



**East Sussex College Group
2019-20 Access and Participation Plan**

Assessment of Current Performance

The East Sussex College Group – Introduction to the College

The East Sussex College Group is a Further Education College serving East Sussex, with campuses situated in Hastings, Ore Valley, Eastbourne, Newhaven, and Lewes. The College Group is the result of the merger between Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College in March 2018. Both former colleges in the Group were subject to a Quality Review Visit in 2017 from The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and the outcome was 'confidence' in the Higher Education offer.

The College Group has longstanding relationships with its validating partners, the University of Brighton and Pearson Education, and offers Honours Degrees, Foundation Degrees and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas across a broad range of subject areas.

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

We aim to meet our objectives through collaboration, both internally and externally, and by continuing to work towards embedding widening access, outreach, student success and progression in to the institution, supporting the whole student life cycle.

Through careful monitoring, we will evaluate and prioritise programmes and activities that have the greatest impact, and aim to reduce the difference in success for those students with Widening Participation characteristics.

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.

The merging of two college systems will take place this year. Key areas / targets will be analysed, such as progression in to further study or employment, an increase of Black and Minority Ethnic Students and disabled students, which are part of our aims in the collage. We will use external data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, such as Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education, and build an internal reporting data system that tracks progress using the RAG rating process.

Our internal reports from our Management Information System will be RAG rated and will flag up automatically if targets are on track. The reporting will flag up whether incremental targets are being met (e.g. for white males from low-socio-economic background).

Context

From the 2016/17 academic year, the College identified the following group profiles which inform the contents of this Access and Participation Plan, together with their standing against local or national benchmarks:

- 48% mature students (25+), UK average: 11%
- 35% from POLAR4 quintile 1, benchmark: 11.4% (South East)
- 20% declared disability, UK average: 12%
- 20% from BME groups, UK average 22%

Targets from the previous Access Agreement identified six key areas:

1. Increasing the number of the College's level 3 students progressing to our own Higher Education.
2. Decreasing the non-continuation rate of mature students.
3. Increasing the proportion of students recruited from low-income families.
4. Decreasing the non-continuation rate overall.
5. Increasing the progression to employment or further study.
6. Raising attainment in schools.

The College has made significant progress against its key areas of focus between 2015 and 2017:

1. The number of student progressing internally from the College's level three provision has risen from 4.8% to 17.8%.
2. Retention of mature students in comparison to young first time degree students showed a negative gap of 18.4% in 2015/16, which has been significantly reduced to 7.5% in 2016/17. However, the College aims to reduce this further as indicated by its milestones.
3. The number of students from low-income families has increased.
4. The overall non-continuation rate has made a significant improvement, decreasing from 39.2% to 18.1%. However, this remains an area for sustained improvement.

Our progress against these targets has been improved and, together with anecdotal feedback, student feedback and internal surveys, the College has identified specific areas for further development:

- High levels of declared disability and the impact this has on non-continuation and success.
- High levels of students from low income families and the impact of financial support in reducing non-continuation.
- An increase in mental health disabilities (declared or not) and the impact this has on non-continuation and achievement.
- Supporting access to Higher Education through raising attainment, aspiration and awareness in schools and colleges.

- To continue to increase the proportion of students from low-income and low participation areas of East Sussex.
- To reduce the current 10.2% gap in retention for students from the first and fifth most disadvantaged quintiles from POLAR3.
- To reduce the current gap of 4.6% in achievement for those students who have been identified with dyslexia.
- Closing the gaps in achievement and non-continuation rates, where they are affected by age, family income, disability or ethnicity.

Based on the 2016/17 cohort, the College Group has already exceeded the targets outlined in the previous Access Agreement in relation to the recruitment of mature students, the recruitment of students from low-income families and college-wide non-continuation rates. The College Group wishes to sustain and build on this success, with the additional aim of identifying and reducing any negative difference in outcomes for students identified with Widening Participation characteristics. Further aims are outlined below:

- To reduce the retention rate gap of 18% for Asian British students, and of 34% for Black British students.

The merging of two colleges has resulted in this joint Access and Participation Plan. 29 degree-level courses make up the combined Higher Education provision. The East Sussex College Group is committed to collaborating with other Higher Education institutions to provide quality outreach opportunities for non-traditional learners across Sussex. The College has a strong relationship with both the University of Brighton, based on a tradition of partnership for providing information, advice and guidance for learners. We intend to build on this relationship in the coming academic years, supporting each other's outreach efforts to enhance the experience of participants. We are also working closely with other institutions like the University of Sussex, and have planned a number of collaborative events with the University of Brighton which will benefit students. Some of these include:

- Two Higher Education Information evenings with speakers from UCAS and the University of Brighton on student Finance.
- Taster sessions across all four campus sites for level three students, targeting students from POLAR3 areas, in conjunction with the two National Collaborative Outreach Programme teams on site.
- The University of Brighton Compact Scheme includes talks on student life and transition from level three to level four study.
- Student finance instruction, including detailed information and advice on applications from our dedicated Higher Education Admissions team.
- UCAS personal statement workshops through the Colleges UCAS Co-ordinator, mock interviews, interview techniques and UCAS fairs.
- The College has a dedicated schools' liaison team and employer relation team who can offer detailed assistance and guidance.

Outreach activities:

- Partnership with the local community.

- Taster events for local schools/colleges.
- Progression agreements across all campus sites.
- Subject-specific outreach activities.
- Shadow Higher Education students events (buddy system).
- Mentoring and student ambassador scheme.
- A 'keeping warm' campaign for all applicants throughout the year through a range of communication strategies (weekly updates, emails from Higher Education Admissions Team, updates from Course Leaders).
- Open door policy for all students requiring support prior to study.

Evaluation

The College will undertake a mapping exercise to ensure that activities are matched to targets so that progress with targets can be monitored. Each target will be monitored incrementally to establish which targets are on track. This data report will be evaluated by senior management. Action plans will be established with clear time frames and realistic actions detailing how progress will be made. This could ultimately help inform future Access and Participation Plans.

This evaluation programme will become a requirement of:

1. The Higher Education Quality Insurance plan. This plan is the yearly action plan for the College and a requirement for each college department. We aim to identify where the gaps in our data targets and actuals are. We will produce robust data across all lifestyle stages (access, retention, attainment, progression into employment / highly skilled employment or further study) and identify any data trends that need to be addressed. This plan is monitored by the College's Executive Team, with clear targets against specific timescales including a RAG rating process. This plan is evaluated three times a year by the Senior Leadership Team and progress against targets discussed and analysed. Currently the Access and Participation Plan is not linked to this plan. This would ensure that key evaluation will take place and form a key part of the Colleges Higher Education department annual monitoring.
2. The Governors (Corporation) report, submitted in October of each academic year and presented to the Corporation by the Head of Higher Education. A section will be added to this paper to report to both the Senior Leadership Team and Governors on progress against targets and milestones in the Access and Participation Plan. This forum would also provide an opportunity for discussion around potential changes to the year's Access and Participation Plan. This forms part of the Office for Students' Governance statement of confidence, required on a yearly basis and submitted to the Office for Students in December each year.

Where targets are not met then more resources will be allocated to ensure that targets are being met incrementally, and progress reports will be submitted by Student Records / Admissions to the Senior Leadership Team to monitor progress.

The evaluation of financial support for students will look at where demand for support is beyond the allocation as set in the Access and Participation Plan. This will inform changes to subsequent agreements and a potential increase for support or direction of funds. Certain outreach activities may be funded centrally as a merged college, but this is still at the planning stage. We will conduct student forums twice yearly as part of our quality cycle, where students will be invited to feed back to the process of funding, including time frames of when students are in receipt of bursaries, and whether the allocation could be over a longer time frame. The Higher Education Admissions team will be part of the evaluation process too, so as to triangulate and see how the process or information could be improved.

Data will be compiled to assess retention and achievement via students who have received support, including a questionnaire to each student in receipt of support to ascertain what impact this has had, if any. This data could help the development of future plans. The College funds a Higher Education Mentor. This role works across the College Group and supports students who require support, generally study support, and support for working students who have families to support and are balancing study with many external pressures. The Higher Education Mentor keeps detailed records that can and have informed the College of emerging trends and potential areas where additional support is required.

The auditing / reporting of the evaluation of each year's Access and Participation Plan. as outlined previously to the Senior Leadership Team and Corporation, will help inform and provide a detailed account / picture of where the College is with its support. This will become even more crucial as the College is working over a 40-mile radius across 4 campus sites. Differences of demographics and challenges for each campus will almost certainly differ. The level of detail required will be crucial to ensure funding is directed fairly and where most needed.

Students will feed back regarding the Access and Participation Plan and its process through independent meetings conducted by the National Union of Students without college management, and through the opportunity to feed back in course boards (three per year). This will become an agenda item on the main Higher Education Boards (three per year). Evaluation from Student Representatives will be made to the Senior Leadership Team at this meeting. This information will help inform future plans.

Ambition and strategy

Our Strategic Plan

The East Sussex College Group aims to provide outstanding, responsive and viable academic, professional and technical learning provision with excellent progression opportunities to benefit individuals, communities and employers in East Sussex. The

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

Strategic Aim 1:

Provide a flexible, relevant and distinctive curriculum that supports and meets the needs of local people and employers.

Strategic Aim 2:

Increase and widen participation in Higher Education amongst local residents in East Sussex.

Strategic Aim 3:

Ensure Higher Education students benefit from a high quality learning and teaching experience, which meets their needs and those of local, regional and national employers and economies.

Our ambition

The College Group aims to target the following groups:

Students with disabilities

- Transition from level 3 college and local provision, building on the National Collaborative Outreach Programme work undertaken from 17/18, for students with disabilities and protected characteristics.
- Support during studies – Higher Education mentors, peer coaches, support for students to access Disabled Students' Allowance entitlement.
- Recognise and respond to a rise in mental health disabilities and the negative impact this has on entering, engaging and continuing in Higher Education.
- Support to exit and gain employment.

Black and Minority Ethnic Students

- Increase participation of Black and Minority Ethnic Students.
- Investigate options to target local schools and 6th forms.
- Develop a marketing campaign to encourage interest in Higher Education.
- Work with the College's National Collaborative Outreach Programme to develop an outreach programme to identify barriers and possible solutions.

Financial support

- Enabling students from low participation neighbourhoods to access Higher Education, following on from National Collaborative Outreach Programme work, building community support and establishing College Higher Education ambassadors.
- Enabling mature students to enter Higher Education by recognising a range of non-traditional qualifications and experiences in meeting entry criteria.
- Providing financial support for those students from the lowest income families to access Higher Education and improve continuation and success.

The College Group aims to support the student cycle in the following ways:

Outreach/pre-enrolment

- Developing a culture of internal progression to Higher Education in all areas of the College.
- Developing and maintaining a responsive curriculum that reflects the needs of the region and local communities.
- Working with communities that have low participation in Higher Education to establish a collaborative approach to higher skills acquisition and employment. Building on success identified in the National Collaborative Outreach Programme project, working with communities, schools and parent ambassadors.

During studies

- Higher Education mentors and peer coaches who are able to support the transition to and through Higher Education, encouraging and facilitating autonomous learners who will progress to employment.
- Support for students with specific learning difficulties and mental health disabilities, which become barriers to learning and risk non-continuation.

Preparing for employment and further study

- The provision of informed careers advice and guidance.
- Opportunities for students to develop meaningful professional networks as part of their course, and the development of flexible, responsive curricula that enable this.

Monitoring and evaluation

We will undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of this Access and Participation Plan and its targets.

We aim to collect and analyse data from access events and outreach activities. This will be used to inform future curriculum planning and potential student needs in Higher Education. 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, diverse 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 and Participation Plan, using established and developing activities, such as:

- Student voice activity gathered from student representatives and students from Course Boards, satisfaction surveys and informal opportunities for student feedback.
- College Higher Education Boards, reporting committees and Governance.
- Annual course monitoring and review.
- External Examiner reports.
- Results of internal and external surveys.

Access Priorities and Work plan

To reduce the current 10.2% gap in retention for students from the first and fifth most disadvantaged quintiles from POLAR3.

Measures to address priority

- Work with the College's National Collaborative Outreach Programme. Current results for the College in 2018-19 in terms of progression puts us in the top 10 in the country for this initiative. We intend to run coffee mornings for potential students or twilight events at the College or in local community centres as a myth busting exercise about Higher Education regarding areas such finance / debt, and opportunities including data on graduate wages. We will address their concerns during these events. This will also be an ideal opportunity to discuss potential options for studying Higher Education at the College for the parents as mature students, including Recognised Prior Learning, study skills, and earn as you learn.
- School liaison visits through the Colleges School Liaison Service in conjunction with our National Collaborative Outreach Programme team.
- The National Collaborative Outreach Programme for 2019-20 will include mature students; this opportunity should support more applications from this group.
- Graduate presentations and support progression of internal students from level 3 by college Alumni who have graduated from our Higher Education programmes, are in employment, and want to promote the benefits of studying at the College.
- Use of Higher Education Statistics Agency data to identify emerging trends.
- Develop outreach activities in local employment centres to promote Higher Education study.
- Develop additional marketing specifically for this target audience, in addition to main Higher Education marketing, highlighting benefits of studying Higher Education in a local college (small group sizes, 1-to-1 tuition, and excellent study skill support, local work experience links).
- Working with Eggtooth, a local organisation that supports underachievement for

students in receipt of free school meals in schools, through a joint programme to encourage progression to Higher Education.

Evaluation

- Narrative & empirical feedback. Survey feedback at end of sessions. Direct questioning! What are the barriers to Higher Education study? What more can the College do, as response to the obvious initiatives? What might support potential applicants into Higher Education (e.g. bursary, maintenance grant, modes of delivery – blended learning? Twilight study?)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency and Higher Education in Further Education Students data year on year should help support new opportunities
- The College is looking to engage with King's College London's parental engagement team. This Widening Participation team has had considerable success encouraging working class students into university. The College is to follow this model.

To reduce the current gap of 4.6% in achievement for those students who have been identified with dyslexia

Measures to address priority

- The College Group was successfully reaccredited for delivery of Disabled Students Allowance in February 2019. This now includes the potential to offer the service across the College group campuses. The College has appointed a full-time Higher Education additional needs supervisor to monitor and work individually with students with dyslexia. An in-house service will reduce the referral time for support. Historically, using external agencies has been an issue with referrals taking too long to action. Students will receive timely support that should ensure that they are supported early, and won't leave.
- A referral service for additional study support is available through a dedicated Study Skills Higher Education Mentor which is funded through the Access and Participation Plan. This member of staff helps with students to bridge the gap and expectations of student from level 3 to level 4.
- Drop-in workshops at specified times throughout the week, when support is required
- A dedicated Higher Education study area in the College's Learning Resource Centre, with relevant Dyslexia IT software and Learning Resource Centre support.
- Mitigating Circumstances boards will be held twice a year with one board for the complete College Group. This will be minuted and used as year-on-year data to monitor number of module Mitigating Circumstances for dyslexia. This could inform module design, if comparative data is evident year on year and hindering progress for students.
- Module design and delivery. New curriculum design offers opportunities and options for range of submission formats (e.g. formal presentation as opposed to dissertation).

Evaluation

- Narrative & empirical feedback as to the level of support provided to students with dyslexia, and the opportunity to make suggestions, through the College's Higher Education Exit Survey, completed by all Students. This can help evaluate and provide suggestions for future improvements to the measures we are to put in place.
- Mid-year course-level reporting will help capture progress of students, and whether students are falling behind, and whether or not our plans are working. College Success and Progression data year-on year will help plot progress and show if measures are working.

High levels of declared disability and the impact this has on non-continuation and success

Measures to address priority

- The College Group was successfully reaccruited for delivery of Disabled Students Allowance in February 2019. This now includes the potential to offer the service across the College group campuses. The College has appointed a full-time Higher Education additional needs supervisor to monitor and work individually with students with Dyslexia.
- A referral service for additional study support is available through a dedicated Study Skills Higher Education Mentor which is funded through the Access and Participation Plan. This member of staff helps with students to bridge the gap and expectations of student from level 3 to level 4.
- Open and transparent declaration of the disability process for all applicants.
- Formal extension of deadlines for assignments supports achievement, including in year module retrieval for level 4 students. This will be promoted more as part of the induction programme.
- Mitigating Circumstances processes used extensively for students. More work is required on the communication of this initiative, which can be complicated for students to understand. This should help students with disability so they don't see a barrier to learning.
- Mitigating Circumstances boards will be held twice a year with one board for the complete College Group. This will be minuted and used as year-on-year data to monitor number of module Mitigating Circumstances for disability. This could inform module design, if comparative data is evident year on year and hindering progress for students.
- Module design and delivery. New curriculum design offers opportunities and options for range of submission formats (e.g. formal presentation as opposed to dissertation).

Evaluation

- Narrative – module feedback from students could capture additional support requirements.
- One-to-one tutorials at course level (recorded) that can identify individual concerns and suggestions for future delivery.
- Mid-year course-level academic-level reporting will require feedback on dyslexia support progress and flag up any additional issues, so that the College can intervene.

- Empirical - Higher Education Statistics Agency data and attendance at regional Dyslexia support workshops to establish good practice and new methods of support to enable student success and potential additional resources required.

High levels of students from low income families and the impact of financial support in reducing non-continuation

Measures to address priority

- The 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan has been developed to be applicable for students with a household income of below £25,000. Previously this was up to and including £42,000. This will support the students in most need.
- Course fees. For the eighth year, Higher National Certificate and Diploma fees have remained below £6,000 at £5,900 per annum, with degree at £7,500 per annum. This is considerably less than full university-level courses.
- Increase of the hardship fund for student in 2019-20 with allocation spread over the full year. Historically this fund has been spent in term one. Spreading the allocation over the full year should help more students in need.
- Payment of fees is staggered throughout the year (three payments). The College can look at individual cases if students are struggling financially.
- The Higher Education Admissions Team holds finance drop-in sessions as an additional service, available by appointment or referral from course leaders. They have also produced a Student Money Guide for Higher Education Students.
- Flexible study. Generally, most full-time courses are delivered in two days, and part-time in one day. This allows students to work to support their studies. We support flexible study, and recognise that the majority of our students have to work to support their studies.

Evaluation

- Is the above working, and if not, why? Focus groups of students in receipt of hardship funding and bursaries will be asked to provide feedback as to whether the initiatives have worked. If not, how can the process or funding allocation be improved?
- Numbers of students continuing at the College will be an indicator of impact.

An increase in mental health disabilities (declared or not) and the impact this has on non-continuation and achievement

Measures to address priority

- The College Group was successfully reaccredited for delivery of Disabled Students Allowance in February 2019. This now includes the potential to offer the service across the College group campuses. The College has appointed a full-time Higher Education additional needs supervisor to monitor and work individually with students with needs, and this offers a counselling service. This service will increase with demand.

- The College has installed new 'safe rooms' in the College, where students can go and have some rest time away from studies, to help with stress of studying
- The College funds all students to be members of The National Union of Students. This provides an additional level of support, including 1-to-1, and is used by students. This can support the general Higher Education team, and students can discuss concerns in a safe environment (The National Union of Students Office). They have access to extensive support systems on a local, regional and national level. This can help inform the students and the staff.
- Mental health support notice boards on each campus site.
- To encourage students to declare mental health issues, as some don't. This information / request can be made at induction. Information about Disabled Students' Allowance to be given to all students, with an appropriate referral process.

Evaluation

- Narrative. What impact will the new measures above have? Focus groups, feedback to support measures. Student feedback at Course Boards.
- Trends in national mental health data for Higher Education students. Establish reasons for this and use national best practice systems adopted by other colleges.
- Participation in Regional Higher Education college partnership events for comparisons of experience and support to develop best practice.

Supporting access to Higher Education through raising attainment, aspiration and awareness in schools and colleges

Measures to address priority

- The College has a schools' liaison outreach team. The College has links with all the local schools and academies.
- The College works with the University of Brighton with a vertical partnership initiative to address attainment, aspiration and awareness in the local schools.
- The College holds three open days a year targeting local schools.
- The National Collaborative Outreach Programme representatives from the College deliver workshops in school and colleges to promote the benefits of Higher Education.
- Work with the schools to investigate Higher Education courses/routes in addition to current Higher Education portfolio.
- Higher Education Alumni to visit schools where they studied to present themselves as a case study for success. Campaign - I did it you and can do it too!
- Higher Apprenticeship courses as an alternative to traditional Higher Education study. Currently delivering two Higher Apprenticeship courses, something the College wants to increase.

Evaluation

- Increase of students progressing into Higher Education from local schools, yes or no?

- Identify national trends of study. More affordable to study in your local community.
- School focus groups including parental feedback about what would support studying Higher Education, especially for first generation students progressing to Higher Education.
- Evaluate whether Higher Apprenticeships are a developing market through the Office for Students, national apprenticeship forums and employers.

To continue to increase the proportion of students from low-income and low participation areas of East Sussex

Measures to address priority

- Targeted outreach work to local community centres.
- Incentives for parents to visit the College for advice/coffee morning, breaking barriers / myth busting.
- Alumni presentations from students who grew up and studied Higher Education locally, delivered at each campus. College pays for transport / lunch for students to attend.
- Set up focus groups within the community to look at barriers, and how best to address them.
- Consider scholarship programme – waivers for students in each of the key deprived areas in the region.

Evaluation

- Impact of application of potential scholarships – fee waivers.
- Focus groups with schools and students as to what they want.
- Data from the Sussex Learning Network. Any emerging trends in the region?

Closing the gaps in achievement and non-continuation rates, where they are affected by age, family income, disability or ethnicity

Measures to address priority

- Disabled Students' Allowance in-house service now in place to support students with disability, including funding for specialised equipment.
- Revised Access and Participation Plan that prioritises lower income families.
- Part-time options for all students.
- Developing blended delivery to support students, especially care leavers.

Evaluation

- Narrative. What impact will the new measures above have? Focus groups, feedback to support measures. Student feedback at Course Boards.
- Use data to assess (reduction) in non-continuation rates and achievement gap between students in categories listed.

To reduce the retention rate gap of 18% for Asian British students and 34% for Black British

students.

Measures to address priority

- Numbers of students are small in comparison to large universities and inner-city colleges. Set up internal focus group through the National Union of Students for Asian and Black British students to establish concerns and issues.
- Individual interviews with the Head of Higher Education to establish issues, and action plan to address drop in retention.
- Increase participation of these particular ethnic minorities, establish marketing campaign to encourage these minorities in to Higher Education.
- Work with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme to establish increase of recruitment of this demographic of students. An increase might encourage retention as a more critical mass will be present across our campuses.

Evaluation

- Establish issues and establish in real terms (actual numbers) if this is a significant issue.
- Assess interventions taken via focus groups and individual interviews with students.

Care leavers

Measures to address priority

- Identify care leavers currently studying at the College. Target internal progression through the College from foundation level.
- Identify barriers to study via a focus group and national data, through the Office for Students and Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- Establish a buddy system to encourage care leavers currently studying in Higher Education to help support care leavers through different levels of study.
- Commission the National Collaborative Outreach Programme to provide a report on local care leavers progressing to Higher Education in the region.

Evaluation

- Participation rates, identify barriers to study.
- Use progression care leavers data to establish and provide informed approach to recruitment.
- Buddy system. Did it work?
- Action plan on National Collaborative Outreach Programme. Local care leavers commissioned report on how best to encourage participation.

Progression to Employment

Measures to address priority

- Develop closer links with local employability hubs to support local employment opportunities for graduates.
- Create an employability seminar programme for all students in conjunction with local employers.
- Create an Alumni programme to support links with past students (Facebook account) and help graduates to help new graduates into employment across the world.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education data to establish patterns of employment from students. |
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<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is Facebook having adequate hits and impact? If not, is there a better way to attract and ensure both Alumni and current students are engaging.• Look at best practice via the Higher Education Academy Fellowship site for student engagement with employment.• Focus groups with employers as to what key/additional skills employers want from students, and integrate this in to all course programmes.
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RAG

Evaluation will be undertaken by the College on a monthly basis and reviewed between the Head of Higher Education and the Senior Leadership Team using a RAG rating process.

Evaluation against progress (Evaluation Process prior to Audit)

Evaluation will be made against each target that has been designed after each activity delivered or data established. Applications will be monitored to establish applications for e.g. Black and Minority Ethnic Students and disabled students. Internal surveys will monitor progress. The Higher Education yearly marketing plan can be adapted to support where targets are not being met.

Equality and Diversity

This College Access and Participation Plan, recognises and aims to build on the sustained work of the Group in relation to Equality and Diversity. The East Sussex College Group is committed to Equality and Diversity in everything we do:

- In access to our entire 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.

Consultation with students

The East Sussex College Group 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 that students receive is of high quality, personalised, challenging and relevant to regional and national skills agendas.

The College Group 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.

To cover the protected characteristics of the abovementioned Equality Act 2010, our Single Equality Scheme aims 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 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 East Sussex community and its sustainability.
- Actively participate in the moves to promote and regenerate East Sussex 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.
- Use positive action to help meet the College targets.
- 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.

Overview of activities in 19/20 to meet targets

Activities are targeted at underrepresented groups and groups at risk of non-continuation. Support aims to close the gaps in admission, non-continuation and achievement for students with disabilities, from low income families, and are described through:

- Outreach activities.
- Financial support.
- Progression to work or study.
- Black and Minority Ethnic Students.

- Care leavers.

The College Group will undertake sustained activities and aims to develop legacy activities of successful National Collaborative Outreach Programme work. Legacy activities of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme have shaped our approach to access and participation as demonstrated through the development of activities such as:

- Higher Education coaches – supporting the transition through level 3, identifying Higher Education as a viable progression opportunity, and providing diagnostic and support activities to enable engagement at level 4 and beyond. 100% of level 3 students who took part in the peer coaching process progressed to Higher Education.
- Outreach work with internal level 2 / level 3 students and with schools and local education providers to enable clear and supported transition to college then to Higher Education.
- Parent ambassadors as a vital link between communities, schools and Higher Education, contributing to sustained access and participation activities across the Group

Outreach

To support progression to Higher Education from the College's level 3 provision, in particular promoting and developing activities which engage 16-18-year-old learners, Access to Higher Education students and other students who come with non-traditional qualifications. Outreach activities continue to build on the successes of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme Project from 17/18 which raised awareness of Higher Education and the journey from school, through college and onto Higher Education through the use of Digital Badges, Peer Coaches and Parent Ambassadors. The East Sussex College Group is committed to collaborating with other Higher Education institutions, and educational providers to provide opportunities for non-traditional students across East Sussex to access Higher Education.

The College continues to work to attract mature students to Higher Education, with focused taster events during Adult Learners' Week and by forging partnerships with other local adult education groups to present potential progression in to Higher Education. Our team of employer engagement staff provide information on progression routes to Higher Education to employees and employers in East Sussex. The result of outreach activities is monitored through student engagement, enrolment and progression through the College.

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

We are a partner in the Sussex Learning Network. 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 Sussex Learning Network allows the College to improve the quality and range of its access work by being part of a collaborative regional community of practice. The College Group is working in partnership with the Sussex Learning Network to deliver the National Collaborative Outreach Programme and is building on the success resulting from the project to complement and extend the existing widening participation activities of the College Group.

As part of this partnership, the College Group 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 Group intends to grow and expand the University Centre Hastings brand as the provider of quality vocational Higher Education in East Sussex.

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 level 2 and level 3 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 the legacy of our Digital Passport to Higher Education, developed through National Collaborative Outreach Programme activities as a level 2 stepping stone to the College and Higher Education

Financial support

Financial support is available to students during their time at the College and is intended to increase achievement and reduce non-continuation:

- £500 maximum cash bursary for students with a household income of below £25,000 per year. This will be paid in two sums of £250 in December and March subject to satisfactory engagement in line with the Student Contract. Bursaries will only be applicable to home students and application will be on a first come first served basis.
- A Hardship Fund will be created to support any student in dire financial need. Eligibility will be based on an assessment of household income and expenditure. To be eligible to

apply for an award, applicants will have a residual household income of below £25,000 per annum.

An evaluation will take place based on retention and success criteria for those awarded bursaries.

Additional support for those students with disabilities will be offered in the form of:

- The funding of an appropriate Needs Assessment Report for students with disabilities, subject to the results of a College screening interview.
- Individual support from the Higher Education Mentor to facilitate the transition from level three studies and to support the trajectory of students becoming autonomous learners.
- Progression to work or study - all Higher Education programmes have an identified progression route to further study, at either Sussex Downs or other local institutions.
- Progression to work or study - graduate progression is informed by regular input from visiting speakers and supported by the College Group Careers and Progression services. We intend to increase the engagement of employers working with the College, with the view to increasing successful progression to employment.

Investment

East Sussex College Group intends to address the need for the number of students with a mental health disability by maintaining the Higher Education Mentor post, supporting Peer Coaches with mental health training and raising awareness of students and staff. This will be measured through a reduction in non-continuation and a decrease in achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without.

The College Group has an above average level of students from areas of low participation. However, due to the high numbers of deprived boroughs in the region, we will maintain our financial investment recognising the diverse needs of our non-traditional cohort.

We aim to invest:

Access	£15,000
Success	£35,000
Progression	£12,000
Financial support	£39,000
Total spend	£101,000

Access and Participation Plan investment summary as a proportion of higher fee income

Higher fee income	615,000
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Access investment (as % of higher fee income)	2.4
Success investment (as % of higher fee income)	5.7
Progression investment (as % of higher fee income)	2.0
Investment in financial support (as % of higher fee income)	6.3
Total investment (as % of higher fee income)	16.4

The 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan is the combination of differing college approaches to the plan. Sussex Downs College had one course under the £6,125 fee (Higher National Certificate / Diploma threshold, unlike Sussex Coast College who had significantly more courses and students in this category, hence the adjustment of total spend.

The overestimated bursary payment at Sussex Downs College was unwarranted and the amount proposed for bursaries for 2019/20 is more realistic for the complete East Sussex College Group.

Access, Success and Progression measures

The College will look at key data through organisations such as the Higher Education Statics Agency, Office for Students and regional Higher Education networks, Advance Higher Education, Universities (Academic Research), outreach, National Collaborative Outreach Programme projects, Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education data and Further Education colleges to recognise best practice and impact with regard to other providers' approaches to meet the College's key targets per year. When developing new programmes, the College will develop in line with local employability needs, use Council and County Council employment data and trends and follow the local employment strategy

One of the key markers with in-year reporting at course level is to establish specific data trends. This report is collated and presented to the Senior Leadership Team as a mid-year report that provides crucial information of what is required, and potentially how this is planned. The College revises its Higher Education marketing plan twice a year, as it uses this data to identify keys areas for growth and any progression concerns. Action planning and evaluation will follow.

Provision of information to students

The College Group 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 admissions staff, College Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance advisors and through information events and open days at the Colleges, 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 Group including Governance, policies, 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.

This Access and Participation Plan will be clearly published on the College website, accessible to applicants, and will be posted on the College Virtual Learning Environment, accessible to students for the duration of their time at the College.

Table 3 - Summary of full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants

Institution name: Sussex Coast College Hastings

Institution UKPRN: 10002923

Validation checks:

1. Please enter statement on increasing your fees by inflation for 2019-20 entrants in subsequent years of study in cell B13.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The College group does not intend to apply inflationary fee increases

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	n/a	£7,500
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND	n/a	£5,900
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
CertHE / DipHE	University of Brighton 10000866	£6,000
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE	University of Brighton 10000866 -	£3,000
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

Table 8 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: **Sussex Coast College Hastings**
 Institution UKPRN: **10002923**

Validation checks:

1. All mandatory cells within a row in Table 8a must be complete - rows must have a reference number, lifecycle stage, target type, they must be classified as collaborative or not, they must have a baseline year and baseline data entered, and they must contain milestones up to and including 2019-20.
2. All mandatory cells within a row in Table 8b must be complete - rows must have a reference number, lifecycle stage, target type, they must be classified as collaborative or not, and they must have a baseline year, baseline data, and yearly milestones entered.

Table 8a - 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)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
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%	15%	20%	22	24	25	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	16	18	20	22	24	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%	36%	37%	38%	39	40	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	5	4	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%	64%	68%	70%	72	75	Appropriate total based AHR anatotal 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	19	21	23	25	30	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.