

Access and Participation Plan

2020-21 - 2024-25

East Sussex College Group – Introduction to the College

East Sussex College Group is a Further Education College serving East Sussex, with campuses situated in Hastings, 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. In addition, the college has new partnership arrangements with the School of Information Risk Management (SIRM) in Ilford, London, and CECOS College London (CECOS) in South Woodford, London, where the college has entered into a collaborative partnership with Pearson to deliver HNC/D Business courses.

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

Key areas / targets will be analysed, such as progression into further study or employment, an increase of Black and Minority Ethnic Students and disabled students, which are part of our aims in the college. We will use external data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, such as Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education, and build an internal data reporting system that tracks progress using the RAG rating process for use from Academic Year 2020/21.

Our internal reports from our Management Information System will be RAG rated and will flag up automatically if targets are not on track. The reporting will flag up whether incremental targets are being met.

1. Assessment of performance

The data used is compiled from a variety of sources: the college’s internal HE data, UCAS, NCOP regional data, OFS benchmarking, and data used to support past Access and Participation Plans. Unless otherwise stated, the data in these tables is composite data from our college’s internal systems.

Based on historical college data, there has been a slight increase of student enrolments in the last two years with a 21% increase overall. This is encouraging and is contrary to the national trend for recruitment of HE in FE. We attribute this, in part, to the college’s unique selling points: the ability for students to stay local, small group sizes, a supportive environment, and affordable and competitive fees against the main Universities

Through the college’s internal and OFS data, we have identified that the college needs to focus on two key areas of access as part of its endeavours to recruit underrepresented groups:

1. BAME
2. Black students (18-25 years)

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

POLAR4 Quintile	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
1	29.80%	30.46%	29.95%
2	20.20%	20.11%	20.72%
3	14.97%	12.50%	13.24%
4	18.60%	17.10%	17.25%
5	15.55%	18.25%	17.51%
(blank)	0.87%	1.58%	1.34%

Figure 1. Enrolments by POLAR4

East Sussex College has maintained a relatively stable percentage of enrolments from POLAR4 Quintile 1 between 2017/18 and 2019/20 (Figure 1). This remains significantly higher than the national average for POLAR4 Quintile 1 of 12% full-time students and 17.5% part-time students. The college is performing well against the sector with over double the national average for POLAR4 Quintile 1. As part of the widening participation agenda, the college undertakes outreach activities in the local community through its lifelong learning agenda. Students have the opportunity to gain entry in to FE at the college from a diverse range of under-represented backgrounds, and can ultimately progress on to HE programmes. This is relayed and encouraged at the interview stage. Supportive environments, flexible study modes, small group sizes and vocationally focused qualifications that are developed in conjunction with local employment strategies are key factors here, along with bursaries and competitive student fees.

The college undertakes a range of WP activities, including membership of The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) through SLN (Sussex Learning Network). In the first two years, 2322 NCOP engaged with the project, and 17,035 WP interactions took place, which is the highest number of interactions across the country. As part of this, the college has employed 16 HE student ambassadors (who are our HE students) to support progression of college students from level 3 to level 4. There is no data yet as to how many NCOP eligible students have progressed internally, but this data will be made available as subsequent AHR.

Enrolments	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
Non NCOP Target Ward	79.37%	78.13%	75.40%
NCOP Target Ward	20.63% (125)	21.88% (140)	24.60% (170)

Figure 2. Enrolments by NCOP and non NCOP Target Wards

East Sussex College has seen a strong increase of 36% in enrolments from our NCOP Target Wards, from 125 in 2017/18 to 170 in 2019/20 (see figure 2). This also represents an increase in percentage of total enrolments from our NCOP Target Wards of 4% since 2017/18.

Success

Non-continuation

POLAR4 Quintile	Academic Year				
	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
POLAR4 Quintile 1	85%	75%	90%	80%	75%
POLAR4 Quintile 5	75%	80%	-	-	90%

Figure 3. Continuation Rates for POLAR4 Quintile 1 & Quintile 5 Full-Time (OfS Access and participation data dashboard)

Our continuation rates have decreased for POLAR4 Quintile 1 full-time students by 10pp between 2012/13 and 2016/17 (see figure 3), from 85% to 75%. This is significantly below the national average of 90%. Continuation rates for POLAR4 Quintile 5 full-time students have increased by 15%, from 75% to 90%, which is just under 4pp below the national average of 94.9%. There is a 15% gap between 2016/17 continuation rates for POLAR4 Quintile 1 and POLAR4 Quintile 5 full-time students, which is three times higher than the national gap of 5.4%.

We will eliminate the 15% gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5 students by 2025. We aim to work with a number of local support groups and agencies to identify the barriers for these students, such as financial, health and academic issues and concerns.

The college hosts a variety of services from local organisations in East Sussex, such as Southdown, an external body that provides support, including homelessness prevention and mental health support. The college is looking at particular methods of support, such as providing food and flexibility of study, but needs to identify specific barriers before proceeding with these initiatives.

Attainment

We are unable to report on attainment by degree outcome due to too small sample sizes within categories. We recognise that, at a national level, there is a 5.2% gap in attainment of first or upper-second class degrees between full-time POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5 students, and a 1pp attainment gap for part-time students.

The below tables report on achievement of a qualification versus non-achievement of a qualification.

Attainment Status	17/18	18/19
Achieved (non AS-Level)	88.98%	92.48%
No achievement	11.02%	7.52%

Figure 4. POLAR4 Quintile 1-2 by Attainment

Attainment Status	17/18	18/19
Achieved (non AS-Level)	92.24%	-
No achievement	7.76%	-

Figure 5. POLAR4 Quintile 3, 4 and 5 by Attainment

Attainment rates for POLAR4 Quintile 1-2 students have increased by 3.5pp between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (see figure 4), bringing them in line with attainment rates for POLAR4 Quintiles 3, 4 and 5 students in 2017/18 (see figure 5).

Progression to employment or further study

Overall in 2016/17, we had good rates of progression for all students (see figure 6) with 86% of students reporting that they were in work and further study. Our employment rates are significantly lower than the national average of 76% of leavers in employment, as reported in the 2016/17 Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE). However, our rates of students in further study are 26pp higher than the national average of 15%.

Current Most Important Activity	Percentage
Employment	45%
Study	41%
Other	14%

Figure 6. Destination of Leavers 2016/17

We are unable to disaggregate our progression rates by POLAR4 Quintiles due to too small sample sizes within categories. However, we recognise that there is a 3.4pp gap in progression between full-time students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5 at a national level.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

The college has very low enrolment figures for both BAME and black students (18-25 years), we therefore aim to increase our percentage of BAME students by 2025.

Ethnic Group	17/18	18/19	19/20
BAME	18.75%	13.65%	19%
White	77.18%	83.33%	81%
Unknown	4.07%	3.02%	0.00%

Figure 7. Enrolments by Ethnic Group

Internal data confirms that the majority of our students are white (see figure 7). The proportion of white students increased by 6% between 2017/18 and 2018/19, before declining slightly in 2019/20 (figure7). We have also seen a small proportional increase in Asian and Black students between 2017/18 and 2019/20 of 1-2%. The college has an international department that, for many years, held significant contracts for international HE students, but this has declined. However, this area of the college's provision has begun to see growth with the college's development of HE subcontracting in its London campuses, where the college has invested in teaching in areas with higher BAME cohorts. Whilst this is viewed as a positive trend, our percentage of white students compared to BAME students is still low.

The college will continue working to recruit more BAME students by 2025. With new contracts planned in East London, this gap should be reduced. The college aims to recruit more BAME students at its East Sussex campuses by working with UniConnect (formerly NCOP), local schools, sixth forms, as well as local youth groups and BAME communities.

Ethnic Group	17/18	18/19	19/20
Black	1.60%	2.30%	2.54%
Other Ethnicities	98.40%	97.70%	97.46%

Figure 8. Enrolments by Black versus all other Ethnic Group

College recruitment trends have shown an increase in black students studying at the college of just under 1% over a three year period (see figure 8). The OfS dataset has identified a 3.6% gap between white and black students in the population compared to the provider. In particular, the OfS dataset shows we currently have no black students aged 18 to 24. We aim to recruit more black students, particularly in the 18 to 24 age range, by working with UniConnect (formerly NCOP), local schools, sixth forms, as well as local youth groups and BAME communities.

Success

Non-continuation

Completion status	Academic Year	
	17/18	18/19
Continuing	96.99%	98.86%
Withdrawn	3.01%	1.14%

Figure 9. Continuation Rates for White Students

Although we can report on continuation rates for white students (see figure 9), we are unable to disaggregate our continuation rates for BAME ethnicities due to too small sample sizes within categories. However, we recognise that, at a national level, there is a 3.2% gap in continuation rates between white and BAME students.

Attainment

Due to small sample sizes within categories, we cannot disaggregate attainment by ethnic group. We recognise that, at a national level, there is a 13.2pp gap in attainment of first or upper-second class degrees between full-time white students versus BAME students, and a 28.3% attainment gap for part-time students.

Progression to employment or further study

Overall, in 2016/17 we had good rates of progression for students (see figure 6) with 86% of students reporting that they were in work and further study. We are unable to disaggregate our progression rates by ethnic group or ethnicity due to too small sample sizes within categories. However, we recognise that at a national level that there is a 3.2% gap in progression between white students versus BAME students.

1.3 Mature students

The college's data on age profiles demonstrates a high proportion of mature students (see figure 10). Evidence as to why is usually connected to the supportive environment, the specific delivery model that allows for local study with communities, and the vocational nature of the courses for career change.

Access

Age	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
18-20	37%	40%	31%
21 plus	63%	60%	69%

Figure 10. Enrolments by Age

Currently, 69% of our students are mature students (see Figure 10). This is a 6% increase from 2017/18.

Age	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
18-20	43%	45%	34%
21 plus	57%	55%	66%

Figure 11. Full-Time Enrolments by Age

Age	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
18-20	8%	13%	12%
21 plus	92%	87%	88%

Figure 12. Part-Time Enrolments by Age

We are currently far in excess of the national average of 27.8% full-time mature students (see Figure 11), and marginally above the national average of 87.4% part-time mature students (see Figure 12). The college's marketing heavily promotes opportunities for non-traditional HE students to study HE locally. Our marketing also emphasises our unique selling points: small groups, work as you learn, career change opportunities, competitive fees, return to study support, and flexible learning. Many of the mature students do not want to travel to main university campuses and are attracted by studying locally at the college while still gaining a University of Brighton or Pearson accredited qualification.

Success

Non-continuation

Age	Academic Year				
	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
18-20	82%	76%	90%	81%	80%
21 plus	85%	77%	81%	91%	82%

Figure 13. Continuation Rates by Age (OfS Access and participation data dashboard)

In 2016/17 our continuation rates for mature students were around 3% below the national average of 84.8% for full-time students (see Figure 13), but exceeded continuation rates of our 18 to 20 year olds by 2%.

Attainment

We are unable to report on attainment by degree outcome due to too small sample sizes within categories. We recognise that at a national level that there is a 10.3% gap in attainment of first or upper-second class degrees between young and mature students.

The below table reports on achievement of a qualification versus non-achievement of a qualification using 2017-18 data.

Outcome 17-18	Age	
	18-20	21+
Achieved (non AS-Level)	93.33%	89.21%
No achievement	6.67%	10.79%

Figure 14. Attainment Rates by Age (18-20)

The percentage of mature students who have not achieved is 4% higher than non-attainment amongst students; aged 18 to 20 (see Figure 14).

Progression to employment or further study

Age	Academic Year		
	14/15	15/16	16/17
18-20	-	55%	70%
21 plus	70%	61%	71%%

Figure 15. Progression Rates by Age (OfS Access and participation data dashboard)

The national average progression rate for full-time mature students was 75.7% in 2016/17 compared to 72.3% for students aged 18 to 20. We are slightly below the national average of 72.3% for students aged 18 to 20 and 5.7% below the national average of 75.7% for mature students (see Figure 14). We aim to bring our progression rates by age on a par with the national average for all students, with a particular focus on mature students.

1.4 Disabled students

Through the analysis of college data, national (TEF) data, University of Brighton data and OfS data sets, we have identified that one of the key areas of concern is students with declared disabilities. The college has recognised that it has a high percentage of students with a disability, which is currently double the national average of 2017/18 (see figure 16). Lewes campus has 37% of students with a declared disability and Eastbourne has 39%, which is particularly high. Disability type is highest for learning disabilities and mental health difficulties (see figure 17), and we have identified gaps for students with declared disabilities in attainment and progression.

Access

Disability Status	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
No	70.16%	70.21%	68.45%
Yes	29.84%	29.79%	31.55%

Figure 16. Enrolments by Disability Status

Disability Type	Academic Year		
	17/18	18/19	19/20
Learning Difficulty	38.33%	38.92%	41.41%
Mental Difficulty	31.11%	32.97%	31.82%
Physical Disability	30.56%	28.11%	26.77%

Figure 17. Enrolments by Disability Type

The percentage of our students who have a declared disability has remained consistent at around 30% between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (see Figure 16). This is double the national average for 2017/18 of 14.6% for full-time students and 14.8% for part-time students. When disaggregated by disability type we can identify higher numbers of students with learning difficulties by 10pp (see figure 17).

Success

We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025

The college has a high proportion of students that declare a disability at 31.5%. We will continue to work with our external DSA partners to access support for students. We will also look at measures that can be put in place internally by the college, including identifying flashpoints at key points of the student cycle.

Non-continuation

Declared Disability	Academic Year				
	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17
No	83%	73%	85%	86%	83%

Yes	-	85%	-	90%	75%
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Figure 18. Continuation Rates by Declared Disability Status (OfS Access and participation data dashboard)

The OfS data set shows a gap of 6.4pp gap in continuation rates for students with a declared disability (see figure 18). The college will attempt to go beyond the 1pp national benchmark to achieve 0pp by 2025.

Attainment

We are unable to report on attainment by degree outcome due to too small sample sizes within categories. We recognise that, at a national level, there is a 2.8% gap in attainment of first or upper-second class degrees between full-time students with a known disability compared to students with no known disability, and a 4% attainment gap for part-time students.

The below tables report on achievement of a qualification versus non-achievement of a qualification.

Outcome	17/18	18/19
Achieved (non AS-Level)	89.93%	96.58%
No achievement	10.07%	3.42%

Figure 19. Attainment Rates for Students with No Declared Disability

Outcome	17/18	18/19
Achieved (non AS-Level)	92.19%	91.30%
No achievement	7.81%	8.70%

Figure 20. Attainment Rates for Students with a Declared Disability

In 2017/18, students with a declared disability had higher levels of achievement and lower levels of non-achievement by around 2pp than those with no declared disability (see figure 19 and figure 20). However, in 2018/19, this trend had reversed, and students with a declared disability had around 5pp lower achievement rate and higher non-achievement rate than those with no declared disability.

We are unable to disaggregate our attainment rates by disability type due to too small sample sizes within categories.

Progression

We will eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025.

We aim to work with external agencies that support students into the workplace. We will identify charities and services that might be appropriate to work with a particular skill set or role, which could best provide a suitable experience. We would like to build a network of work placements and graduate jobs over the next 5 years to best serve these students' needs.

Progression to employment or further study

Known disability	Academic Year	
	15/16	16/17
No	62%	73%
Yes	50%	-

Figure 21. Progression Rates by Declared Disability (OfS Access and participation data dashboard)

For progression of students with no known disability, we are on a par with the 2016/17 national average of 73.3%. However, using the most recent available data from 2015/16, we are currently 20% below the national average of 70.4% for students with a declared disability (see figure 21). This figure also represents a 10.1% gap between students with no known disability and students with a known disability, which exceeds the national average gap of 1.8%.

We clearly need to put strategies in place to support and monitor the progression of students with declared disabilities into employment and further studies, which we need to consider in relation to social deprivation.

1.5 Care leavers

Care Leavers

To date we have no declared Care Leavers in HE at the college. We recognise that Care Leavers face additional barriers to other groups including poorer experiences of education than other young people, a transient childhood with fewer role models, and little or no financial support available to them outside of the state system. We will make a commitment to increase our numbers of Care Leavers incrementally throughout the lifespan of the

Access Agreement .The College will be looking at a number of ways to recruit more Care Leavers through a variety of methods, including working with local employment centres, marketing towards support groups, and flexible drop -in sessions.

We are currently unable to report on care leavers due to too a too small sample size. We aim to increase our identification of care leavers at enrolment and increase the percentage of care leavers studying with us to exceed the 2016/17 national average of 0.63% (from *The 12 by 24 Pledge*, Centre for Social Justice). This will be part of the internal data reporting system due to be live for Academic Year 2020/21.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

As indicated in East Sussex County Council's Indices of Deprivation report 2019, Hastings is within the top 10% of the most deprived towns in the country. The college will be investigating the link between disability and deprivation in relation to attainment and progression. Through focus groups and individual feedback, the college has identified that costs are a contributory factor in attainment and progression for some of these students. In addition, further analysis of this intersection has been carried out using The Personal Social Services Research Unit at the LSE and Political Science unit, which highlights that young people with mental health issues in education are likely to face difficulties in gaining and sustaining employment. The college has limited data on this. The college is seeking credible data on this by conducting a pre-Graduate Survey to identify barriers to learning and progression. It will also be investigating the link between BAME and black (16-24) access, attainment and progression, although the number of our students from BAME backgrounds is significantly smaller.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The college is planning to undertake work-exploring links between mental health and students identified as LGBT, especially in relation to access and attainment. Through tutorials, student support and mentor records, we have identified a high percentage of students in these categories that request additional support.

Through focus groups, 1-to-1 tutorials and feedback in team meetings, it is clear that many of our students are the first in family to attend higher education and therefore are more likely at risk of experiencing poor mental health, as has been identified in a recent Universities UK report, *Minding our Future*. This is another area the college wishes to investigate.

2 Strategic aims and objectives

Our Strategic Plan

2.2 Target groups

Section 1 provides comprehensive analysis as to the situation of the college over the last three to four years in its endeavours to contribute both locally and nationally to equality for underrepresented groups, based on college, sector and performance data. The college has worked collaboratively with a number of external bodies such as SLN (NCOP), and with school initiatives and outreach work in local communities. The college has been ambitious in its targets

In response to Assessment of Performance data compiled in the previous section, the college has identified specific groups (below) that it intends to target from 2020-21 to 2024-25. We have identified the areas with significant gaps, and by addressing these gaps we hope to make the most impact across the complete student lifecycle.

We aim to review and evaluate these targets / groups through the college's SAR (Self-Assessment Process).

Access

1. To increase our BAME students numbers
2. To increase access to Black students

Success

3. Eliminate gap in continuation rates (POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 5) to meet national averages for each quintile
4. Eliminate gap in continuation rates for between students with a declared disability and no known disability

Progression to employment and further study

5. Eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a declared disability and no known disability

Research / gathering of Data

6. Explore whether there is a link between LGBT and mental health in completion rates of students
7. Further information gathering about students who are the first in their families to attend HE / University

2.2 Aims and objectives

Key Aims

	Aim	Measurable Objective
1	We will increase our percentage of BAME students by 2025	From 19pp to 29pp by 2024-25
2	We will increase access to black students 18-25year olds	From 0pp to 3.63pp by 2024-25

3	We will eliminate the gap of 15pp in conjunction rates between Polar 4 Q1 and Q5.	From 15pp to 0pp by 2024-25
4	We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025	From 6.4 pp to 0pp by 2045-25
5	We will eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025	From 10pp to 0pp by 2024-25
6	Research/ gathering of data To determine / identify and respond with a full dataset throughout the student lifecycle by 2024-25 pp of LGBT students reporting mental health issues, and how the college can address any concerns and issues raised.	Completion 2024-25
7	To determine / identify and respond with a full dataset throughout the student lifecycle by 2024- 25 pp of first in family in HE /University students reporting mental health issues, and how the college can address any concerns and issues raised.	Completion 2024-25

Access

Target 1 – Increase our BAME student’s numbers

PTA_1 (Investment Plan) – Increase Access for BAME students from 19% to 29% by 2025

Baseline data	19 %				
Yearly Milestones	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	21 %	24 %	26 %	27%	29%
We aim to increase access by 10pp over a 5 year period by 2024-25					

Target 2 – Increase access for Black Students 18-25 year olds (gap)

PTA_2 (Investment Plan) – To increase access from 0pp to 3.6pp

Baseline data	0%				
Yearly Milestones	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	0%	1%	2%	3%	3.6%
We aim to increase access by 3.6pp to the average by 2024-25					

Success

Target 3 – To eliminate the continuation gap between Polar 4 Quintile 1 and 5 students (gap)

PTS1_ (Investment Plan) – To reduce the gap from 15pp to 0pp

Baseline data	15pp				
Yearly Milestones	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	12pp	9pp	6pp	3pp	0pp
We aim to reduce this gap by 15pp by 2024-25					

Target 4 – Eliminate the gap in continuation rates between students with a known disability and not known disability (gap)

PTS2_ (Investment Plan) – To reduce the gap from 6.4pp to 0pp

Baseline data	6.4%
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Yearly Milestones	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	5pp	3pp	2pp	1pp	0pp
We aim to reduce this gap by 6.4 pp by 2024-25					

Progression

Target 5 – Eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a known disability and not known disability (gap)

PTP_1 (Investment Plan) – To reduce the gap from 10pp to 1.8pp

Baseline data	10%				
Yearly Milestones	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	8pp	6pp	4pp	2pp	1.8pp
We aim to reduce the gap by 9pp by 2024-25					

Research/ gathering of data

Target 6 – To determine / identify and respond with a full dataset throughout the student lifecycle by 2024-25 percentage of LGBT students reporting mental health issues, and how the college can address any concerns and issues raised.

Target 7 – To determine / identify and respond with a full dataset throughout the student lifecycle by 2024-25 percentage of first in family in HE / University students reporting mental health issues, and how the college can address any concerns and issues raised.

3 Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach to HE

The college is committed to work in conjunction with local employment and education initiatives to ensure that it meets its HE remit for the local economy. The strategies that we adopt look at supporting our local communities to fulfil their Higher in Further Education expectations. Provision is developed in conjunction with employers to ensure that local skill needs are met, with a focus on key employment sectors in the county of East Sussex. The college is an active member of Skills East Sussex, the countywide Employment and Skills Board, which provides opportunities to link directly with employers in our key sectors via a series of task groups: Creative and Digital, Engineering, Construction, the Visitor Economy, and Care.

The college offers vocationally focused courses and promotes itself as a genuine alternative to university. It predominantly recruits from internal level 3 courses and has developed progression pathways within the wider curriculum strategy for younger students, and for adults to access our HE offer from the local community. These are strongly promoted and focused on meeting the specific needs of each of its campuses and the communities they serve.

ESCG prides itself on recruiting underrepresented groups such as mature students, students with disabilities, BAME students, students in employment, and students from non-traditional Higher Education backgrounds. It has a high percentage of students experiencing HE for the first time. This is because of our excellent links with adult education and community sector providers who support the promotion of our courses in FE and HE as aspirational and supporting social mobility. The college is a member of the Hastings Opportunity Area and Sussex Learning Network and works with the wider school, FE and HE stakeholders on these Boards to ensure that the HE offer is appropriate and targeted at students in high deprivation wards.

Our unique selling point is that we offer smaller group sizes, classroom-based delivery and additional 1-to-1 support in a dedicated HE student environment, with reduced fees and a supportive bursary. We hope this encourages students who would not normally study at a university.

HE Aims

- We aim to ensure access to our Higher Education for all students, whatever their background
- We aim to create an inclusive learning environment where all students have the support to continue with their studies, regardless of their background or current circumstances
- We aim to eliminate barriers to further study or employment for all students, whatever challenges they face
- We aim to offer high quality provision
- We aim to ensure financial sustainability

We will use evidence-based decision-making to ensure that we meet our strategic measures and ultimately the targets we have set in our assessment of performance measures. The college has maintained HE student numbers over a three-year period, in part by offering an inclusive experience as part of its widening participation agenda.

The college has a commitment to the complete student life cycle to access, success and progression. Staff and students have been consulted on, and recognise and support, the key target areas for consideration. This plan is the result of data gathered by the college, HE Board meetings, Course Level meetings, Student forums, NUS meeting with students and staff, marketing plans and feedback by external and internal student surveys. The

plan has been prepared by the Head of Higher Education and is in line with The ESCG Higher Education Strategy. This plan will form part of HE's key documentation and the auditing of HE by the college's Governing body. The college has identified the gaps for improvement that it considers will have significance to the HE provision at the college, but that are also aligned to the college's aims as outlined above.

Overview

Strategic College Aims

East Sussex College Group has a clear overarching strategy in relation to Equality and Diversity.

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 meeting our obligations as set out in the Equality Act 2010 but to become a beacon organisation that others look to for best practice.

We 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.

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 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 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.
- Ensure 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.

Alignment with other strategies

Our Higher Education Access and Participation Plan recognises and aims to build on the sustained work of the Single Equality Scheme by ensuring equality of access to and success in education, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity and disability. As a college group operating across a county with pockets of deprivation near to our main sites (in particular Hastings, Eastbourne and Newhaven), one of our key strategies is make high-quality education available to all regardless of socioeconomic status or background. This is equally the case with HE, and particularly with regard to non-traditional students who would not normally enter university.

The college has a number of policies that support the strategic measures identified in this Access and Participation Plan:

- Our commitment to Equality & Diversity and particularly reducing achievement gaps is identified in our Single Equality Scheme (linking with our student BAME/ Black targets)
- ESCG Marketing plan (links with Access & Progression targets)
- The colleges approach to working with our local communities is identified in our Community Strategy (linking with our access & success measures)
- The colleges commitment to high quality teaching and assessment is outlined in our Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy (linking with our student success measures)
- The colleges commitment to improving internal progression is identified in our HE Strategic Plan (linking with our access measures)
- The colleges approach to improving our curriculum offer is identified in our Curriculum Strategy (linking with our access measures)
- The colleges commitment to student voice is identified in our Strategic Plan and our student engagement strategy (linking with Disability LGBT/First in family at University targets)

Our provision also aims to address skill needs identified at a county level through evidence and local economic strategies developed via Skills East Sussex, and the South East LEP Skills Strategy, which identifies higher-level vocational skills as a key priority for development to address identified weaknesses in the wider SELEP region.

Barriers to Access

Financial considerations are a barrier to access for many students. College fees have been aligned to support all students into Higher Education at the college, not just those that the college has identified in its first two targets focused on BAME and Black students. The college has maintained its

fees at the same level for 5 years in order to support access for students from deprived communities. The college has a bursary scheme, which ensures students with a low income are able to apply and receive some additional financial support. A hardship loan scheme is also available which students can access at any time throughout the year. The college will work with local BAME groups and the council Leaving Care team as part of its HE Outreach initiative to target these groups. Marketing materials will be designed to attract these target groups as identified in the HE Marketing Plan. The college facilitates its own University Connect funded team, who work closely with schools and college students to help students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 enter Higher Education. The college has its own schools liaison outreach team, working with schools throughout the South East offering the opportunity to study from Foundation level-to-level 6 at the college.

Barriers to Success

The college has a significant number of students who are the first in their families studying at a higher level. All students are interviewed irrespective of subject and campus site. This can be intimidating for many students, but this process is in place to assess the suitability of the candidate and identify any barriers to learning. 30% of students declare a disability at interview stage, but it is not uncommon for students to declare a disability at any stage of the course. The support students receive is an area that the college prides itself on; the college facilitates small group sizes and 1:1 teaching, and extensive pastoral support. These are key features of the college's unique selling point for its HE offer. Students who are eligible for DSA receive this support, and the college has HE Mentors that offer 1:1 additional support. The college is investigating the need for additional resources for a specific mental health service to support students who we have identified. A RAG rating process will be put into place to identify at risk students who are in danger of non-continuation, success or progression.

Barriers to Progression

Opportunities can be limited for many of our students, despite courses being validated to link in with local employment needs, due to limited employment for graduates. The college offers many arts and media based courses; given our close proximity to Brighton and London, these areas provide many progression opportunities. The college has a careers service that supports all FE and HE students, and is available for drop ins and 1-to-1 appointments. The college also engages with the National Careers service, which offers key regional and national resources for students. The majority of students undertake a period of work placement within their HE programme. Additional barriers to progression for some students include self-confidence, and financial problems. This will be an area that the college might consider as part of its bursary initiative. HE does not currently hold an employer CRM system, which is an area that the college is keen to research and invest in.

Strategic measures

We have adopted a range of measures that are informed by trends in Access, Success & Progression data and outcomes as part of our Academic Health process for the college's awarding bodies, including EE reporting and an annual Self-Assessment Review (SAR), KPIs, and reporting to Governors. This research and evidence has informed the measures we intend to undertake to ensure that we meet our milestones and targets. We will be adopting the theory of change model. As part of our quality improvement cycle, we will review the effectiveness of our marketing approach, including our school engagement work and recruitment processes, on an annual basis to ensure that these activities are completed and have the most significant impact on our enrolments and participation. We believe this approach builds on our evaluation of activities in previous years in the areas outlined below. This will form the basis of our proposed evaluation approach to our HE Access and Participation Plan.

Curriculum offer

The majority of our students live within a 20-mile radius of the college. At open days, outreach work, student feedback and interviews we have identified that we need to address the following to support our targets:

- Our curriculum strategy is to ensure the currency and suitability of our HE curriculum offer, ensuring multiple delivery options including flexible modes of study that may be suitable for non-traditional students, and to meet the needs of employers.
- We will be looking to expand our HE offer to meet the current and future skills needs of employers and local residents in East Sussex, linked to local labour market and intelligence identified via the college's involvement in Skills East Sussex and the SELEP Skills Advisory Board.
- We will also continue to explore alternative routes to HE for Care Leavers, mature and disabled students.

Progression from FE / other routes into HE

It has been identified at HE interview stage that the majority of applications and subsequent enrolments are internal progression students from the college's level 3 provision. We are seeing an increase in applications from mature students, particularly students who are already in employment and applicants looking at APL. These are the two key areas that the college is likely to recruit students from. This is evidenced via feedback from NCOP and other Outreach services, including HE presentations to all level 3 students and college managers, and college open days. The college has an increasing rate of mature students joining, as they tend to want to stay in their local community and our fees are competitive. Both these factors are usually presented at interview as reasons why they ultimately enrol with us.

Outreach

The college is very active in its outreach work. It has open events and visits to schools, working with Year 11 students to look at HE provision. It liaises with all local schools and sixth form colleges in East and West Sussex as well as Brighton and Hove, and offers visits and on-going communication and support to potential students, their parents and teaching staff. The college also attends UCAS fairs to promote the HE offer to wider cohorts of young people in the region, and has a targeted range of stands at community events in each of the main towns, which serves to attract mature students onto HE programmes.

Financial Support

Bursaries

We will provide bursaries of up to £500 in each year of study for the following target groups identified in this Access agreement:

Students with a household income below £25,000
Students from low participation HE areas (POLAR Quintile 1 and Quintile 2)

Students who identify as BAME
Students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance

A bursary of £200 will be awarded for each of the above target groups a student falls in to, up to a maximum of £500.

Hardship fund

This fund will be available for all students. Applications are assessed on a case by case basis according to need. Discretionary hardship bursaries will be awarded where a student demonstrates exceptional hardship that may be a barrier to learning and participation. The College may also provide supermarket vouchers to those in need of emergency assistance.

This hardship bursary is set aside for those in greatest financial hardship; to support them with the ongoing costs of being at College. A student may receive support in the form of a bursary or supermarket vouchers twice per academic year.

The college is committed to funding outreach work, disability resources and additional marketing.

Access Target 1 - We will increase our percentage of BAME students by 2025

- Support our East London partnerships to target local BAME communities through targeted community outreach and alumni networks
- Set up focus groups within the East London community to look at barriers to access for BAME students, and how best to address them in our partnerships
- Set-up an internal focus group in Hastings, Lewes and Eastbourne through the National Union of Students to look at barriers to access for BAME students, and how best to address them in our region
- Establish a marketing campaign to encourage ethnic minorities in to Higher Education, especially at our East London partnerships
- Pilot higher bursary awards for BAME students to encourage applications and enrolment
- Work with local BAME support groups to better promote the offer to BAME residents in East, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Access Target 2 – Increase access for Black Students 18-25 year olds(gap)

- Set-up an internal focus group in Hastings, Lewes and Eastbourne through the National Union of Students to look at barriers to access for BAME students, and how best to address them in our region
- Establish a marketing campaign to encourage ethnic minorities in to Higher Education, especially at our East London partnerships
- Work with local landlords in Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes to provide accommodation which may encourage BAME students to move in to the area
- Pilot higher bursary awards for BAME students to encourage applications and enrolment.
- Work with local BAME support groups to better promote the offer to BAME residents in East, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Success Target 3 - We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5 students by 2025

- Develop and adopt new processes to monitor non-attendance with a view to additional early intervention from teaching and support staff.
- Ensure HE mentors at each campus are able to access data to target their work at students at risk of non-continuation
- Statistical analysis of previous non-continuation amongst target group in order to identify particular trends
- Focus groups with target group to look at barriers to continuation, and how best to address them
- Part-time & flexible study options for all students and development of blended delivery to encourage continuing engagement with course when physical attendance is challenging
- Pilot a higher bursary award for students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 to support students in continuing their education
- Pilot a revised hardship fund, which awards smaller payments rather than larger repayable loans, and includes emergency relief such as supermarket vouchers. This will support students who may not be able to seek help from parents in times of financial difficulty which would otherwise lead to non-continuation
- Consider scholarship programme – partial fee waivers for students in each of the key deprived areas in the region to encourage continuation of course

Success Target 4 - We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025

- Develop and adopt new processes to monitor non-attendance with a view to early intervention
- Ensure HE mentors at each campuses are able to access data to target their work at students at risk of non-continuation
- Part-time & flexible study options for all students and development of blended delivery to encourage continuing engagement with course when physical attendance is challenging
- Set-up an internal focus group in Hastings through the National Union of Students to look at barriers to continuation for disabled students, and how best to address them
- Better support for students with mental health difficulties through drop in sessions with Southdown, local mental health support provider, commencing April 2020
- Put a Mental Health Toolbox in every classroom and the common room, and explore enrichment sessions on self-care
- Pilot a higher bursary awards for students with a known disability to support students in continuing their education (e.g. to help with student contribution to DSA laptop)

- Pilot a revised hardship fund, which awards smaller payments rather than larger repayable loans, and includes emergency relief such as supermarket vouchers. This will support disabled students in times of financial crisis

Progression Target 5 - We will eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025

- Develop closer links with local employability / voluntary hubs to support local employment opportunities for graduates
- Work with in-house careers advisors to develop workshops and an HE Careers Toolbox with sections for issues faced by disabled students
- 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
- Use Graduate Outcomes from Higher Education data to establish patterns of employment for students

Target 6 – LGBT/ Mental Health Concerns

- To undertake focus groups to establish barriers in the student life cycle

Target 7 – First in Family to attend University

- To undertake focus groups to establish barriers in the student life cycle

3.2 Student consultation

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.

In 2019-20, we have carried out a particularly focused consultation around the Higher Education bursary, seeking student views about how the bursary is administered and allocated. We carried out an online survey of all students who had received the bursary and used our findings to inform the role of the higher education bursary from 2020-21 onwards. For example, the majority of respondents (70%) agreed that students who face additional barriers to education (such as disability) should get a higher bursary than others. We have not previously taken additional barriers in to consideration when allocating the bursary. In 2020-21, we will introduce higher payments to support our target groups as a pilot. We will seek student feedback as part of the evaluation process.

We also consulted key HE staff and NUS Reps to gather information about how students were using both the bursary and hardship fund, and how it could be improved. In response to this feedback, in 2020-21 we will pilot a hardship payment rather than a hardship loan, and we will make immediate help available (such as supermarket vouchers) to combat the lag between application for hardship and payment. We will seek student feedback as part of the evaluation process.

After the Access and Participation Plan had been drafted, we canvassed a range of students for their opinions and views of it. We included students in this consultation who were part of our target groups (e.g. those with BAME ethnicity, those with a declared disability). We then reviewed comments and suggestions and used them to develop and refine our strategic aims and measures. The below table summarises student comments:

Black & Ethnic Minority (BAME)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our students predominantly reside in East Sussex which has a lower percentage of BAME residents than regional and national averages ● Provide student accommodation to encourage students to move in to the area – work with local landlords ● The college is very supportive to students ● Our current Marketing information portrays a good, diverse range of 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)
Students with Disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If there were a 'drop in' facility for Mental Health issues students would feel safe to talk to someone in confidence. ● The colleges HE Mentor is very good to talk to but not mental health trained ● Mental Health issues rising among students – stress related. A dedicated facility would help students to cope with this. ● A college counsellor would be good, to work across all three sites. ● A Mental Health Toolbox created by Early Years students – would be a good idea to put a copy in every classroom and the HE Common Rooms? ● Students reported there can be barriers throughout the student life cycle with Mental Health issues.

- Enrichment would help as a preventative measure – sessions on health care, looking after yourself, signposting where to go for help. Just chatting to others who are feeling the same could be part of the enrichment programme and be very helpful.
- Students not clear on what the parameters of support are available from the Student Union.

Views on Part Time and Flexible Learning

- If students have very young children it prevents them from attending
- For Art and Design provision students need access to the studio unless you have one at home and a lack of studio access at evenings or weekends is a problem
- Last minute issues can lead to nonattendance – put lessons on Moodle
- How can we facilitate studio access with no staff present to meet Health and Safety requirements?
 - Students to sign an agreement?
 - Students to work in pairs?

Views on Progression in to Employment

- The opportunities at the level we want are not easily available locally
- Students may leave the area to find work
- Engage with local employers
- Offer careers advice
- Liaise with recruitment agencies

The college regularly feeds back to student's queries regarding the student journey via a number of key forums on the HE Quality Calendar. The main forums for this are the termly HE Board, chaired by the Executive Manager for HE, Course level boards, Course level meetings, HE student Rep meetings conducted by the HE Operational Manager and the NUS (National Student Union) Student Rep meetings chaired by our NUS Co-ordinators. There is student representation at all of these meetings/ boards. Student access to these meetings ensures that students receive key information constantly throughout the academic year, they can have continual input in the process and any areas for change / development can be acted upon quickly. Academic Health reporting per course occurs twice in the academic year, where student's feedback to their courses and college is recorded and actioned upon, and this commentary forms the part of the annual college HE Self Reporting report, and can inform the colleges Quality Insurance plan. Students have access to these documents to monitor progress made. In addition, The College has a dedicated quarterly Student Newsletter that updates students on aspects of the student experience, to ensure that all students are provided with regular updating to any developments that the college has acted upon and as a forum to share good practice.

From 2020/21 onwards, we will continue to seek student feedback through surveys on the effectiveness of the bursary and hardship fund in supporting our target groups. We will also extend these surveys to our target groups to include broader questions about their experiences of studying with us and the barriers they face.

We will continue to use the involvement of student reps in course level boards and institution level boards to help assess the effectiveness of our access strategies by making this a standing agenda item.

We will gather more informal student feedback through 1-1 tutorials with course leaders and our HE mentor, who works with a significant number of students in our target groups.

Our NUS reps will continue to provide ongoing independent advice and feedback relating to issues around our target groups and how we can better support these students.

3.4 Evaluation strategy

The college will be using the OfS Evaluation Self-assessment tool to assess its evaluation strategy over the five year period. This will ensure that we will be able to effectively monitor and make recommendations on a yearly basis, including investment and additional research practices that we can adopt. This should work well and will be part of the college's annual Self-Assessment Process and KPI process.

Key targets, strands of intervention and areas where the college is looking to research and undertake additional work will form part of the college's HE review in term 1 of 3. This should ensure that yearly milestones are evaluated, and to identify areas of good practice or poor performance. Any improvements will form part of the colleges HE Key Performance indicators that are reviewed and updated twice a year. Arising themes or trends can inform yearly Access and Participation plans.

Quality improvements will inform the HE Annual Quality Plan, which is reviewed and approved by the college's Governance each year. Milestones and targets can be monitored and action taken if these have not been met. Changes to the plan and its delivery can be made at this stage.

We undertake an annual review of our Access and Participation Agreement target using a number of mechanisms, including:

- Analysis of internal student enrolment data
- Analysis of the impact of financial support using internal data reporting and the OfS toolkits
- Analysis of HESA data
- Analysis of student surveys, both national and internal

We use this evaluation to inform programme design and financial support to target underrepresented groups.

The college has the following strands of intervention activity, which the college wishes to focus and invest in and which will be evaluated:

1. Curriculum design
2. Access for BAME / Care Leaver students
3. Financial support
4. Outreach work including marketing
1. Disability
2. LGBT/ first in family

Strategic Context

The college has a rigorous approach to evaluation throughout each of its campuses. It employs a team of Quality Assurance Managers to oversee all quality and evaluation processes set against the HE Quality Plan, which is revised annually to meet the expectations of new regulatory and awarding body processes and procedures. The Executive Level HE Management along with the HE operational management will oversee and evaluate the plan, and take this to the college's internal HE Board for approval before ratification at the HE Corporation Board. If required, changes can be made in a timely manner in term 1, for impact in terms 2 and 3.

Programme design

When addressing the design of our plan we have used the college's own and OfS datasets to establish targets, and our college-wide approach as a starting point. However, we have used a number of approaches to help inform the design of the complete Plan for 2020-25. We undertook the following processes to fully inform our plan:

1. Used Annual Academic Health processes, including retention, achievement progression and success data to inform design
2. Used focus groups conducted in the college. These meetings identified issues and trends and emerging themes that informed our strategic targets
3. Internal (the college undertakes its own internal surveys and external surveys (NSS/DHEL)
4. Area / targets were discussed through our HE board meetings that we considered would be most impactful for students across the complete student lifecycle
5. Annual and mid-year review of our HE Quality Improvement plan / SAR and KPI's.

The targets that we have set in this plan for our target and underrepresented groups will be evaluated in term 1. These plans will be reviewed annually, changes made where required to ensure targets, and especially milestones are met. To ensure that targets are met by 2025, the college recognises that improvements to plans and the implementation of them will take place to ensure the college reaches its targets.

Designing evaluation

The college will use a combination of its own self-assessment process in conjunction with the OfS Self-Assessment tool. This should ensure that each strand of intervention has a clear evaluation plan, and that we can use this plan to collect the required data to assess impact. The evaluation will be in the form of a RAG rated report and will be part of our SAR. This is to ensure it is relevant, timely and appropriate, and to ensure all HE evaluation is in one place and is assessed in the same way. These plans will be reviewed annually throughout the complete 5 year cycle of the Access and Participation action plan, and changes made when required to ensure our data is robust. Evaluation of data will form part of the annual SAR.

Evaluation implementation

The college currently does not have evaluation of this data set up within the college MIS systems, but it plans to develop this as part of its overall HE data set. Ensuring that the data is live will mean that monitoring and evaluation can take place constantly throughout the academic year, and provide opportunities for additional research, funding and delivery to ensure targets are on track. This should help us monitor over short, medium and long term periods, and improve on the data if required.

Learning to shape improvements

We currently use a number of feedback mechanisms to shape improvements, namely: Academic Health, focus groups, and college and OfS data. We are still to use the OfS Self-assessment tool, which we know will help us to inform and shape improvements. We want to begin to use more external data and reports to reference and support our findings. We are committed to continuous improvement by changing methods whilst we undertake more research during this project. Changes of approach will be required if gaps are not closed, and the college will draw on increasing amounts of feedback on different models of good practice in the sector. Hopefully, this will be shared by other providers and HE regulatory bodies at local and regional networks. Any changes to our approach will be highlighted in our annual evaluation plan and presented to the college's Corporation.

Evaluation of Financial Support

We will evaluate our financial support using the OfS tool kit. This will be new for us in 2021. Financial support for students will be evaluated annually not only in terms of recruitment, but also in the process of assessing our bursary and its performance. Our HE Admissions Co-ordinator will review this process, along with a focus group to gather feedback on the process of applying for financial support, and whether the support is having impact on the student lifecycle (access, continuation, attainment and ultimately progression). Outcomes from these findings will inform future practices.

3.5 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

As outlined before this plan will be part of the annual quality assurance process for HE, and will be subject as with all other aspects of HE delivery to the same level of scrutiny. This will ensure that:

- We are meeting our targets
- Our financial allocations towards our targets are feasible and working effectively and efficiently
- Approaches to activities have worked and will have impact
- Good practice is shared
- Initiatives that need further development are recognised

The college's HE Board, which meets termly, three times per year, will monitor progress of the plan against targets and milestones. This board also reviews Course Board meetings and mid-year health review reporting, and live reports for the monitoring of data on recruitment, applications, access, retention, success and progression.

The Governing Body receives a yearly update as part of the Quality and Standards Process. This monitors and evaluates progress against the college's HE targets, including the Access and Participation Agreement, and sets objectives and yearly goals. The college is reviewing the need for additionally reporting to the Governing Body in line with the meeting of the HE Board (three times per year) for the monitoring of the plan.

To ensure targets are met and effective evaluation will take place, an annual review will assess impact on the targets within the student life cycle. This will form part of the HE annual SAR, recognising impact, and demonstrating targets met and areas that need improvement, to ensure targets are met. Corporation, including HE Exec, will review this SAR. This evaluation will not only inform progress but also recognise if and when intervention is required to ensure targets are met.

Students from all the four campus sites have been involved in the consultation and delivery of the plan. Students will be encouraged to take part in the monitoring and evaluation of the plan and feedback through the HE Admissions team and to the college's HE Board.

Provision of information to students

The college's [website](#) provides detailed information on student fees, against all HE courses delivered at the college. All students are interviewed, and during interviews, fees are discussed and students are advised to work with the college's HE Admission team (dependent on campus) on their applications for Student Finance. The college's Access & Participation plan is published on the website, which outlines the college's commitments to supporting students that the college has indicated they will support in their yearly plans / commitments. A bursary statement is published on the website informing students on entitlements and criteria for applying for a bursary. This information and the process for application is communicated in a timely manner so that Course Leaders and students have ample time to gather key documentation and evidence to apply to our HE Admissions team for a bursary.

4 Appendix

1. Targets - attached
2. Investment summary -attached
3. Fee summary - attached

Access and participation plan

Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: East Sussex College Group

Provider UKPRN: 10002923

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	at ESCG	£5,900
HNC/HND	partnership with CECOS/SIRM	£6,165
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	University of Brighton 10000886 - top-up year CECOS/SIRM	£9,250
First degree	University of Brighton 10000886 - with University of Brighton	£7,500
Foundation degree	University of Brighton 10000886 - with University of Brighton	£7,500
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	University of Brighton 10000886 - with University of Brighton	£7,500
Postgraduate ITT	University of Brighton 10000886 - with University of Brighton	£6,000
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£2,950
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	University of Brighton 10000886	£3,950
Foundation degree	University of Brighton 10000886	£3,950
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	University of Brighton 10000886	£3,000
Postgraduate ITT	University of Brighton 10000886	£3,000
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: East Sussex College Group

Provider UKPRN: 10002923

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£30,000.00	£36,000.00	£43,000.00	£50,000.00	£56,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£5,000.00	£8,000.00	£10,000.00	£12,000.00	£14,000.00
Access (post-16)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£12,000.00	£14,000.00	£15,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£10,000.00	£12,000.00	£14,000.00	£16,000.00	£18,000.00
Access (other)	£5,000.00	£6,000.00	£7,000.00	£8,000.00	£9,000.00
Financial support (£)	£75,000.00	£88,000.00	£101,000.00	£113,000.00	£125,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£5,000.00	£6,000.00	£7,000.00	£8,000.00	£9,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£628,030.00	£716,430.00	£807,500.00	£902,575.00	£997,650.00
Access investment	4.8%	5.0%	5.3%	5.5%	5.6%
Financial support	11.9%	12.3%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
Research and evaluation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Total investment (as %HFI)	16.8%	17.3%	17.9%	18.1%	18.2%

