



Access Agreements for Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College, 2018-19.

A new College Group for East Sussex

Introduction to the College

From 29th March 2018, Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College merged under type B Merger arrangements (governed by the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012, SI2012 No. 1157 to create a new college group for East Sussex. Under these arrangements, Sussex Downs College was dissolved and its property rights and liabilities transferred to the remaining college, Sussex Coast College Hastings. From 16th April 2018 the newly formed organisation will be called East Sussex College Group.

From 29th March 2018, Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College merged under type B Merger arrangements (governed by the Further Education Corporations (Publication of Proposals) (England) Regulations 2012, SI2012 No. 1157 to create a new college group for East Sussex. Under these arrangements, Sussex Downs College was dissolved and its property rights and liabilities transferred to the remaining college, Sussex Coast College Hastings.

The component parts of the College

The two colleges that merged were general further education colleges that delivered vocational skills and training. Sussex Downs College was based in Lewes, Eastbourne and Newhaven and in 2017/18 had a total of 236 higher education students and 3000 full-time 16-18 year old students. Sussex Coast College Hastings was based at two sites; Hastings and Ore Valley and had a total of 409 higher education students and 1700 full-time 16-18 year old students.

From 29th March 2019, the new college group, entitled the East Sussex College Group operates from five college centres: Sussex Coast College Hastings; its two centres located in Hastings Town Centre and Ore Valley; Sussex Downs College; its three centres located in Lewes, Eastbourne and Newhaven.

Sussex Coast College and Sussex Downs College both charge tuition fees on some of their Higher Education courses above the basic fee limit and have approved Access Agreements for 2018/19, which appear in the following pages of this document.

This document confirms that the agreements and undertakings made at both Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College Access Agreements for 2018/19 are accepted by the new merged college group and the tuition fees at both colleges will be charged in accordance with the details contained in each of the separate 2018/19 Access Agreements (which appear in the following pages).

This document confirms that financial support offered for students of Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College outlined in the following pages, is accepted by the new merged college group and will be maintained as such for the duration of study for those students enrolling in in the academic year 2018/19. Financial support for continuing students, will be maintained by East Sussex College Group in line with earlier Access Agreements from Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College.

Access Agreement

Sussex Coast College Hastings

2018-19

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1. Introduction to Sussex Coast College Hastings

- Our Vision for Transformation: Inspiring futures: Changing lives
- Our Mission: High Quality Education and Training in partnership

Sussex Coast College Hastings is a Further Education College serving the areas of Hastings and Rother, situated within the town of Hastings at two main campus sites, Station Plaza and Ore Valley.

The College has received awards or recognition from a large number of organisations including Action for Business, Centre for Vocational Learning, Investors in People, Positive about Disabled People, Action for Inclusion, Wella Centre of Excellence, Cisco Networking Academy, Academy for Renewable Energies, D&AD (Design & Art Direction), RSA (Royal Society of Arts) and YCN (Young Creative Network) with 59 international design awards.

The Colleges Higher Education (HE) provision has received in (March 2012) a grading of full confidence across all key areas with QAA IQER. Its largest subject areas are Construction/Engineering, Sixth form and The Arts. The College currently has approximately 2125 16-18 learners, 2636 Adult, 161 fulltime and 245 part-time HE students for the academic year 2015-16 via franchise agreements with the University of Brighton and University of Central Lancashire. HE accounts for 1/16 of the total income for the College. The College works in partnership with two Higher Education Institutions, The University of Brighton (UOB) and The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The partnership with UOB has existed since 1987 and the College currently offers foundation degrees BA (Hons) Top-Up and a BA (Hons) top-up programme. The University of Central Lancashire partnership was developed in 2010 to deliver a foundation degree and HNC in Nuclear Engineering. The college extended its HE provision by delivering both HND/C courses from 2012/13.

The progression rate to Higher Education for the young people of Hastings and Rother is one of the lowest in East Sussex. Hastings is ranked as the second most deprived ward in East Sussex and the nineteenth most deprived in the UK. The 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked Hastings overall level of deprivation as one of the worst in the South East and 19th of the 326 Local Authorities for local concentrations of multiple deprivation dropping from 32nd most deprived in 2007. There are also distinct pockets of deprivation across Rother (ranked 139 overall) with areas of Sidley in the top 10% most deprived in the country and further areas of Bexhill and Rye in the top 20% most deprived. 9 out of 12 LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) Castle, Central St Leonards and Gensing wards are ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally.

This Access Agreement for 2018-19 pays careful consideration to the local demographic in East Sussex. Through this agreement the College seeks to ensure that its vocational provision in HE is maintained at the highest standards.

Higher Education is an integral part of the work of the College and is carried out with the following aims:

- To widen participation so that more students and non-traditional students in the East Sussex area can access Higher Education.
- To provide a supportive progression route to Higher Education for those without the formal entry requirements or who have non-traditional qualifications.
- To offer opportunities for progression from within the college for those learners completing level 3 programmes of study.
- To provide blended and flexible learning including e-learning, off site, part-time and top-up provision to ensure the college engages with local and regional employers.
- To provide professional research and development opportunities for all staff
- To provide flexible HE that is responsive to local employer requirements,

particularly in sectors where participation in HE is currently low.

2. SCCH HE Strategic Plan 2015-18

Mission

Sussex Coast College Hastings will provide and grow a first class Higher Education offer to meet the needs of individuals, employers and the local communities of Hastings and Rother.

Strategic Aim 1:

Provide a flexible, relevant and distinctive curriculum that supports and meets the needs of local people and employers whilst increasing the number of International students on programmes (Annex 1 outlines the current and future curriculum developments)

Strategic Aim 2:

Increase and widen participation in Higher Education amongst local residents in Hastings and Rother

Strategic Objective 3:

Ensure HE students benefit from a high quality teaching and learning experience, which meets their needs, employers and local, regional and the national economy

3. Fee Levels, Student Success and Progression Measures

Fee levels for 2018/9

Fee category – Full time courses	F/T Fee PA	P/T Fee PA
BA (Hons) degrees (Three year undergraduate degree)	£7,500	£3,750
BA (Hons) Top –degrees (One year	£7,500	£3,750
HND	£5,900	£2,950 (HNC)
HND (Brighton Film School)	£6,165	£3,083

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Estimated Additional Fee Income	£267,000	£290,400	£314,000	£348000
Additional Income spent on Access Measures	£48,000	£62,717	£73,000	£87,000

4. Resourcing priorities for 2018/19

1. Access	£7,000		Outreach work (see below)
2. Student Success	£7,280		Retention of students (HE Mentor) whilst on courses
3. Financial Support	£20,000		Bursaries for FT students from low income families £13 ,000 for full time students
4. Progression	£7,280		To support students into employment
Total	£41,560		

We have attempted to cover our own HE aims and objectives as outlined in the colleges HE Strategic plan 2015-18. We have reflected in the expectation by Ofra to take into account the student life cycle and made an attempt to spread this across three main areas.

We attempt to improve retention and attainment by currently employing a HE Mentor who supports students that are struggling on the course. Students are referred by Course Leaders or can book to see the Mentor themselves. Accurate records are kept which looks at the background issues and evaluates the support given and required. The information then gets fed back to the course leadership where concerns can be raised and external support can be recommended if required. The Mentor is managed by the HE Manager who can support and act on an individual basis if required. This is set to continue.

5. Financial Support for Students 2018/19

1. £500 maximum cash bursary for students income of below £25,000 per year. This will be paid in 2 sums of £250 on 1st December and 1st March subject to engagement demonstrated by attendance, only applicable to home students (application on a first come first serve basis) those with an income of up to £42,875 will receive a maximum of £300.
2. A Hardship Fund will be created to support any student in dire financial need. All eligibility will be based on an assessment of household income and outgoings. Normally to be eligible to apply for hardship award the applicants will have a residual income of under £25,000 per annum.
3. Annual evaluation will take place based on retention and success criteria for those awarded bursary support.

6. Outreach activities

1. to support progression to HE from the College's level 3 provision, in particular to the promotion and development of activities which engage 16-18 learners who are completing their level 3 qualifications, Access to Higher Education and other students who come with non-traditional qualifications. Sussex Coast College Hastings is committed to collaborating with other Higher Education Institutions to provide quality outreach opportunities for non-traditional learners across Sussex.
2. to support a range of other outreach activities for adults to encourage a greater number of people from NS-SEC and LPN backgrounds to apply and study with us. These include tasters during Adult Learners Week each May and forging partnerships with other local adult education groups to discuss potential progression onto our HE programmes. Our team of employer engagement staff also provide information on HE progression routes and courses to employees in the local area. Data will be captured to show whether the named adults involved in these outreach activities actually convert to applications and enrolments onto HE programmes.

The College currently has a strong relationship with the University of Brighton, based on a tradition of partnership for providing information, advice and guidance for our learners. We intend to build on this relationship in the coming academic years, supporting each other's outreach efforts to enhance the experience participants.

Through our partnership network, we are currently exploring ways of further developing our collaborative outreach work to provide quality opportunities for Widening participation pupils and students across Sussex.

The college has begun to develop a longer term approach to outreach with the introduction of a Primary college initiative that encourages groups of Primary school children to attend taster sessions to enable them to experience our college and see what potential progression routes are available to them. This work targets Year 6 students to embed ideas of potential progression as they transfer to secondary school. The college also provides a wide range of Year 10 and 11 taster activities that provide young people with FE and HE information to support progression. The college has also recently formed a new group focused upon educational attainment and progression in the town. Entitled the Hastings Academies and College Alliance (HACA) it contains all four secondary schools, the college and the University of Brighton as members and is focused upon raising the quality of education, standards and results and progression though and to HE. This is part of the colleges longer term planning and support for the area.

This Access Agreement is the responsibility of the Head of HE within the college. He is line managed by the Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality who will oversee this work and ensure compliance with this agreement.

These personnel are in turn held to account on the key performance indicators within the document by the Curriculum Quality and Standards Committee who receive reports on progress twice-yearly. The Quality and Standards committee is chaired by the Vice Chairman of the College Corporation and will monitor and oversee the delivery of this agreement. The committee also contains student representation, via the Student President.

The committee will review progress and make recommendations accordingly based on the use of socio-economic data from student enrolments to ensure that access is fair and the student body is commensurate with the wider socio-economic demography of the Hastings and Rother area.

This Access Agreement will be monitored on a regular basis placing emphasis on monitoring the key performance indicators at quarterly Principal's Performance Review audits throughout the year. The information will be shared with other Heads of Learning at the Higher Education Strategy Board.

Widening participation

The undergraduate curriculum has been planned to encourage students to study at the College and developed in conjunction with local industry partners. Through information gained partly through the College's Work based learning team, the college now is focusing and investing further on a local vocational training agenda at HE level that will support key local businesses and anticipate the developments of industry. It is hoped this will both encourage participation and demonstrate that the College is aware of the educational needs of the local community and committed to responding to these, through an HE offer including foundation degrees and Higher National Diplomas in several subject areas and a variety of study modes.

This offer seeks to improve existing levels of recruitment from underrepresented groups: 38% of the College's 2011-12 cohort came from NS-SEC categories 4-7, with 32% of this cohort also coming from Low Participation POLAR neighbourhoods 1 and 2. 62% of this cohort received the maximum available University bursary, because their household income was below £25,000.

Despite the local issues of low participation and deprivation in Hastings and Rother, these rates are lower than at some other FECs in Sussex, and the College has set targets to address this. In particular, the College will seek to:

- i. increase participation from under-represented groups as defined by NS-SEC and LPN data
- ii. increase internal progression from Further Education to Higher Education

Targeting groups

Schools

The University Centre are investigating opportunities to recruit an HE specific school liaison coordinator. The purpose of this post will be to raise aspirations within the local demographic. They will liaise with student ambassadors to promote interactive activities to local schools and to host taster sessions and competitions in growth areas such as the engineering and IT industry.

No opportunities within the local area to sponsor a school (due to academy status) however investigations are underway in the wider vicinity. However, the VEP (Vertical Education Partnership) provides opportunities to widen access and participation within two local schools. Use of current HE students and virtual reality simulators have been used to engage with students and raise awareness within local schools.

Plans are in place to develop the tracking and monitoring of school progression through widening participation activities. This will include the development of inter-school competitions.

Employers

We will offer Higher Apprenticeships and our dedicated sales team will recruit employers from local businesses including employers who want to progress through to level 4 & 5.

Recruitment fairs

We are looking to target this potential market which will include youth centres and other youth organisations to invite them into a 'Did you Know that you could Study for a Degree' event at the college, or at their venue, to attempt to overturn the myth of only academically orientated students succeeding at university level. We will provide overall student support and financial advice. HE in FE tends to be more supportive and we don't believe new potential students realise this. We aim to attempt to change this through these workshops.

University Centre

Significant work is currently being undertaken by community stakeholders in the town as to what they see the future of the new university centre in Hastings being. The report will indicate what a range of people in Hastings want which could provide us with valuable market research which can be utilised setting up focus groups in the community.

7. Performance to Date Against Our Targets and Milestones

N/A – All our directly funded numbers fees have been under the £6,135 fee threshold. We have reported this to OFFA each year which has been acknowledged.

8. SCCH Monitoring and Impact Assessment Capability

The college will include the monitoring of all data against its targets set out in the Access Agreement, this will become an agenda item at each board held three times per year (1 per

term) Key members of the group HE management and the Student Services department will report on activity, progress, issues, ensuring that the work is carried out against the quality assurance cycle set out for HE. Issues and concerns and what impact the Access Agreement has had on a yearly basis will be raised and discussed for future consideration. The Director of HE will report this impact to the PPR (Principals Performance Review) meeting (three times per year), to report to Senior Management of progress, Governors will be present as part of this process.

Annual Self Evaluation conducted by the college will provide an opportunity to analyse progress against performance data set in the agreement, and evaluate on a year on year basis to ensure the offering is accurate.

The college will review its monitoring processes of its expenditure to ensure that the correct expenditure and impact is undertaken, we recognise that we are new to this system and will endeavour to honour this to the best of our ability as this will be our first year.

The evaluation of our outreach work will form part of our annual reporting to our Corporation. We have discussed with UCAS and will purchase, as part of the UCAS package, POLAR data. This will provide us with key data to analyse.

We will compare the percentage of data received from our outreach work in comparison to our enrolment numbers to ascertain if the feedback received at the events and focus groups is being implemented.

All interview forms/enrolment forms at the college will ask where they heard about the course. We will include an option for 'external event' and 'If so, where was the event held?', for example.

Feedback forms from these events will help us to assess and develop our outreach approach and establish good and bad practice.

9. Consulting with the Student Body

The most recent involvement with have had was in 2011/12, a focus group was convened made up of level 4, 5 and 6 students. General questions were asked regarding the colleges current system regarding scholarships and bursaries including communication of information, amount, payment and usage. The basic proposal for the Colleges 2014/15 OFFA agreement was outlined and feedback was provided below:

- 95% of students were satisfied with the method and timeframes for payments
- 5% of students suggested that a payment award be made to students could be made for students who made good progress.
- 100% of students did not want fee waivers
- 90% of students were happy receiving their bursary in two payments, with only 10% suggesting that the bursary be split in monthly payments. This echoes the past EMA method of student payments that was given to many of our level 3 students who have progressed onto our HE programmes.
- Students generally wanted more information prior to application/ enrolment regarding bursaries, scholarships etc. They understood that this information was available to them on Direct.gov but thought it useful to adopt this with the colleges marketing for HE. This supports an action point by QAA at the colleges recent IQER (March 2012) that the college needs to provide more student focused information to applicants.

10. Equality and Diversity

Overview

Sussex Coast College, Hastings is committed to Equality and Diversity in everything we do:

- in access to all our curriculum, academic or vocational, for all those who wish to learn.
- in the delivery of the highest quality education and training to everyone.
- in employing staff and all our employment practices
- in our partnerships with other bodies
- in our procurement of goods and services

Our Single Equality Scheme is a key element within our strategic objectives. The Scheme demonstrates our commitment to not just fully meet our obligations as set out in the Equality Act 2010 but to become a beacon organisation that others look to for best practice.

We will work with our community to raise and work on issues of equality and to promote the advantages of a diverse and mixed society. Our curriculum aims to develop in a manner that meets the needs of our community and the ability of our students to compete in the local, national and international arena.

We do not envisage teaching to be 'outstanding' unless it takes into account issues of equality and diversity and prepares our students to work in a culturally diverse society either within the UK or internationally. As an employer we will ensure that all our processes are in line with good practice in Equality and Diversity.

Our Single Equality Scheme Aims

To cover the protected characteristics of the abovementioned Equality Act 2010:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Age
- Sexuality orientation
- Religion and Belief
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Plus:

- Economic and Social Inclusion

We aim to:

- Ensure the development of a curriculum that enables all sections of our community to raise their aspirations and to achieve their maximum potential.
- Support learning programmes at appropriate and accessible levels for all potential learners, enabling progression.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the content and delivery of our learning programmes.
- Provide a learning and working environment which is safe and free of bullying and harassment relating to the above characteristics.
- Provide a learning environment which is accessible to all.
- Work with local bodies, statutory or voluntary, to develop and provide a College which is central to the Hastings and Rother community and its regeneration programme.
- Support bidding for funds which will help us achieve these aims in partnership with others in the community.
- Actively participate in the moves to promote and regenerate Hastings and Rother as a place which welcomes people from diverse cultures, faiths and beliefs, and ways of living.

- Celebrate the achievements of individuals and groups who have assisted the progression to equality of opportunity.
- Aim to recruit, retain and develop a workforce that reflects the diverse nature of the locality and employ the very best staff available to enable us to reach our aims.
- Implement a continuing professional development plan in Equality and diversity for all staff.
- Use positive action to help meet the college targets

We have:

Zero tolerance of bullying, discrimination, any behaviour which may make the college feel an unsafe place or of behaviours which damage or worsen the physical environment for others on grounds of the above characteristics or for any other reason.

Equality and Diversity Objectives

Our Single Equality and Diversity Objectives are:

- Set out targets against which we can be measured on improvement of Equality and Diversity, in all nine categories
- Use our Principal's Performance Review process to monitor our progress on equality and diversity issues and that it delivers increased understanding of issues so as to develop our performance on equality and diversity.
- Develop equality and diversity impact measurements in all divisions and departments to ensure progress can be made in each of the areas of the College.
- Develop performance indicators and quality measurements that enable us to monitor and report our progress.
- Develop our Equality Impact Assessment process to ensure that all new processes, policies and significant changes are fully assessed and that a plan for impact assessing existing services, policies and practises is introduced.
- To embed Equality and Diversity within all Teaching and Learning.
- To ensure all staff and students receive an induction programme which ensures they understand the legal requirements of Equality and Diversity
- To ensure the student admissions policy and process is audited annually and produce a report for SLT
- To ensure that Equality and Diversity is fully introduced in all our procurement of goods and services.
- To work with our partners to promote Equality and Diversity.

Further details of our equality and diversity policy can be found in the full Single Equality Scheme document.

11. Provision for Information to Prospective Students

The College provides clear and accurate information about fees and financial support. We will ensure that the planned year on year increase in fees is clearly communicated to students. The web site lists fees in categorised tabular form and a detailed fees policy document is available to view on line and download. The College website meets the requirements of the Key Information Set and UNISTATS. All appropriate full and part-time course pages display the interactive KIS widget and content updates have been made to add the full programme specification for all programmes with module level details including learning outcomes and assessment requirements.

Sussex Coast College will provide the following information for all our HE students and stakeholders:

- Information on fees through our website
- Course information through the HE prospectus
- Details of financial support

- Details of other resources available at the College
- UCAS website/fairs
- Publication of KIS information

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: **Sussex Coast College Hastings**

Institution UKPRN: **10002923**

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
T16a_01	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	The aim will be to encourage and support a higher % of our existing level 3 students to progress onto our own Higher Education	No	2015-16	3%	10%	15%	20%	22	24	There will be an expansion of programmes and the redevelopment of a new University Centre in Hastings POLAR3 category. 53% of your 2015-16 enrolments were from postcodes in the lowest 2 categories of participation this only applies to students on UoB courses, so difficult to make a full judgement
T16a_02	Access	Socio-economic	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	To retain and support mature students	No	2015-16	10	14	16	18	20	22	No baseline data, this is an approximate total at this time
T16a_03	Access	Socio-economic	Other statistic - Low-income backgrounds (please give details in the next column)	Increase recruitment from students with a residual household income below £25,000	No	2015-16	33%	35%	36%	37%	38%	39	More indepth baseline data required, this info from UoB partnership data only
T16a_04	Student success	Socio-economic	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (All, full-time, first degree entrants)	To reduce student drop out	No	2015-16	15	6%	6	5	4	4	Non continuation %, increase in facilities, programme offer, pastoral and academic support to reduce drop out %
T16a_05	Progression	Socio-economic	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Progression and other Statistic - Progression to Employment or further study.	No	2015-16	60%	62%	64%	68%	70%	72	Appropriate total based AHR anotal data. The college is currently working to develop Inhouse process to capture all Data, not rely on DHEL
T16a_06	Access	Attainment raising	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Raising attainment in schools	No	2017-18	15	17	19	21	23	25	Working in conjunction with Sussex Downs College, measuring volume of enrolments and engagement of students in POLAR3. This will be achieved by school based activities and competitions. Investigating options for HE specific school liaison post to ensure school and college leavers are fully informed of their progression opportunities.

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	

Optional commentary on milestones.

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



Access Agreement, 2018-19

Executive Summary

This access agreement relates to the setting of fees for the UK and EU students entering Higher Education programmes at Sussex Downs College 2018-2019. Programmes include two-year Foundation Degrees and Top-up Bachelor (Honours) Degrees.

This Access agreement sets out how Sussex Downs College will be aiming to improve Access to Higher Education, student success and progression amongst those groups currently under-represented in Higher Education. The college has taken a strategic approach responding to national and regional agendas for widening access, as well as objectives identified within the college's strategic statement.

We aim to meet our objectives through collaboration, both internally and externally, and by continuing to work towards embedding widening access into the institution, addressing the whole student life cycle.

Through careful monitoring, we will evaluate and prioritise programmes and activities that have the greatest impact.

We aim to work closely with our validating partner, the University of Brighton, and will work closely with our local partner schools, colleges, employers and other stakeholders.

We aim to continue working to embed widening access, outreach, student access and progression initiatives throughout the college.

Although there have been national changes to the NSP and the way ALF is delivered, we will continue to offer Sussex Downs College students a package of financial and welfare support to maximise recruitment, retention and success.

1. College vision and strategic plan

Vision

Sussex Downs College seeks to provide an aspirational, transformative higher education experience, giving students the opportunity to experience an excellent local

learning environment where they are supported to become confident, skilled and valued graduates.

We will provide high quality; local and accessible, employment focused higher education.

Higher Education Strategic Plan

The College aims to grow its higher education provision to meet the current and future demand of identified higher-level technical and professional skills. In doing so, the College will provide a genuinely transformational experience for students enabling a Sussex Downs College graduate to be:

- Technically skilled in their field
- Knowledgeable about their industry
- Able to apply their knowledge in practical situations
- Employable and enterprising
- Confident in making decisions, solving problems and presenting themselves
- Critically informed and analytical within and beyond their subject

This will be achieved through five key strategic aims:

1. to provide high quality education that delivers excellent student outcomes;
2. to providing an outstanding HE experience for our students in a supportive and personalised learning environment;
3. to develop a higher skills curriculum, which supports local and regional economic demands and prepares all graduates for lifelong employment;
4. to provide an accessible curriculum that enables progression for a wide range of local people; and
5. to develop the College workforce to deliver current practice and research-informed pedagogy.

2. Fees, student numbers and fee income

This access agreement sets out the tuition fees and financial support arrangements for full time UK and EU students entering Higher Education courses at Sussex Downs College that are funded through the direct contract with HEFCE from 1st September 2018. It describes the proportion of tuition fee income to be spent on access and student success measures and how this income will safeguard and maintain fair access.

The College is developing a curriculum which is driven by a strategic focus on access, retention, student success and progression to further study or to/within employment as described in the Sussex Downs College Higher Education Strategy: 2017-2020. We will continue to evaluate the impact of financial support access and success initiatives made available to our students.

Our individual annual student fees for full-time under-graduate qualifications for 2018/19 are set out below for the following programmes:

- Two-year Foundation Degrees - £7500
- One year Top-Up Bachelor Degree - £7500

- Higher National Certificate or Diploma - £5900

3. Access, student success and progression measures

Context

In 2016/17, our HE student cohort included:

- 44% mature students (25+)
- 24% from POLAR3 quintile 1
- 24% with a declared disability
- 46% with declared household income of less than £25,000
- 5% from BME groups

Access to Higher Education

The College aims to maintain and further develop a collaborative network with schools, colleges and other FE and HE institutions to undertake activity to raise awareness of and aspiration to study at HE level. The College aims to raise awareness of progression opportunities to employment post degree, to promote personal development and motivation, and to develop skills to progress to higher-level study.

We are a partner in the Sussex Learning Network (SLN). The Sussex Learning Network is a partnership of universities, colleges, training providers and guidance agencies who want to transform the opportunities for learners in Sussex. Their work brings together new research and curriculum development, widening participation activities, and careers education, information, advice and guidance to support the whole learner journey into and through higher education and on into employment.

The SLN allows the College to improve the quality and range of its access work by being part of a collaborative regional community of practice. Currently the College is working in partnership with the SLN to deliver the National Collaborative Outreach Project (NCOP) and sees this work as a valuable opportunity to complement and extend the existing WP activities of the College.

As part of this partnership, the College aims to develop additional curricula that meets local demands as identified in the Higher Education Strategy and offers new and flexible ways for students to access Higher Education.

The College is committed to collaborating with other HE and FE providers to provide quality outreach opportunities for non-traditional students across Sussex. We have a close relationship with the University of Brighton for the provision of information, advice and guidance for our students. We continue to build on this relationship, supporting each other's outreach work whenever possible.

Our planned outreach work includes:

- A number of information evenings and events for parents and potential students with speakers to increase understanding of the transition the HE
- Progression arrangements for students on foundation degrees to top up to degree level programmes at the College and validating university
- Visits to schools, colleges and public events

We aim to provide focused outreach activity to engage students who would not normally progress to HE, through the following activities:

- Establishing and nurturing partnerships with the local community: We will continue to work with the local community to develop links from school through to mature learners on Access and HE programmes.
- Holding taster events for local schools and colleges
- Holding internal progression events which raise existing (FE) learners' awareness of the opportunities offered through progression to Higher Education, at Sussex Downs and elsewhere
- Establishing progression agreements with other institutions
- Providing focused, subject specific outreach activities in particular where a recruitment imbalance exists within particular subject areas
- Student Ambassador schemes
- Working with employers and local industry to establish curricula and modes of study that enable part-time and distance learning opportunities

We aim to work closely with local schools and colleges to enable more pupils to be in a position to progress directly to Higher Education, or to progress to Further education study. We are seeking to identify gaps in our provision and by working with local schools to develop aspirational, cross-cutting subjects at Degree level.

Our work with schools will include:

- Identifying and supporting, through subject focused work, an increase in attainment in related L2 and L3 subjects which will increase progression to Higher Education
- Aspirational events to support higher attainment in English, Maths and Sciences, with the view to increasing readiness to study at higher level
- Events and support to increase awareness and effectiveness of our Digital Passport to Higher Education, developed through NCOP activities as a L2 stepping stone to the College and Higher Education

Student Success

Relatively small class sizes across our Higher Education offer enables tutors to respond to individual student's needs. The College will maintain excellent approaches supporting students, through inclusive pedagogic practice and the additional support for students with identified additional need.

Employability and enterprise is embedded within the curriculum and this supports students in identifying and creating opportunities to succeed on graduation. Students are supported to engage in placement activities which enable students to experience and establish professional networks during their studies. Resources are available to allow student to develop their skills in commercial, public settings (through the provision of salons, workshops), allowing students to access additional learning opportunities that meet industry standards and expectations.

In response to student feedback the College has committed to developing HE specific learning and social spaces, recognising the trajectory of student autonomy and to facilitate collaborative working opportunities.

It is expected that initial engagement with the AoC Scholarship Project, relating to Employer Engagement will reinforce how students and the College are able to engage with future employers; supporting the development of meaningful curricula and reinforcing the value of HE within the local community. Further engagement with the AoC project seeks to establish a Peer Assisted Study Session programme for all students, with the aim of increasing student retention and success.

Progression

All Foundation Degree programmes have an identified progression route to further study, at either Sussex Downs or other local institutions.

Graduate progression is informed by regular input from visiting speakers and supported by the College Careers and progression services. We intend to increase the engagement of employers with the College, with the view to increasing successful progression to employment.

4. Financial support

We intend to continue to make progress on **our** widening participation milestones and targets and we propose to spend 25% of our additional fee income above £6,000 per annum on widening participation measures for 2018-2019. This amounts to around £101,250 and includes the provision of:

- Bursary payments
- Outreach activities which complement the work of NCOP activity
- Progression support
- Additional and targeted information and advice
- Intervention services to increase student success

Awards of between £500 and £300 will be given in the form of cash bursaries to students with a residual household income below £42,875.

Priority will be given to the most disadvantaged. Awards are given on a first come, first served basis with no guarantee that all applications can be supported.

We will continue to offer support for students through the following schemes: -

1. Cash bursaries - low income:

Annual awards will be given to students; those with low household incomes - for those with a residual income of below £25,000 a bursary of up to £500 will be payable, for those with a residual income higher than £25,001 but below £42,875 a bursary of up to £300 will be payable. Bursaries are payable in installments subject to engagement demonstrated by attendance. Students who sit in multiple categories will only be given one award.

2. Cash bursaries – other WP characteristics:

Students with other WP characteristics as defined by OFFA may also be awarded bursaries up to £500. Each application is judged on merit. No

award to an individual student will exceed £500 in any one academic year. Bursaries are payable in installments subject to engagement demonstrated by attendance. Students who sit in multiple categories may only be eligible for one award

3. Hardship Fund: This fund is based on a student's income and expenditure whilst at college and is intended to provide short-term financial support. Students must be receiving their full loan entitlement to be eligible for the Hardship Fund

5. Targets and milestones

Sussex Downs has set focused targets that aim to maintain and improve levels of widening participation, and to ensure that these learners are well supported and achieve. These include:

- To increase the diversity across cohorts of Higher Education students
- To improve retention and achievement rates
- To increase internal progression from Level Three to Higher Education
- Offer increased flexibility in our modes of delivery
- Develop stronger links with local schools, colleges and employers
- Work directly with schools to provide inspirational and innovative support to L2
 - pupils
- Ensure access for prospective students to clear, unambiguous information
- To effectively track, monitor and support students
- Ensure the effectiveness of IAG, recruitment, enrolment and induction
 - experience.

6. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

We will undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of this Access Agreement.

We aim to collect and analyse data from access events, this is used to inform future curriculum planning and potential student interest in HE. We collect information at enrolment that helps us to identify the characteristics of our student body; this helps us target our support more effectively.

Data collected from outreach activities and work with schools will allow us to monitor the success of our engagement activities, through increased and higher quality applicants, higher levels of success and internal progression. Evaluation of outreach activities will inform curriculum development and continued work with our work with schools to progress to Higher Education and college study.

Quality processes and direct engagement with our students enables us to monitor the impact of this Access Agreement, using established and developing activities, such as:

- Student voice activity: gathered from student representatives and student fora, Course Boards, satisfaction surveys and informal opportunities for student feedback
- College Higher Education Boards, which manages the quality of Higher

- Education offer in the College, the Higher Education Management Group which enables the strategic aims of the College
- Annual course monitoring and review
- External Examiner reports

The Higher Education Management Group will monitor progress with milestones and measuring success.

7. Equality and diversity

Sussex Downs College is committed to developing an inclusive environment for all students, staff and visitors. One of our key objectives is to enrich and enhance the student experience at all stages of the student journey. This reflects the College's principles of equality and diversity in all of our work.

The College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all; this is supported by College Policies and development activities for staff and induction activities for students. Our access agreement aims to provide fair access to HE courses for applicants from low participation neighborhoods and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to ensure no students are disadvantaged. We will continue to monitor data relating to applicant and student demographics, retention, achievement and progression outcomes for all of our students.

8. Provision of information to prospective students

The College publishes clear, accessible and timely information for prospective students on Higher Education fees and the range of financial support available. Communication is through the College website, promotional materials; the UCAS website, Higher Education's admissions process, our offer to students and through information events and open days at both College, local schools and public events.

The College's website is the primary communication method for all of the College's public information. The website meets the requirements of the Key Information Set and UNISTATS and additionally provides key information about the College including College Governance, policies, College strategies, contact information, fees, finance, and support available to students.

The Higher Education team, admissions staff, student support services, course tutors and the marketing team provide information and students are consulted on the effectiveness of this public information.

9. Consulting with students.

Sussex Downs College aims to be an outstanding organisation that welcomes the views of its students to improve their educational experience; ensuring that the teaching learning and assessment students receive is of high quality, personalised, challenging and relevant.

The College is committed to involving students in its strategic decision-making and operational management processes and believes that students have key roles to play in self-assessment and improvement, allowing students to shape their

own Higher Education experience, leading to improved success.

Student representation is embedded at all levels of committee structures at the College and plays a vital role in the development and assurance of our Higher Education offer

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: **Sussex Downs College**

Institution UKPRN: **10006432**

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
T16a_01	Access	Low income background	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To develop a more diverse HE student profile and a more balanced representation across curriculum areas. Especially from families with below average income.	No	2011-12	83%	85	85	85	85	85	To include entrants from families with below average incomes, part-time students and those with disabilities. Currently NS-SEC 4-7 stands at 22%. SDC(Eastbourne has a slightly higher lower participation neighbourhood LPN (Polar 3) than the University of Brighton and Partner College average of 23%. Also, 86% of SDC students from the Eastbourne campus and 81% from Lewes come from the state sector. The University of Brighton average is 63% and Partner College average is 78%.
T16a_02	Access	Socio-economic	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Increase the number of HE programmes that meet the needs of WP students e.g. flexible, part-time modes of study, distance learning and/or modular components	No	2011-12	22%	40	45	45	45	50	Focus will be on distance learning and modular delivery for all programmes with the exception of programmes where specialist resources for practical work are a restricting factor e.g. Complementary Healthcare
T16a_03	Student success	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To increase the number of students completing the two year programme, supported by broad L3 attainment and ability to access cross-cutting subjects	No	2011-12	80	90	92	94	94	94	Increase will be achieved by additional support for students suffering financial hardship and those struggling academically. This will be achieved by enhanced welfare services and non-academic tutoring.
T16a_04	Progression	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase top % of Foundation Degree students that are able to progress onto degree top-ups to 45%, supported by higher level attainment at L2 in English Maths and Sciences.	Yes	2011-12	31	45	45	45	45	45	Currently our progression rate is 31% and we intend to improve on this subject to future validation agreements with University of Brighton or other HEI
T16a_05	Access	Multiple	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	To increase internal progression (FE to HE) for students that are under-represented in college and nationally at HE, from 11% in 2010/11 to 25% in 2017/18	No	2011-12	11	25	28	30	30	30	To further develop internal curriculum progression from both L3 academic and vocational pathways for non traditional HE students
T16a_06	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T2b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, part-time entrants)	To develop our L4 Higher Apprenticeship numbers	No	2013-14	0	25	30	35	35	35	Continue to work with Sussex Learning Network and Centre for Work and Learning to develop L4 apprentices in business, accounting, financial services and care.

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	

Optional commentary on milestones.

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