base and change theory: Research has established clear links between levels of educational attainment in schools and colleges and access to HE (Sparks, LSE (1999); Raffo et al (2007); Berrington and Roberts (2016). This research indicates that attainment gaps appear very early in a child's life, particularly in underrepresented groups, and are likely to increase over time if not mitigated. The extant research body clearly identifies the links between raising attainment levels in schools and future HE participation (Chowdry et al (2008) and Crawford (2014). The OfS has set attainment raising as a key attribute of effective outreach practice based on this evidence; therefore, an institutional commitment to raising attainment by identifying, mitigating and closing the gaps in educational outcomes between underrepresented students and their peers is considered key to supporting students to develop effective learning and study techniques as early as possible in their educational journey.

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Raising attainment concomitantly raises understanding and aspiration as the learner recognises the link between current study, attainment and HE progression. Targeted learning strategies to close identified educational gaps increases the range of learning styles available to the institution and the student cohort	Through supported learning strategies an increased understanding that progression is possible develops As attainment gaps close, the student begins to see HE as a viable goal, improving motivation and interest in continued study	Students that otherwise would not be aware of or aspire to HE are supported to reach entry criteria and encouraged to make HE a viable life option	Learners attain the required entry qualifications to apply for high tariff providers. Learners are provided with the necessary tools and qualifications to make successful applications to the College Increased successful applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4	Evaluation of progression to appropriate KS benchmarks. Number / % enrolments to the College from target groups

				Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College	
The evidence base indicates that diversity in available learning strategies, styles, preferences and skills have a positive effect on attainment when practiced and applied					

LEARNER FOCUS METHOD: *On-campus*

Activity / Inputs: Delivery of a range of on-campus experiences and HE 'life and learning' tasters

Evidence base and change theory: Learner-supplied qualitative evidence indicates that a feeling that university is not for them but for other groups influences the decision-making of underrepresented groups. Effective sector practice evidences the impact of providing target learners with opportunities to engage with, and experience, HE on university campuses. Such experiences enable and support learners to identify with HE as a possible option for them, building a sense of belonging (Thomas 2012; Ribera et al 2017; Astin 1999; Hoffman et al 2002), increasing confidence and awareness through lived experiences and increasing familiarity (Slack et al 2014; Flemming and Grace 2015). Learners can build early relationships with the HE learning environment, its staff and students Thomas 2012; Osterman 2000; Thomas 2002; Trowler and Trowler 2010). This promotes a sense of belonging and connection to the HE community, decreasing the 'alien' promoting the familiar (Smyth & Banks 2012; James et al 2016; Grant 2017).

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Learners develop familiarity with, a sense of belonging to, and an understanding of the College environment and learning. Aspirations and motivation for HE participation are increased through positive on-campus learning and HE life experiences. Learners establish points of contact for IAG, admissions, and potential mentors that help them understand that HE is a viable life choice, and negotiate process and requirements	Learners establish points of contact for IAG, admissions, and potential mentors to help navigate processes and gain understandings of requirements, responsibilities and eligibility criteria in considering HE	Learners make choices to apply to HE, and specifically to the College, based on their understanding of the College environment, HE study, and their sense of belonging and 'fit'	Increased applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College	**Short-term** Aspiration and awareness surveys post-activities **Mid-term / long-term:** Use Qualitative on-campus activity and enrolment data to establish progression to HE of targeted groups. Number / % of applications to HE from target learners; Number / % applications to high-tariff providers; and, to the College; Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to College

LEARNER FOCUS METHOD: *Student ambassadors & Role Models*

Activity / Inputs: Provision of a range of opportunities for target learners to engage with current HE students (ambassadors / HE 'Buddies' / Student or Staff Mentors)

Evidence base and change theory: The evidence base suggests that outreach activity delivered by, or with, university role models, such as ambassadors, buddies, student or staff mentors, is the most likely to have impact on target groups, including underrepresented cohorts. The Sutton Trust (2015), Gartland and Paczuska (2007) and Roberts and Weston (2011) highlight the value ambassadors and role models carry and deliver in terms of positively influencing target groups. In providing authentic, accessible information, ambassadors, buddies and mentors offer support and guidance that can be crucial in informing and shaping learners' early experiences with HE. A key ingredient to the success of ambassador, buddy and mentor relationships appears to lie in their comparative lack of structure. This gives participants freedom to choose to define how relationships develop and the responsibilities of each party. Defining these are key to the success of the interaction (Hay, 1995; Cordingley, 2004). Research indicates that 'subject matching' between buddies, ambassadors and mentors can be significant regarding how their input is valued by students – with some reporting disappointment if the ambassador did not have detailed knowledge about the relevant subject area (Gartland and Paczuska, 2007: 122). Students defined successful ambassadors as those who help practically, pragmatically and instrumentally (Archer and Yamashita, 2003). Other recorded benefits include increased achievement, results, awareness and aspiration. Empowering students to see themselves as potential university students. Providing an insight into the work they would be expected to produce; providing information about the university; identifying suitable courses (Gartland and Paczuska, 2007).

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Raised learner awareness about HE, including the College offer and opportunities available. Building learner confidence, awareness and understanding	Learners are given individualised support and guidance that helps them apply information to their own personal context They are supported in	Learners supported and empowered to make informed choice to apply to HE, and specifically to the College, based on a	Learners attain the required entry qualifications to apply for high tariff providers. Learners are provided with the necessary tools and qualifications to	It is difficult to structure and measure these relationships purely in quantitative terms, and although roles/ responsibilities need to be clearly defined, evidence shows that there is a danger that over-formalising the process may impact the value of these relationships (Hay (1995); Cordingley (2004); Gartland and Paczuska (2007) **Short-term & Mid-term:**

about HE generally. Learners feel 'supported' through what can be an unfamiliar and isolating experience	challenging their misconceptions, and empowered through dialogue with informed partners to make reasoned choices about HE pathways, knowing the benefits of choosing HE	secure understanding of HE study, its requirements and the opportunity it offers Ongoing 'buddy' or mentoring helps them transition to HE with confidence that they will be supported	make successful applications to the College. Increased applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College	Aspiration and awareness surveys accompanying ambassador, buddy and mentor activities. Student / ambassador 'contracts' defining roles and responsibilities of each party, and timelines for key events (Open Days / draft statements / applications, etc) **Long-term:** Number / % of applications to HE from target learners. Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) Data on use of dedicated social media (twitter) or central mentor email account to allow students and administrators one point of contact and resolution **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to the College from target groups

ANNEX 2: Intensive, repeated outreach activities (Strategic Measure 5)

LEARNER FOCUS METHOD: Intensive, repeated experiences
Provision of intensive support to target learners – incl. Study Support, Skills Workshops, Residential opportunities, Study Days.
Evidence base and change theory: Abbott-Chapman describe HEIs who are successful at widening participation as 'responsive' – they consider and respond to the needs of the harder-to-reach students, and then devise strategies to equip students with the skills, competencies and study expectations necessary to participate successfully in higher education (Abbott-Chapman, 2011). Masterclasses, Open Days, Taster Days raise awareness and achievement, giving students an insight into academic and vocational subjects but also key skills necessary to succeed in HE. Delivered by academics and experts, they can stimulate interest and open learners to the possibility of engaging with hitherto unconsidered pathways of study as well as their current subject areas (Action on Access, 2006e). They offer a flexible delivery model, as they can be run on campus or at the school. Evidence indicates that many students are put off applying to HE because they feel it is not for them. On campus, intensive activities help overcome the fear of the unknown, giving learners a 'feel' for what university life and learning might be like, introducing them to campus geography and demystifying the HE experience (Church and Kerrigan, 2011).

Outcomes: Short-term	Outcomes: Mid-term	Outcomes: Long-term	Impact	Measurements
Open Days / Taster lectures/Taster Days etc give raised learner awareness about HE, including the College offer and opportunities available. The above builds learner confidence, awareness and understanding, 'demystifying' HE generally	Learners develop secure understandings of academic and vocational study programmes and outcomes; their entry requirements; and their progression criteria, empowering them to make informed choices about their HE pathway. IAG helps them apply pathway information to their own personal context. They are supported in challenging their misconceptions and empowered through dialogue with informed partners to make reasoned choices about HE pathways, knowing the benefits of choosing HE	Learners supported and empowered to make informed choice to apply to HE, and specifically to the College, based on a secure understanding of HE study, its requirements and the opportunity it offers. Study Skills Workshops / Flexible Timetabling/ Alternate Learning Pathways give learners a certain amount of flexibility, supporting their engagement with HE when they have competing commitments	Learners are provided with the necessary tools and qualifications to make successful applications to the College. Increased applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds. Improved retention and progression rates of enrolling students due to increased awareness course suitability, requirements and progression criteria	**Short-term & Mid-term:** Pre- and Post-Aspiration and awareness surveys; accompanying ambassador, buddy and mentor evaluation (surveys). Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) **Long-term:** Number / % of applications to HE from target learners. **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to the College from target groups

ANNEX 3: Partnerships and Collaborative Networks (Strategic Measure 6)

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT METHOD: Partnerships & Collaborative Networks

Building outreach partnerships with schools and colleges and development of networks with others in the sector (including higher education providers and third sector organisations).				
Evidence base and change theory: Collaboration and partnerships are well-evidenced methods for delivering effective, impactful outreach programmes (Reed et al 2015; Moore et al 2013; Thompson (2008). Research indicates that long-term engagement between schools / colleges and HEIs support effective outreach programmes (Gale et al, 2010; Moore et al 2013). Thomas et al (2010) have indicated that a number of positive impacts derive from HEPs working in partnership with schools/colleges including: learner support; learner achievement; learner progression; school improvement; curriculum development; widening participation; governance; organisation of outreach activities including Masterclasses, Open Days, Taster Days, Ambassador, Buddy and Mentoring programmes; and programme design, delivery and evaluation. Many additional benefits can be realised through wider partnership working, including access to target learners; strengthening impact of activity; and realising efficiencies of scale/ established practice and experience.				
Outcomes: Short-term	**Outcomes: Mid-term**	**Outcomes: Long-term**	**Impact**	**Measurements**
The College increases its visibility through school and college partners, offering a different HE experience to target learners. Increased understanding of school and college priorities, environment, potential to offer activity and barriers to HE for target learners. Learning informs activity and practice development. Developing relationships, which support access to and engagement with target learners. The College accesses and is included in a range of activities with additional collaborators, providing access to a broader target audience. Shared practice and learning exchange. Supports College understanding of effective outreach activity	Relationships with schools and colleges are deepened; the College gains more exposure, delivering an increasing number of events and related activity with target schools and learners. The College can contextualise this learning, apply it to practice and offer renewed, increasingly impactful and relevant, outreach activity that benefits the learners and adds value to the school and its staff. Training & development opportunities through the networks are realised, contributing to College staff understanding of effective practice. The College can contextualise this learning, apply it to practice and offer learning back through the Networks regarding specific needs/ opportunities of a specialist provider	School staff (particularly those advising learners) can talk comprehensively about the College's offer and provide this information to learners and connect them to a range of outreach events offered by the College. Network/ collaborator members can talk comprehensively about the College's offer and provide this information to learners at a wider range of events	Increased successful applications and enrolments of target learners from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, IMD Q1 backgrounds at the College, via collaborative activity and referrals/ signposting	**Short-term & Mid-term:** Number/ depth of relationships with identified schools and colleges and collaborators. **Long-term:** Number / % of applications to the College from target learners from partner schools/ colleges and other collaborators Learner feedback (survey/ focus group) **Impact:** Number / % enrolments to the College from target learners from partner schools/ colleges and collaborative activities. Learner feedback/ surveys and case studies

Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: NCH at Northeastern Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10048199

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

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

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	N/A	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
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	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
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	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: NCH at Northeastern Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10048199

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 (£)	£100,000.00	£125,000.00	£148,000.00	£183,000.00	£220,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£40,000.00	£50,000.00	£59,200.00	£73,200.00	£88,000.00
Access (post-16)	£50,000.00	£62,500.00	£74,000.00	£91,500.00	£110,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£4,000.00	£5,000.00	£7,400.00	£10,980.00	£13,200.00
Access (other)	£6,000.00	£7,500.00	£7,400.00	£7,320.00	£8,800.00
Financial support (£)	£80,000.00	£82,000.00	£86,000.00	£92,000.00	£103,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£20,000.00	£23,000.00	£26,000.00	£30,000.00	£37,000.00

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)	£799,015.00	£916,245.00	£1,042,730.00	£1,221,660.00	£1,468,460.00
Access investment	12.5%	13.6%	14.2%	15.0%	15.0%
Financial support	10.0%	8.9%	8.2%	7.5%	7.0%
Research and evaluation	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Total investment (as %HFI)	25.0%	25.1%	24.9%	25.0%	24.5%

Targets and investment plan
2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: NCH at Northeastern Limited

Provider UKPRN: 10048199

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To increase the proportion of POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 students enrolling at the College.	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Increase the percentage of POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 (aggregate) entrants to reach 20% by 2024-25	No	The access and participation dataset	Other (please include details in commentary)	8.3%	10%	12%	14.5%	17%	20%	Baseline is the average percentage of POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 students from 2016-17 to 2017-18 (2-year average).
To double the proportion of undergraduate students who are from the most deprived backgrounds enrolling at the College.	PTA_2	Socio-economic	Double the percentage of IMD Quintile 1 entrants to 11% by 2024-25.	No	The access and participation dataset	Other (please include details in commentary)	5.5%	6%	6.7%	7.6%	9%	11%	Baseline is the average percentage of IMD Quintile 1 students from 2016-17 to 2017-18 (2-year average).
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
	PTS_1												
	PTS_2												
	PTS_3												
	PTS_4												
	PTS_5												
	PTS_6												
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

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