

Hereford College of Arts

WIDENING PARTICIPATION STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT 2009

1 Context

1.1 Background

The College was established in 1851 as a School of Painting in the City of Hereford. It was incorporated as a Further Education Corporation in 1993, and currently has approximately 850 FTE students, of whom about 500 are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The majority of the remainder are on Higher Education Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) courses funded by HEFCE and student fee income, with a small number engaged in short courses and full cost recovery provision.

1.2 Student Profile and Performance Indicators

The following indicators are currently in use:

Disabled Students Allowance:

- 2006-07 20 students were eligible for DSA.
- 2007-08 25 students were eligible for DSA.

Post codes:

- 2006-07 23 new entrants out of 107 (21%) from low participation post codes.
- 2007-08 27 new entrants out of 123 (22%) from low participation post codes.

(Based on HEFCE data)

Higher Education Maintenance Grant:

- 2007-08 60 students received a full HEMG. These students received bursaries totalling £47,231.
- 2008-09 103 students out of 290 (36%) received a full HEMG. These students received £77,500 in bursaries. 2008-09 is the first year where all three year groups are eligible for bursaries under the new grant system.

1.3 Quality

The College's directly funded provision was subject to a QAA Subject Review in 2005. The result has confirmed overall 'Confidence' in the provision, with areas of teaching and learning, and support for students, identified as Commendable. The first round of the new QAA IQER process took place in the College in December 2008 in the form of Developmental Engagement. This confirmed overall confidence in the College's HE provision. This will be followed by Summative Review in 2009.

FE provision was last subject to Ofsted inspection in November 2007, and the outcome was an overall judgment of Good (Grade 2).

1.4 Lifelong Learning Networks

The College is a Full Member of the National Arts Learning Network (NALN) established with the University of the Arts, London, as lead HEI, and the Principal is also a member of the Executive Board. Principle objectives of this network include increased progression to Higher Education through widening participation. The College has appointed a Progression Manager and a part-time administrative assistant. The College is also a partner in a number of NALN projects including a development project to research and develop curriculum to support progression from FE to HE study, and a project to support bridging between FE and HE study for students from a WP background.

The College intends to maintain and extend Progression Agreements with FE colleges and schools and academies, overseen by the NALN Progression Manager, employing the National Arts Learning Network model. The College intends to maintain its active participation in the National Arts Learning Network, as it links-up with the UK Art and Design Institutions' Association (UKADIA), continuing to share good practice and contribute to the network.

The College is also involved in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire LLN led by the University of Worcester, and has undertaken a number of LLN funded projects intended to support progression into HE within the region.

1.5 Aim Higher:

The College receives modest funding from Aim Higher which supports a programme of awareness raising activities for Level 2 and 3 vocational learners and also supports two Transition and Bridging summer courses to encourage and orientate BTEC 1st Diploma students towards higher level studies

2 Widening Participation and the Institution Mission

The College Strategic Plan is appended to this document.

The College's mission is to provide outstanding education and employability in the creative arts.

Key values of the College include:

- Being active in widening participation in education and the arts
- Offering opportunities for progression via vocational and non traditional routes to higher level study or employment
- Valuing diversity and respecting individuality and difference

Strategic aims include a commitment to growing HE student numbers, and to developing and improving connections with stakeholders and the community. This includes students and potential students and their parents, schools, work based learning providers, colleges and employers. Connections with all of these partners support the widening of participation in education and particularly higher education.

HCA is also committed to the development of higher education within the county in support of the regeneration and cultural development needs of the region. This will inevitably require a focus on widening participation if it is not to displace provision from elsewhere. The College is an active member of the HE for

Herefordshire Management Group of which the Principal is Vice Chair which is preparing a bid for the HEFCE University Challenge fund.

The College is also committed to providing opportunities to the widest range of students from all backgrounds and whatever their needs in an equal, fair and diverse setting. The College's Equality and Diversity policy is available at:

http://www.hca.ac.uk/pdf_policies/equality-leaflet.pdf

The College's Disability Equality Scheme is available at:

http://www.hca.ac.uk/pdf_policies/Dis%20Eq%20Statement.pdf

The College's policy and procedures for selection of students for admission to HE courses is outlined in Appendix 2.

3 Aims for WP to HE

The College aims to:

- Improve transition, progression, retention and employability
- Increase collaboration with schools and colleges particularly in the West Midlands and Marches, targeting those in areas of social and economic disadvantage
- Provide promotional support materials and activities to raise aspirations and support progression

Success in achieving these aims will be measured in a number of ways including:

- Progression into HE within the College from WP backgrounds (see below)
- Progression into HE from the College from WP backgrounds
- Retention
- Careers destinations
- Collaborative events / initiatives delivered to support progression
- Materials produced

The College has submitted detailed returns via NALN to HEFCE on its recruitment to ASNs from WP backgrounds using various measures including post-code, family HE study background, vocational study routes, diversity profile.

Criteria for WP include:

- From a school or college with a poor record of entry to HE
- Family socio-economic status
- No family experience of HE (parents or siblings) or in care
- From a post-code with low participation rates
- Mature learner
- Single parent
- Disabled
- Traveller, refugee or looked-after by local authority
- Vocational study route
- Ethnic minority / under-represented gender group

These criteria for WP are wider than the ones used to calculate HEFCE funding allocation for WP. HEFCE Funding is based on students in receipt of DSA and on the proportion of students from post codes where there has been low higher education participation rates.

4 Widening Participation Activities

The College has extensive links with schools in the region and employs a Schools Liaison Officer responsible for organising workshops, taster days and visits for year 9, 10 and 11 students, as well as very successful year 9 Spring School and year 10 Summer School within the College. These have run for a number of years and attract a total of 300 students each year to practical project based workshops for up to 5 days at a time.

Workshops, taster days and vocational course delivery has developed from successful Increased Flexibility Project funded pilots, and included all schools within the county. A guide to HE entry 'Way-In' has been published and distributed by the College for the past three years, and supporting materials including guides to portfolio preparation and interview have been produced.

An Art Teachers' Forum and a Drama Teachers' Forum is also organised to develop links and joint working with school in order to enhance progression. Significant work has been undertaken with schools in areas of significant deprivation including the Hereford Academy.

An innovative development of National Saturday Arts Clubs, funded by the Sorrell Foundation and Audi Design UK, is being piloted in 2009-10 by the College with three specialist art college partners. This will focus on offering enhanced opportunities and raising aspirations among year 9 to 11 students from WP backgrounds and first time entrants to HE.

The College is coordinator of the county-wide consortium's successful Gateway 2 bid to deliver the Creative and Media Diploma, and is working closely with partners to develop this curriculum which is anticipated to be a means to strengthen a widening of participation in vocational provision and progression into higher education.

To date the College Progression Manager has concluded 18 formal Progression Agreements in place with partner FE colleges in the region with a further six under discussion. These agreements support progression into HE via non traditional routes through information, advice and guidance, taster days, portfolio surgeries and visits, and bursary support for students. Guaranteed places are offered to students from partner institutions, mainly focused upon vocational progression routes including BTEC ND.

Other NALN funded activities include FE Curriculum enhancement project and the development of materials to support HE progression from ND.

Courses have been developed in order to meet the needs and aspirations of targeted WP students, such as the ND Music which has proved successful with those wishing to focus on popular music performance. The BTEC First Diploma Art and Design has recruited post 16 students with no or low qualifications, a number of whom have progressed through Level 3 to HE courses.

The College has focused on improving internal progression from FE to HE within the institution. This has led towards widening participation due to the study patterns of most current students (BTEC National Diploma) and consequent increase of their progression into HE.

The College has an approved Access Agreement, and has implemented a bursary scheme which is used to support WP activity alongside HEFCE WP allocations. The agreement is available at:
<http://www.offa.org.uk/agreements/L108535.pdf>

Increased investment in Learning Support provision has been made in order to support and retain students with learning needs in higher education, particularly those relating to academic study and writing.

Further planned activities include:

- FE/HE bridging courses to support study skills and transition to HE
- Taster days in College
- Masterclasses and workshops delivered in schools and community settings
- CPD to support arts teachers in order to raise aspirations
- Links to employer networks established by the College in order to support enhanced WBL opportunities
- Deliver a programme of Saturday Art Clubs
- HE:FE articulation event planned in October to encourage and open dialogue between HE tutors at HCA and FE tutors from Progression Partner Colleges

5 Resources

- 2008-09 HEFCE WP funding allocation £22,680
- 2009-10 HEFCE WP funding allocation £26,749

This funding along with funding from NALN and income from additional student tuition fees and FE funding from Increased Flexibility Partnership (IFP), and Aim Higher supports the wide range of activities above.

The challenge for the future is to sustain these initiatives as both IFP funding and NALN funding to support specific activities and posts finishes. The College has increased its additional tuition fee income beyond its original targets and this will be used to support these activities.

6 Widening participation activities and initiatives 2006-9

WIDENING PARTICIPATION ACTIVITY SUMMARY 2006 - 9				
PROGRESSIONS AGREEMENTS Types of Learners Involved	HE Qualifications that learners will enter	Progression Agreements-Signed and implemented	Progression Agreements- In development/draft	number of learners progressing to HE at HCA per year from partner colleges
BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA	FdA/BA	2006 – 7: ten	six	2007-8: 56
	FdA/BA	2007 – 8: five	five	2008-9: Total = 68
	FdA/BA	2008 – 9: three	six	Target for 2009-10 = 75
WP CURRICULUM LINKS AND ACTIVITIES				
ACTIVITY	DELIVERY	VOLUME	OUTCOME	COMMENTS
Taster days for Progression college Partners and new target colleges	On campus HE taster provision	5 per annum 10 workshops: 2007-8 attendance approx 300 student 2008-9 attendance approx 370 students	Development of portfolio for interview Increased awareness of HE routes, enhanced IAG	HE tasters are focused on attracting non traditional route learners Focuses on supporting students in specific skills areas
Portfolio surgeries and studio workshops in Partner colleges:	Progression Partner home institutions	Annual calendar and schedule of visits by specialist tutors	Preparation for interview, development of confidence and communication skills	Portfolio surgeries are delivered according to needs of feeder course by subject specialist tutors Focus on student support and personal development
Bridging course	On Campus Bridging/transitional course for ND Art & Design	2007-8: 13 students enrolled 2008-9: 15 students	100% progression for both years	Targeted at ND Art & Design Students with follow up

		enrolled		studio sessions over 8 weeks, open to internal students and progression Partner ND students
Creative Start	One week long summer course Art and Design Performing arts	2007: 15 2008: 15 2009: 20	Increased confidence and increased retention and potential to progress	Targeted at enrolled 1 st year Diploma students to aid transition and offer pre start orientations from school to FE
Summer & Spring schools	School pupils from local county secondary schools	Spring school 2007: 48 students 2008: 92 students 2009: 95 students Summer School: 2007 : 182 students 2008: 189 students 2009: 238 students	Progression via non traditional routes IAG	Summer and Spring schools designed to attract progression from School to FE and HE, programme included 14 vocational workshops
Art Teachers forum	Local art specialist teachers from all county schools	Six meeting per term average attendance = 15	Shared good practice Practitioner presentations	Engagement of dialogue between teachers from Schools and HCA tutors at FE and HE. Additional HE:FE Dialogue/articulation event planned for October 2009
Vocational Workshops	Outreach: Practitioners/school pupils	Delivered to meet requirements: approx 6 per term in various schools year 9 – year 12	IAG for routes into Creative industries and HE pathways.	Vocational experiential learning opportunities Awareness raising of creative career

				pathways for progression
Annual Schools Expo	Schools Exhibitions for local secondary pupils on campus	Annually, 14 schools approx Approx 60 young people represented from year 7 to year 11	Increased awareness of FE/HE routes, public exhibition	This annual event opens the College to a large number of parents, carers and teachers who may otherwise not be aware of FE/HE provisions
Teachers' CPD	On campus delivery to local art specialist teachers from all county schools, [delivery by practitioners	6 per year, average attendance per session 10 teachers	Teachers' CPD, increased vocational awareness for local teachers	CPD workshops with practitioners and vocational specialists Local art specialist teachers from all county schools
Employers event	1 st event held October 2008 On campus	35 employers	Increased data base of employers Sector skill specific vocational links Dedicated employers link to web site: progression to vocational opportunities	FE/HE academic staff, Business link, Chamber of Commerce, Skillsfast, Employers 1 st event spring board for planned termly FE and HE Employers Forums
Hfd & Worcs LLN	Various projects: Taster for LLN Portal for Vocational learners Mapping	N/A	Enhanced IAG Informing curriculum development, enhancing employability.	Progression Manager is member of West Midlands

	transferrable skills in Media Arts for employment and progression Regional progression work with partners			Progression group Additionally member of regional LLN Employer Engagement group, Art Providers group and APEL group
Aim Higher	Various activities with vocational routes students throughout the year: Enrichment, IAG, masterclasses	120 x ND Art & Design 35 x 1 st Diploma students 19 x ND Performing Arts	Increased aspiration, IAG, enrichment	New activities planned for 2009-10 include new Bridging courses with regional colleges.
14 – 19 diploma development	Development by HCA, Delivery by 4 local secondary schools and HCA and employers	Student cohort Level 2 pre 16 = 40 Level 3 = 24	Operational structure in place for delivery in 2010	Consortium of county schools and colleges Local Authority, Senior managers Delivery framework IAG and Partnership agreement for progression Partnership agreement for Employer Engagement

7 Widening participation activities and initiatives 2009-12

Targets and Milestones 2009-12			
Initiative/activity	Indicators of success	Annual Milestones	3 Year Target
Increase proportion of new entry students from low participation post-codes	Percentage of new entrants (HEFCE data)	Increase percentage by 1% per year	25% of new entrants to be from low participation post-codes by 2012
Maintain or increase proportion of students eligible for full HEMG	Percentage of students eligible (HEFCE data)	Maintain or increase percentage of eligible students at current levels of 36%	At least 36% of students eligible for full HEMG in 2012
Ensure that fair admissions policies take account of the needs of learners from vocational courses	HE Admissions Policy in place and key admission staff trained to appropriate level	Development and monitoring reviewed annually by Admissions Steering Group	Revised HE Admissions policy in place by December 2009, reviewed annually and training of key staff completed
Development and implementation of College Student Questionnaire	Improved NSS ratings and in-house Student Feedback results	Achieve an annual increase of 1% in overall satisfaction rates for all HE students in College Student Questionnaire Achieve a year on year increase in NSS scores for categories below 4.0	Overall student satisfaction in College Student Questionnaire of 90% in 2012 Overall NSS satisfaction of 4.0 in 2012
Continue to work with regional schools and colleges and organisations that succeed the NALN and Worcester Lifelong Learning Networks to widen progression and participation to HE from non traditional routes	Number of signed Progression Agreements and monitoring of WP students.	4 new Progression Agreements agreed and implemented annually	12 new Progression Agreements agreed and implemented for 2009-12
Proactive engagement with delivery of 14-19 Creative & Media Diploma and LA consortia	Data to evidence recruitment at Level 3	Recruitment against agreed targets for delivery at HCA	Recruitment to meet target at level 3 within two years of commencing delivery in 2010

Targets and Milestones 2009-12

Initiative/activity	Indicators of success	Annual Milestones	3 Year Target
Continue to work with county schools and colleges to further develop progression via vocational route: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer schools • Spring schools, • Bridging and transition courses • HE taster activities 	Data to evidence recruitment from low participation groups participating in Spring and Summer schools year and HE tasters	5% annual increase in progression from students participating in Spring and Summer schools year and HE tasters	15% increase in progression from students participating in Spring and Summer schools year and HE tasters by 2012
Continue to develop activities to encourage internal progression	Data to evidence increased internal recruitment to HE	Increased recruitment from WP students on vocational level 3 courses studying at HCA (baseline to be established)	20% growth in internal progression from vocational courses over 3 years.
Continue to develop initiatives to underpin and inform progression to HE	Increased recruitment from WP students from partner colleges	3% growth in progression from Progression Partner colleges per year (baseline to be established)	10% growth in progression from Progression Partner colleges over 3 years

Appendix 1

STRATEGIC PLAN

2009

Our Values:

We are committed to

- *Putting our students, their needs and their learning first*
- *Providing teaching and learning of the highest quality*
- *Continually raising standards in everything that we do*
- *Being active in widening participation in education and the arts*
- *Offering opportunities for progression to higher level study or employment*
- *Increasing the employability and entrepreneurial ambitions of our students*
- *Valuing, supporting and investing in our staff*
- *Extending innovation through creative practice*
- *Valuing diversity and respecting individuality and difference*
- *Engaging with business and cultural partners*
- *Making a difference to the cultural and creative quality of lives throughout the region*
- *Contributing towards economic regeneration in the region*

Mission:

'To provide outstanding education and employability in the creative arts'

Aims:

1 Stability

To achieve long-term sustainability by delivering outstanding academic quality, by maximising and diversifying income, and by making the best use of human and physical resources

2 Development

To achieve planned developments by growing student numbers and working with universities in the region to meet aspirations for a university ethos in the city

3 Connection

To develop and improve connections with stakeholders, the community and the creative industries

Appendix 2

Selection Procedures for HE courses (from Validation documentation 2009)

The selection of applicants is fundamental to the quality of the activity of the course and the general health and well-being of the academic community. Selection for a programme is governed by a set of principles which constitute the admission policy. These general principles are set out below, and guidance to candidates is published on the College website.

- The selection of applicants will fully recognise the primary importance of equality of opportunity, in accordance with the Mission Statement of the College. In particular, each application for admission will be considered on the basis of merit, suitability and academic qualification; no applicant will be placed at any form of advantage or disadvantage for reasons of age, colour, creed, disability, employment category, health, sexual orientation, marital status, race or gender.
- As much information as possible will be provided to allow candidates to assess their own suitability for a programme of study and candidates will have access to whatever additional information they may reasonably require about the course.
- Only necessary and justifiable entry criteria will be applied, and objective selection and interviewing techniques will be used in order to estimate the ability of the applicant to benefit from involvement in the programme and to complete it successfully.
- Entry to the course will be open to as large a range of potential applicants as possible, as far as the limitations of available resources allow and without waiving the academic standards pertaining to the course.
- The specific admission requirements described in the documentation for the course will be framed in such a way that no successful applicant entering the Academic Programme is regarded as a 'non-standard' or 'exceptional' case.

Selection of students is carried out in line with UCAS procedures and the Admissions Policy. Assessment of an applicant's case for admission will normally require attendance at the College for interview.

Applicants selected for interview are carefully considered by a panel of staff in order that their ability to benefit from the course and their level of educational attainment can be measured. A student will also normally be present in an advisory role to the interviewee and to give information about the course. Interviews are informal and enable the applicant to show their work and discuss it with staff. The interviewer(s) consider:

- the quality and range of work displayed
- the level of creative curiosity, awareness and maturity of the applicant displayed during the interview
- the academic capacity of the individual
- the ability of the individual to meet the academic aims of the course

- the written application, record of academic achievement and tutorial references submitted by the applicant, together with any other relevant material they wish to put forward to support their application.

The Course Leader, reporting to the Programme Manager, will ensure that:

- members of the panel are properly briefed and all documentation appropriate to the application is available to members e.g. UCAS form, certification of prior learning, testimonials, general and subject specific criteria for entry;
- admission assessments/interviews are conducted on an objective basis;
- applicants are informed of the interview process, its purpose and the process and timescale for the notification of final decisions;
- appropriate arrangements are made for applicants to show properly any work they feel relevant to their submission;
- applicants are given equal opportunity to present the best case for their admission to the course
- applicants are given encouragement, time and opportunity to ask questions
- at the end of the interview applicants are given the opportunity to clarify any aspect of the discussion about which they may be unclear or unhappy
- arrangements are put in place for the provision of further information to applicants if required
- decisions resulting from the interview are properly recorded

Where the interview is conducted by a single tutor, responsibility lies with the Programme Manager to ensure that the process and decisions are open to appropriate scrutiny. All interviews are recorded in written form and notes supporting decisions relating to admissions are made against transparent and justifiable criteria in accordance with the QAA Code of Practice Section 10. The College publishes to candidates clear guidance on the interview process and expectations of work to be brought as a portfolio.