

[Hereford College of Arts]
Provider's UKPRN: 10003022
2019-20 access and participation plan

Pen Portrait of the College

Hereford College of Arts (HCA) was established in 1851 and has offered higher level qualifications in Art and Design since 1993. HCA provides College higher education (HE) to a total undergraduate and graduate population of 397 students.

HCA offers twelve BA (Hons) undergraduate courses within the Creative Arts and postgraduate qualifications in Fine Art and Contemporary Crafts. The University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) validates all the College's higher education courses.

We represent a dual sector college with distinctive higher education provision sitting alongside our further education (FE) offer, which is delivered at a separate campus. We have a long and established history of positive NSS and QAA outcomes. In 2017, we achieved TEF silver. The College is in the city of Hereford in the West Midlands and operates across two campuses a short walk apart. Our data reflects our unique profile as a small specialist arts college situated in a rural area.

Self - Assessment

The following self- assessment considers our current performance for under- represented groups, considering, in turn; access, success and progression.

A summary of our key strengths and areas for further development are available at the end of the section.

Self-assessment: Access

To date the College has focussed widening participation work around access and our 17/18 enrolment data reveals we have continued to maintain a positive record of securing enrolments from several under-represented student groups. However, there are areas for improvement in both the capture of data and analysis of data that is available, and an opportunity to understand the overlap between these groups of under representation and how we might best address.

Our last OFFA Access Agreement Monitoring (16-17) shows that three of our five Access targets have been met, exceeded or missed by a narrow margin. The targets reflect consistent performance from the college in attracting students from non-traditional routes, state schools and supporting students eligible for DSA.

In other OFFA milestones and targets the College set a target of developing 25 strategic partnerships (through formal partnership agreements) with schools and colleges. This target has been exceeded and maintained at 30.

Our Access Agreements for 2017-18 and 2018-19 aim to maintain or exceed these targets; however, the College has already identified that developing our data collection will allow us to track performance from under-represented groups more accurately and also identify where intervention is best placed.

Three targets from our existing Access Resource Plans relate to the first of the under-represented groups identified as a priority by OfS. Target 1, which concerns non-traditional, vocational routes

(enrolments of students via routes such as L3 vocational qualifications and FE and HND/FDA top-ups Access), target 3 (State school access) and target 5 (students entitled to a full higher education maintenance loan) can stand as proxy measures of our first strength. This is our progress in attracting students from areas of low education participation, low household income and/or low socioeconomic progression.

Our 17/18 enrolment data showed 79% of Level 4 students have a vocational Level 3 qualification on entry. 98% of all new entrants in the 18-25 age range are from state schools¹ or colleges, above the sector average of 90%² and 23% of Level 4 students from low socio-economic backgrounds are entitled to financial support through a cash bursary.

Our TEF metrics confirm HCA is effective in attracting students from low participation neighbourhoods - POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2. 32% of our undergraduates are from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2. Across the sector, in 2017, the entry rate for POLAR Quintile 1 was 20.4% and the entry rate for quintile 2 in 2017 was 26.9%.³

Our student data on placed applicants from MEM group 1 2013-2017⁴ is in line with the sector average. Given our low (just over 4%) intake of non-white students, and that MEM ratings include ethnicity, this shows a certain amount of success in our improving access for severely under-represented areas such as white males from low socio-economic backgrounds, an area which we might usefully explore further.

Our second strength is our success in reaching out and attracting mature students into HE. Over 37% are 21 or over, despite a national decline in mature students.⁵

Our third area of strength is in improving access for disabled students. This is an area of considerable achievement for HCA. As part of our OFFA Access Agreement, the College has set a target of students with Disabled Student Assessments at 13% (a benchmark drawn from HCA data for 2013/14). Since 2014 the college has been able to maintain or increase this level consistently across 5 years of our Access Agreement with 15% of students enrolled in 16/17 with DSA. This is well above the HE sector average of 6.6%⁶

With reference to a further under-represented group; people with specific learning difficulties and mental health problems, enrolment data collected from students indicates that within our current undergraduate population approximately 50% of students self-declare a learning disability and/or mental health difficulty.

We support a small number of care leavers which is lower than the 6% national average - we intend to sustain our current good practice in supporting these students financially through their higher education studies but we are not intending to make them a major strategic focus for access, given our specialism and scale.

Just over 5% of our student population is non-white. Herefordshire is sparsely populated and has a relatively small (6.4 per cent in 2011), Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population compared with 19.5% nationally⁷. As a creative arts specialist there are also wider issues in attracting BAME students and lack of diversity is an issue high on the agenda of the Arts Council

¹ OFFA Target – Access Agreement

² <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/01-02-2018/widening-participation-summary>

³ UCAS End of Cycle Report, 2017 <https://www.ucas.com/file/140396/download?token=TC7eMH9W>

⁴ UCAS MEM data, 2017

⁵ Bolton (2018) Higher Education Student Numbers: Briefing paper

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7857#fullreport>

⁶ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/01-02-2018/widening-participation-summary>

⁷ <https://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/about-a-topic/population-and-demographics>

and other bodies interested in promoting the creative industries. Our strategic planning seeks to address this over the longer term.

Historically, we have never set gender as an access target. However, overall we enrol more female than male students, well above the national average of 56%⁸. There is an under-representation of white males from low POLAR Quintile categories in both Higher Education in general (6.5%)⁹ and a relatively low proportion of men within Creative Arts (31.4%)¹⁰. Given our location in an area of mainly white ethnicity with key patches of low participation neighbourhoods, this provides an opportunity for us to consider further developing our access strategy at a granular level towards this particular intersection of under-represented groups.

Access performance trends

A review of trends around the three groups identified as areas of strength in our access analysis shows that:

By inference, access data from students from low socio-economic backgrounds (using the proxy measure of students from vocational entry pathways and state schools) show a steady increase in enrolments. Approximately 50% of enrolments in 2017 were from partnership colleges, of which the majority are large GFE colleges, hence our inference that we are recruiting from more of this demographic. This represents an increase from 42% from the previous academic year.

The proportion of students classed as 'mature' on access to Higher Education from 2014/15 was 41%. In 2015/16 mature students represented 43% of first year students, with a small drop to 40% in 2016/17. This represents a slight variation with no overall trend or pattern.

The overall numbers of students recruited who are from particular ethnicities is extremely low and therefore remains unreportable due to both data privacy issues and TEF metric guidance. We can confirm, however, that as a general trend access from students from particular ethnicities remains broadly the same year on year.

Access from students in receipt of DSA mapped between 2012/13 and 2016/17 shows a slight variation from a baseline of 15% but no discernible trend. Within the context of DSA changes, this may represent a positive trend in recruitment from this demographic. The number of students self-declaring with a mental health difficulty is increasing year on year

Self-Assessment: Success

This section reflects on our current performance around the two success priorities identified by OfS; improving non-continuation and reducing attainment gaps.

We currently have one pre-existing target around Success, which concerns the number of students who complete the full three years of their honours degree. Our OFFA target is set at 81%. At the 2016/17 monitoring stage, this fell to 63%¹¹.

This can be explained in part because our method of tracking did not make allowance for students who transfer from one course to another within the institution, and due to our diverse

⁸ 2015-16 HEFCE data <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/HEinEngland/students/sex/>

⁹ UCAS data <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/ucas-undergraduate-releases/equality-and-entry-rates-data-explorer#sankey>

¹⁰ <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Pages/patterns-and-trends-2017.aspx>

¹¹ OFFA Target - Access Agreement

learner population and frequent inter-course communication, course transfers and suspension of study is relatively common.

Although more formal tracking and monitoring of cross-course transfers began in 2017/18, internal data suggests that students transferring between courses rose from 2% in 2015/16 to just over 3% in 2017, with an even steeper rise to 5% recorded in April this year.

We recognise this is an area for improvement i.e. non-continuation. However, our TEF workbook metrics from June 2017 and HEFCE APR metric from November 2017 show that our non-continuation scores are neutral when set against TEF benchmarks.

Data from 2017/18¹² shows that 36% of students who withdrew or interrupted their studies cited ill health as a reason for withdrawal. Wellbeing is therefore identified as an area of strategic focus as our HEFCE annual provider review 2016 shows an increase in non-continuation.

Regarding achievement, one of our existing identified areas for improvement is to do more analysis to identify possible attainment gaps between our more under-represented students and our broader student population.

We do not currently gather robust success data for all five under-represented groups. We can measure success mapped to degree classification and non-continuation by some disaggregated demographics and map these to our performance data for the whole student body to identify patterns and trends. The underrepresented groups we can report on are; mature students, students of particular ethnicities and disabled students.

We support a small number of care leavers but our data is currently dependent on their self-identification and they are often identified when applying for loans and bursaries mid-way through the academic year. In future, we will pro-actively invite care leavers to identify themselves to improve our tracking of this cohort.

In order to identify students from low socio-economic backgrounds we use the following criteria as proxy measures; entry from vocational pathways, state schools, plus TEF data around students from low POLAR quintiles. Our systems do not currently tie this data to either non-continuation or academic outcomes. To improve our tracking of student success at a granular level, we intend to strengthen our measures of socio-economic backgrounds rather than using proxy measures that are not mapped to Office for Students criteria. With regard to students from low POLAR quintiles, we intend to use the OfS postcode tracker from 2018/19 to map student postcodes so that we can measure success according to these criteria.

Results show that mature students have good success rates, with students aged 21- 30 when enrolled in the course and those over 30 on enrolment, awarded more first-class honours degree classification and upper second honours degree awards than the general student population. Due to our scale, the numbers of mature students achieving lower-second class awards and below are less than 10 and therefore not reportable due to both data privacy issues and in line with TEF metric guidance.

Likewise, when students of particular ethnicities are disaggregated from the overall student population the analysis of data is not reportable due to both data privacy issues and TEF metric guidance. We can confirm, however, that as a general trend our students from ethnic minorities in 2016/17 achieve broadly in line with the rest of our student population.

¹² Hereford College of Arts registry data

In our current data capture, students self-declaring a disability are aggregated with students in confirmed receipt of DSA. In order to support and track student success on an individual level, we intend to disaggregate this data from 2018/19.

Students, who self-declare a disability, achieve success in line with the aggregated student population in terms of degree classifications. Taking into account research by Public Health England (2014)¹³ which suggests links with good mental health and academic performance, this is an indicator of success for this under-represented group. Robust and coded data was not gathered on non-continuation reasons until the current academic year (2017/18) but this current data suggests that 36% of non-continuation rates are due to health issues and represent a key theme within our non-continuation statistics. This correlates with external research published in the 'Step-change' framework for wellbeing in HE, which finds strong links between mental health and student continuation on study programmes.¹⁴

We have addressed mental health and wellbeing in our OfS submission as a key strategic aim to support our student success rates.

Success performance trends

We can measure success mapped to degree classification and non-continuation by some disaggregated demographics and map these to our performance data for the whole student body to identify patterns and trends across academic years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The underrepresented groups we can report on are mature students, students of particular ethnicities and disabled students.

Trends for successful academic performance (measured by degree classifications) are positive for mature students, regardless of whether these students self-declare a disability.

During 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 mature students achieve a higher than average proportion of first class degrees when compared with aggregated figures and the majority leave college with degrees of an upper second class and above.

However, low-achieving mature students are an area of attention. Numbers are too small to identify a trend but this will be closely monitored and addressed in our ambition and strategy around success.

The vast majority of mature students who also self-declare a disability succeed in their studies throughout the three years. However, younger students who self-declare a disability did not achieve as many first class degrees as the average in 2016/17. Those declaring a disability achieved broadly in line with the general learner population in 2015/16 and 2016/17. We will closely monitor during 2017/18 to find out if this is a pattern or trend.

Our intake of students declaring particular ethnicities is very small and so granular analysis of data cannot be disclosed under data privacy laws. However, students from particular ethnicities achieve successful outcomes broadly in line with internal benchmarks and aggregated data.

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-link-between-pupil-health-and-wellbeing-and-attainment>

¹⁴ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/stepchange/Pages/case-for-action.aspx>

Self-assessment: Progression

TEF shows that we are below benchmark with regard to students accessing highly skilled employment and further study.

Graduate progression is already an area of key strategic importance to college.

We have relatively small numbers of DLHE returns and have initiated an internal small-scale pilot around graduate outcomes to support in developing a Graduate Launchpad and Enterprise programme. We will be triangulating 2016/17 DLHE results and the insights from our own research.

The students who contributed to the internal research project represent a random sampling of students who had opted in to receiving the DLHE survey. Of these, 76% of students were from OfS under represented group backgrounds.

38% of graduate participants in the research project were mature students, and 53% had self-assessed with a learning difficulty, with a few students who were both mature and declared a learning difficulty on enrolment.

Although this was a small-scale research project, which makes it difficult to spot patterns and trends, 50% of students from under-represented groups gave answers suggesting they were confidently involved in professional creative practice. The vast majority of the rest were still engaged with creative practice but were building up these careers (for example, one was actively engaged in creative practice but also volunteering for local business). Mature students marginally appeared to achieve better than the rest of the under-represented groups, with all mature students participating in the project feeling confident around pursuing their creative practice.

Progress performance trends

Hereford College of Arts has a limited amount of data to draw on to explore progress performance trends.

This data from a small-scale research project has been considered alongside TEF metrics. Our data suggests that an area for focus is the progress of younger students self-declaring a mental health difficulty, as these appear to be marginally less confident in their creative careers.

Our TEF data shows that our progression to Higher Level Employment or Further Study is ranked in the bottom 10% of providers. Although data returns were too low on our 2016/17 return to gather information on a cohort basis against benchmark, we also have one negative flag in our three-year data against benchmark target.

We currently have an intake with a high proportion of students from Office for Students identified groups, in particular; low socio-economic backgrounds, mature students and students with disabilities. Give the national trends for lack of progression from such students our inference from a low return on DHLE is that this is an area of weakness for college and aggregated data will still give us relevant insights into student outcomes.

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses

Our self-assessment shows that access to Higher Education at Hereford College of Arts from three OfS identified groups is an area of strength. These groups are; students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, mature students and students in receipt of DSA and those self-declaring a learning or mental health disability.

We have identified intersections within these groups, which we might explore further. Our non-continuation statistics research confirms that wellbeing is an important area to explore for development¹⁵. This is currently a strategic priority for HCA. There is a small cohort of low achieving students that needs attention and younger students with self-declared health issues.

A key area of weakness is progression to higher-level employment or further study. This is an area of immediate strategic concern for HCA, which is reflected in our strategic plan.

Ambitions and Strategy

Hereford College of Arts has a track record in successfully enrolling students from underrepresented groups and enabling students to further their personal goals. Our ambition and strategy builds on this sustained activity and achievement. With outreach, short course and further education programmes fully integrated with our higher education programmes we offer students a ladder of opportunity that can lead from Level 2 to Masters.

In designing the plan, we have drawn on insights from our self-assessment and prioritised areas where we believe that we can develop an ambitious and credible strategy. This addresses gaps in our current performance around access, within the context of a small, specialist college in a rural area as we put a new focus on the non-continuation and progression for underrepresented groups.

In terms of success, we have identified low-achieving mature students as an area which needs attention. As indicated under strategic goal number two in our strategy, we will develop more detailed individual profiling of students in order to ensure that our learning support can be more pro-actively engaged with this cohort.

Likewise, we have identified younger students who self-declare a disability as not achieving as high a percentage of first-class honours degrees. This group will also be prioritised as part of how our learning support outreach can proactively reach out and support their needs.

Identified trends correlate around the need to focus on these two groups.

All of our strategic interventions around learning support, connected data, wellbeing and mental health will be continuously developed and evaluated for their impact on underrepresented groups as our understanding of these groups performance improves.

We will develop an evaluation of our learning support and wellbeing services which takes account of their impact on underrepresented groups and which will be monitored through formal college processes.

In terms of progress, the data we have suggests that a focus on younger students who have self-declared a health issue would be a priority area to consider. This will be taken into account when developing an Enterprise programme.

¹⁵ Thorley et al, 2017; [Not by degrees, improving student mental health in the UK's Universities](#)

Our key strategic plan includes actions to revise which data we capture on enrolment and how we profile students from under-represented groups so this can process can begin from enrolment onwards.

A working group has formed to look at how we track learning gain with more consistency of approach to students from under-represented groups. This group will also develop key tracking points in order to track progress and design interventions on a granular level.

We will develop, led by the new role of Wellbeing Officer, which we introduced this year, interventions to support those under-represented groups we have identified.

Through our Graduate Launchpad programme (a new initiative) we intend to maintain contact with and track the onward journey of all opting-in graduates and through this we will be able to address any gaps or disparities for the progression of these under-represented groups and tailor bespoke interventions to support progress to higher level employment or future study which will feed back into our existing curriculum development.

Strategic Goal One: Improve Access for underrepresented groups.

Developing our strengths in Access: We are ambitious to maintain our current strength in this area and deliver five-year goals that are stretching in context but achievable.

Our on-going focus will be on strengthening our achievements in access for the three core groups where we have already demonstrated effectiveness:

- those living in areas of low participation neighbourhoods, low household income, or low socio-economic status
- mature students
- those in receipt of DSA or self-declared mental health problems

Within these groups we will refine more specific targets that draw on further analysis of our core strengths, external needs and opportunities.

Whilst continuing to work towards our pre-agreed targets for 18/19 we will consider state school access only as a proxy measure and contextual information alongside other data.

In addition to building incrementally on our areas of strength we are ambitious to include gender as an intersection in our ambitions for increasing access from students from low socio-economic backgrounds and seek to increase enrolments of white males from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2.

Overview of 2019-20 activity:

- We will launch a new digital creativity outreach programme for schools and colleges, aligned with new FE curriculum development, designed to support engagement by white males from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2, and their progression to higher education.
- We will establish a new Saturday programme to enhance our on-going schools outreach with subsidised places for those from low participation neighbourhoods.
- We will build on our long-standing schools outreach work to develop a student artist in residence programme, to support aspiration and attainment in schools and develop pilot work with the local Cultural Education Partnership around careers in the creative industries.
- We will consult with partner schools and colleges to develop new and effective outreach approaches of engagement that attracts underrepresented groups
- We will introduce a new taster programme specifically designed for mature students

Strategic Goal Two – Improve Success rates for all students from underrepresented groups

Our self-assessment shows that overall non-continuation is around national benchmarks but our five-year strategy is to reduce non-continuation and make this a positive metric in both our college wide TEF assessments and in terms of underrepresented groups. We have identified mental health as a significant cause for non-continuation and will continue to develop our support for students in this area delivering a well-being strategy that draws on sector research.

Overview of 2019-20 activity:

- Making our learning support more accessible outside designated student services areas to improve the reach to students who do not pro-actively access current provision.
- Connect our data to ensure we have holistic student profiles and an understanding of underrepresented students' needs across the different areas of their engagement with the College.
- To promote well-being and mental health, we will further develop the experience of community and belonging at HCA, including a buddy scheme for new students. We will respond to our Matrix assessment feedback (May 2018) to develop a new collaboration and social interaction space, outside of the normal curriculum timetable. Research shows that wellbeing is tied to notions of community and 'belonging'¹⁶ and we will support our underrepresented groups by fostering community collaboration and a sense of belonging to a creative community.

Strategic Goal Three: Improve Progression

We are ambitious to tackle one of the key areas of improvement in our self-assessment around employment and further study. We are making careers and enterprise a central pillar of a new cross-college strategy (subject to Board approval July 2018). Within the development of this strategic theme, we will include targeted provision for underrepresented groups in our student body.

Overview of 2019-20 activity:

- Following a pilot process in 2018, we will start a graduate Launchpad programme. This is part of the 'Scholarship and Enterprise' framework at HCA and will give recent graduates an 18 month access to face-to-face and digital resources to support their transition from college to employment. The Launchpad programme will complement a new cross-college enterprise offer at undergraduate level.

Progression target

The College Progression target is to improve progression into employment, higher level employment and further study of under-represented group 1 (Low socio economic backgrounds). We will use DLHE data for 2017 graduates from POLAR quintiles 1-3 as a benchmark. The College is interrogating this recently published data to identify this group within it. The number of students who participated in the DLHE overall is small and this may undermine the robustness of the benchmark and may limit the Colleges ability to publish at a more detailed level if the group 1 cohort is less than 10. The College will review the use of this target and if found to be deficient will work to put a more robust target in place.

The College will not have an external measure of the progression for 2018 graduates and subsequent years until the new Graduate Outcomes survey is published in 2020. In the interim, the College will track engagement of the 2018 cohort in our new Graduate Launchpad programme.

Strategic Goal Four: Underpin the effectiveness of access and participation planning, delivery and evaluation

Improved use of data, research and collaboration is necessary to ensure the delivery of all our goals and is therefore a strategic priority in itself. HCA's historic focus on the individual student has great strengths, but we recognise the need to improve our research and information around cohorts of students including underrepresented groups.

Overview of 2019-20 activity:

¹⁶ http://www.barnwoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Importance_of_Belonging_Summary_v12-web.pdf

- We will develop systems and processes that capture data throughout the student cycle in order to develop bespoke interventions for the students in underrepresented groups.
- We will improve the tracking of student attendance as a risk indicator.

Strategic Goal Five: Embed better understanding of access and participation goals and activities across the College.

The College is currently developing a new five-year strategy (subject to Board approval in July 2018). The goals we have identified for our access and participation plan have been informed not only by our access and participation self-assessment but also by our college strategy development work. They are aligned with this work to date, which includes the outcomes of extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders including students. Our access and participation work will be more fully embedded not only in college outreach work but also curriculum development and quality improvement systems, indeed across the four strategic pillars for development:

- Our Curriculum
- Our Community
- Creative Spaces
- Student Careers and Enterprise

We are committed to student engagement in the ongoing development and delivery of the College strategy. We will include access and participation as part of our student engagement programme.

Overview of 2019-20 activity:

- We will hold a staff and student festival around our access and participation strategy.

Strategic Goal Six: Amplify the impact of our access and participation plan through collaboration

Collaboration will underpin our access and participation work both in internal cross-college collaboration between staff and students and between the College and external organisations. The following is a list of key external organisations with whom we expect to maintain collaborative relationships around access and participation. It is not exhaustive, as we would expect to develop new partnerships during the 5 years of this plan.

- Formal partnerships with our 30 Progression Colleges and informal partnerships with schools.
- Aim Higher West Midlands. The College is part of the Aim Higher West Midlands Consortium delivering the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). Whilst NCOP activity is separately funded and will not form part of our resource plan we will draw on the experience and evaluation of the collaboration to inform our wider access and participation work.
- United Kingdom Association of Arts and Design Institutions (UKADIA). The College is a member of UKADIA, which enables the sharing of good practice, policy and sector changes.
- ERASMUS+ Knowledge Alliance Arts and Humanities Entrepreneurship Hub (University of Wales Trinity St David). HCA is developing a relationship with our validating University UWTSD's ERASMUS+ Knowledge Alliance Arts and Humanities Entrepreneurship Hub to support the development of a programme, which closely matches the needs of our specialist provision.
- Herefordshire Cultural Partnership (HCP) and Creative Connections Herefordshire. The College is an active member of the Herefordshire Cultural Partnership and Creative Connections, a complementary network of more than 40 organisations. Our goal to improve progression for underrepresented groups and graduate Launchpad activity will align with the objectives in HCP draft strategy.

How we will ensure continuous improvement and evaluation

Our overall approach will be to review measures taken to achieve our access and participation goals as an integral part of our review of progress against other strategic priorities over the next

five years. We will ensure this evaluation takes place at different levels so that we have a better understanding of how individual initiatives contribute to the overall progress and assess value for money. This evaluation as well as overall outcomes will be monitored at a senior level within the College. We will be open to innovation and trying new approaches, accepting some of these may fail but ensuring we learn from the failure.

Overview of 2019-20 evaluation programme:

- We will ensure our evaluation is robust by continuing to refine our use of data to give more specific insight into performance around distinct, underrepresented groups.
- We will develop our evaluation methods by learning from practice nationally including working with other creative arts institutions through UKADIA.
- We will continue to develop our close relationship with local schools and co-design a more formal feedback process to help us shape our schools engagement.
- We will draw on national research into employment skills and employer feedback in the evaluation of the development of the new enterprise and graduate Launchpad programme. Initial measures will need to be around the delivery of the programme ahead of the measurement of longer-term outcomes.
- We will capture student feedback in advance and during the 2019-20 staff and student access and participation festival.

Monitoring performance against the measures set out in the access and participation plan

- We will monitor performance at a curriculum and senior management level and through existing quality assurance reviews reporting to Academic Board and Academic **Quality & Standards Committee**.
- Key census points will be established throughout the student cycle.

How our access and participation plan supports and benefit from your broader equality and diversity strategy

HCA embodies its response to the Equality Act 2010 through the Single Equality Scheme. The scheme sets out the College's commitment to embedding equality and diversity into the College's culture and actions. It sets out the framework to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality and diversity across all of the equality and diversity protected characteristics, detailed within the Equality Act 2010. This includes; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The College has adopted this approach to fair admissions and our admission policy, which refers directly to our current OFFA Statement and Access Plan.

We have considered our current action plan based on Office for Students self-assessment in the light of our Single Equality Scheme. We will be subjecting both to regular review through our Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

- **The data and analysis development we are improving as part of our access and participation plan will also support our equality and diversity activity.**
- **Our well-being activities supporting underrepresented students align with broader equality and diversity ambitions**

Consultation with students

Our plan draws on consultation with students undertaken as part of the development of new college strategy.

- The appointment of a wellbeing officer is a direct result of student feedback to college.
- Recent graduates are contributing to the development of the 'Graduate Launchpad' and all Level 6 students will be consulted about how this programme might develop in line with their needs.
- Our HE student governor and Student Union representatives have been involved in reviewing wider draft strategy work.
- Developing engagement with students is part of an ongoing 'Student Engagement' project, which began in October 2017.

For largely logistical reasons around timing we have not engaged students in reviewing this written submission but will fully involve them more systematically in future development of the access and participation goals, targets and delivery.

Investment

For 2019-20, the College plans to invest:

- 17.5% of additional higher education income will support Access, Success, Progression and financial support.
- Financial support will be £65,000 in total of which £20,000 will be allocated to hardship support and £45,000 to support bursaries. This represents 7.2% of additional higher education income.
- £31,000 (3.4%) will be allocated to Access, £42,000 (4.6%) will be allocated to Success, and £20,000 (2.2%) will be allocated to Progression. This will be a total investment of £93,000.

The College has re-purposed expenditure from Access to Success, as it is felt that the success of students while at College needs to be further supported to improve outcomes for those students enrolled at the College and to successfully complete their degree course. For example, the College has appointed a Wellbeing Development Manager to support student's mental health and wellbeing. Mental Health is a major problem affecting young people nationally.

We are committed to offering the following financial support (as stated in our current access agreement 18-19):

Cash bursary: The College will continue to offer a cash bursary with a value of £1,000 for full-time students and £500 for part-time students. To be eligible for the cash bursary a new student will need to be a resident in England or European Union, liable to pay a tuition fee of £9,000 if full-time or £4,500 if part-time, must be a new undergraduate starting higher education for the first time, and have declared residual household income of less than £25,000. This bursary is paid directly to students in 3 instalments: 25% is payable in the autumn term, 25% in the spring term and 50% in the summer term. This bursary is payable in the first year of the course only. Satisfactory work, attendance and progress during the year are required to ensure all payments are made.

Progression College Bursary: All students who have studied at Hereford College of Arts or at one of its Progression Partner Colleges on a further education course within the last 2 academic years are eligible for a Progression Bursary of £500 for full-time students (£250 for part-time), in their first year. This bursary is paid directly to students in 3 instalments: 25% is payable in the autumn term, 25% in the spring term and 50% in the summer term. Satisfactory work, attendance and progress during the year are required to ensure release of payment. This course must also be their first HE course.

We will continue to invest in a progression bursary for students from Partner Colleges. We have based this on evaluating the impact the bursary made on students through online responses from two groups; those from low-income households and those that are over the £25,000 threshold. Both groups of students said that the bursary makes a positive impact on the student experience and is valued highly. Students from low-income households see the bursary as essential to purchase books, kit and materials with a number suggesting in both groups that the bursary could be spread across 2 years of student when students have a financial outlay at key assessment points during their course. We plan to do further research around the timing of bursary payments ahead of a potential restructuring of our bursary for 2020.

Hardship fund: The College has a financial hardship fund that students apply to if they are suffering genuine financial hardship. The majority of students apply for support at three points during the academic year, which must be supported by evidence of need. The College will also support students in an emergency or matters of urgency.

In Herefordshire and South Shropshire, the College is working with the West Midlands Rural Strand of Aim Higher led by the University of Worcester. The work the College is involved with is targeting key schools and postcodes that have a low participation rate in Higher Education.

The College will be using its targeted allocations (2018-19: £103K for Premium to Support Successful Outcomes; £38K Disabled Students Premium) from the OfS to further support and develop the work in the Access and Participation Plan. This will include investment in success and employability along with investment in improved systems to tracking and evaluation.

Evaluation of financial support

In our 2018/19 Access Agreement the College identified the need to develop a process of evaluation for the financial support it offers to students from low-income households in order to measure the impact and where it supports successful continuation. During 2017/18, using OFFA's survey Toolkit, the College surveyed Level 5 & 6 students who received a Bursary in their first year of study. This research specifically analysed responses from an under represented group; students from low-income households, using whether students were eligible for a full maintenance grant as a proxy measure to identify.

Students from low-income cohorts reported slightly more emphasis on using the bursary to support purchase of materials and equipment. The outcome and recommendations of this survey is that it is well valued by students but has identified a question around potentially revising the structure of its delivery.

We will repeat this survey in order to acquire more robust data and further improve our evaluation by collecting data from students accessing hardship funds. Our analysis will consider whether there are any patterns and trends around student success for students from under-represented groups in receipt of bursaries and how they support student success.

Provision of information to students

Our provision of information relating to financial support for students and tuition fees is available on our website, at Open events, outreach activities, through the prospectus, and included in summer pack information sent to students ahead of enrolment. These details are included in Annex C. When approved, our access and participation plan will be published on our website and shared with students as part of our student engagement programme, and with our collaborative partners.

* course type not listed.

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

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The College is not planning to increase its tuition fees at this point in time above £9,000. All students will be charged the same tuition fee for each year of their course. Therefore if charged £9,000 for level 4, this will be the fee for level 5 and level 6. The College will review prior to its submission for 2020-21 entry whether it will increase its fees for new entrants to £9,250.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,000
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£4,500
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body													
Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	Disabled	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Maintain overall level of students with Disabled Student Assessments(DSA's) within student body.	No	2013-14	13%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	
T16a_02	Access	Low income background	Other statistic - Low-income backgrounds (please give details in the next column)	Maintain and increase overall level of students within student body who are entitled to a full higher education maintenance grant or to a full maintenance loan.	No	2015-16	49%	51%	51%	52%	52%	52%	This Access target is being reviewed. Higher Education Maintenance Grants have been phased out.
T16a_03	Access	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Maintain and increase levels of entrants from non-traditional routes targeting L3 vocational route students and FE/HE college partners who offer HND and FDA programmes for progression to appropriate BA Top-Ups	Yes	2015-16	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%	84%	
T16a_04	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Maintain and increase retention levels from first enrolment date to course completion.	No	2013-14	77%	80%	81%	81%	81%	81%	This Student Success target is under review. A target that is in line with the TEF metrics is being investigated.
T16a_05	Access	State school	Other statistic - State School (please give details in the next column)	Maintain current percentage of new entrants in the 18-25 age range from State Schools.	Yes	2013-14	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.													
Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Participation in HE Taster Workshop days.	Yes	2015-16	167	190	200	210	220		Effectiveness of workshops reviewed. Focus of delivery is to take place in schools. Timetabling of pupils to attend college based taster days or events was proving to be logistically more demanding. It is expected that taster events in schools will be easier to organise but also allow access to more pupils.
T16b_02	Access	State school	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Partnership Agreements in place with schools and FE/HE Colleges	Yes	2015-16	29	30	30	30	30		Baseline figure amended and target increased.