Access and Participation Plan for the Academic Year 2019 – 2020

1   The College

Following a merger on February 1st 2018, Solihull College and University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College became one large general further education college situated to the south-east of Birmingham, providing a range of programmes from entry level to higher education in all fifteen sector subject areas as defined by the Skills Funding Agency, and has an annual turnover of approximately £53 million. It receives funds from the Skills funding Agency and for Higher Education income from HEFCE, from Student Finance England (SFE) and via franchise arrangements with the College's Higher Education Institutional partners[1].

Over £60 million has been spent on the College estates in the last ten years, with a major redevelopment of the larger, Blossomfield campus in South Solihull at which 80% of learners study, completed in 2012. This included new build facilities for land-based provision and arts and a purpose-built Computer block which was completed in September 2014.

The Woodlands campus, in the north of Solihull, an area of significant social and economic disadvantage, was newly-built in 2006 and extended in 2013 to include Motor Vehicle and Construction workshops. An Advanced Manufacturing Centre was opened in the summer of 2014 with support from the Local Enterprise Partnership, and in October 2015 the facilities were further developed by the construction of an aviation centre which includes an aeroplane hangar.

The Stratford Campus[2] (currently known and branded as Stratford-upon-Avon College) is nationally-recognised as a centre for drama, theatre, music and dance, was the first in the country to achieve the Training Quality Standard with excellence in hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism, in recognition of its outstanding work with employers.

The College[3] was subject to a Quality Assurance Higher Education Review in February 2016 which confirmed our commitment[4] to offering high-quality Higher Education.

QAA's judgements about Solihull College and University Centre:

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and other awarding organisations ***meets UK expectations.***
- The quality of student learning opportunities ***meets UK expectations***.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities ***meets UK expectations.***
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities ***meets UK expectations***.

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[1] See Scope of the Plan
[2] Situated about 20 miles South of the main Blossomfield Campus
[3] Prior to the merger with Stratford-upon-Avon who have since adopted all of Solihull's HE management policies procedures and strategic goals
[4] http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/Solihull%20College/Solihull-College-HER-16.pdf

2   Introduction

This Plan has been prepared following a decision by the governors of Solihull College and University Centre and Stratford-upon-Avon College (they became a single institution as a result of a merger on February 1st 2018, and are referred to from here onwards as "the college") to raise its undergraduate tuition fees above the basic fee level for some of the programmes over which it has the appropriate authority[5] for all new Higher Education student enrolments from September 2019 onwards.

The College is committed to ensuring that not only are tuition fees affordable for all under-represented and disadvantaged groups, but that studying higher education is both realistic and achievable for all sectors of our local communities, and therefore it is envisaged that the maximum fee[6] will only be applied to high-cost provision, if at all.

The fees for the majority of Pearson Higher Nationals offered as part of the College's Higher Education curriculum[7] will be significantly lower than allowed, with the exceptions of Sport and Exercise Science and Production Arts (Theatrical Make-up) which will both be slightly higher to cover the costs of integrating additional qualifications and the purchase of necessary personal equipment as part of our commitment to maximising graduate employability.

The other programmes that Solihull College and University Centre[8] has the authority to set fees in excess of £6165 for 2019/20 are those it offers which are validated by Newman University, Coventry University and the University of Northampton: see Table 3 of the Resource Plan.

Clear information about the tuition fees that apply to all[9] courses and programmes of study at Solihull College and University Centre, and the financial support available to students is provided on the College website, with advice from the Student Services team, and other professionals provided at interview, or in writing if requested by any interested party.

Tuition fee information is also provided through student services and College open events, with the student's offer letter specifying the fees due for the duration of the programme, and outlining any and other expected expenditure such as that required for trips, printing and other necessary resources.

This Access and Participation Plan is integral to the College's mission "*to make significant contributions to the local and regional economies and beyond, by providing high quality vocational education and training for individuals, employers and the wider community*" and is a constituent factor in our vision "*to be the organisation of choice for learning for young people, adults and employers through their recognition of our excellent and distinctive experiences in vocational education and training.*"

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[5] This will be covered in detail in the section Scope of the Plan
[6] This is currently £9,250 for full-time undergraduate programmes and £6,935 pro for part-time undergraduate programmes.
[7] All of the college's Pearson provision is within the scope of this plan.
[8] This title includes Stratford-upon-Avon College in all cases, and has been used only for brevity.
[9] Including courses and programmes of study not covered by this plan.

2.1 Inflationary Statement

It is an integral part of college policy that the course fee remains constant for each year of a student's course (i.e. students are charged the same fee for the second year of their course as the first), and that the College will only increase any maximum fees for new students[10] in line with inflation subject to governmental agreement, for example through the TEF[11] or other permissions, but may raise programme fees set below permitted levels up to those permitted levels if additional, and at the time of setting unforeseen, factors necessitate increases to maintain economic viability.

Any increases, whether due to inflation or as adjustments towards the maximum permitted levels, will be rounded to the nearest £5.00 and publicised on our website, in addition to written confirmation sent out to prospective students who have declared an interest in these programmes within 10 days of any decision being made.

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[10] It is theoretically possible (but unlikely as it would mean a student had completed comparable modules/units elsewhere), for students joining the second year of a programme to be charged slightly more than students who have progressed from year 1.

[11] The Teaching Excellence Framework – Solihull College and University Centre is one of fourteen colleges awarded Gold in June 2017.

3   Our Students

The College's student profile consists of approximately 4000 16 to 19 year olds, 8500 adult learners, 750 Management and Professional students, 1000 Apprenticeships and over 900 Higher Education students which are on average comprised of 8% from North Solihull postcodes, 45% from Birmingham codes and the remainder from the south of the borough[12].

The proportion of Solihull and Stratford-upon-Avon residents qualified to level 4 is slightly above the England average, whereas the proportion of residents with no qualifications is lower than in the West Midlands region generally and nationally, which is a key driver for the College's successful strategies to engage people in lifelong learning and close the equality gap which has resulted in around 50%[13] of the higher education students coming from widening participation backgrounds.

POLAR classifies local areas or wards into 5 groups based on the proportion of 18 year-olds who enter HE aged 18 or 19 years old. The lowest young participation is quintile 1 (most disadvantaged) up to quintile 5 with the highest rates (most advantaged). Birmingham, Solihull and Stratford-upon-Avon wards adjacent to each other demonstrate POLAR characteristics that vary from POLAR 3 to POLAR 1.

In North Solihull, where the college's Woodlands campus is situated, the majority of the POLAR classification wards are areas of significant deprivation, with staying-on rates around 11%, and in South Solihull, the majority of the wards are in POLAR Quintile 5. Staying-on rates in the immediate catchment areas around our Blossomfield campus are over 70%, however, the main arterial roads into Birmingham, including the one from our Stratford-upon-Avon campus, has most wards categorised as POLAR Quintile 2 or POLAR Quintile 3 with participation rates post-16 typically around 25%.

As part of our strategic aims to widen participation, we have developed curriculum pathways from Further Education to levels 4, 5 and 6 which respond to the training and development needs of our local employers. These flexible routes enable students to achieve degrees (level 6) whilst working and living locally.

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[12] Including Stratford-upon-Avon and the area between it and South Solihull. Participation from further away varies but is not statistically significant as it tends to be under 2%
[13] 44% of the total HE cohort in 2017

4   Our Strategic Goals

Solihull College and University Centre is committed to promoting and sustaining the high standards which have consistently delivered the best possible learning opportunities for its students, and has developed a number of related, subsidiary and inter-dependent strategies[14]:

- To provide an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious and have very high standards of academic and personal achievement which will enable them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.
- To maintain leadership and management that will continue to ensure the highest possible standards of teaching, training, learning, assessment and support.
- To offer innovative and responsive programmes that meet the needs of employers and students, respond to the demands of the economy and continuously explore new market opportunities.
- To implement effective strategies that respond to local economic growth opportunities and social priorities.
- To develop resources and inclusive learning environments that are of a consistently high quality, support the College's evolution, promote sustainability and inspire learning.
- To operate management processes which maintain outstanding financial stability and continuously improve the efficient use of resources.

These college-wide strategic goals provide the framework from which the wider Higher Education Strategy has been developed, which is that the College:

- will continue to develop vocational pathways from the full-time further education provision and respond to the needs of local employers;
- will identify the most appropriate accreditation routes and will develop Higher Education provision through both our own funding and through appropriate partnerships;
- will continue to offer Higher Education provision that is both high quality and affordable;
- will provide educational, professional and academic opportunities which are accessible to all members of the local community and in particular to those from disadvantaged areas and non-traditional backgrounds[15].

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[14] Available from the college's website at http://www.solihull.ac.uk/about-us/policies/

[15] This is reviewed annually to identify which particular groups, if any, should be targeted or prioritised. Analysis of the 2017 (and all previous years for which analysis has been carried out) HE student cohort shows that around 50% are from at least one WP priority category. Although the bulk of our Access investment for 2018 was aimed at increasing the participation and success of disabled students (most of whom were also White Males from low POLAR3 regions), the current intention is to focus on providing financial assistance to Part Time students from low income families (again, this will increase our success rates across multiple demographics).

5 Scope of the Plan

5.1 Courses Covered by this Plan

This plan covers only those courses for which Solihull College and University Centre currently receives direct funding from the Office for Students (OfS)[16] such as Higher National Awards (HNC and HND) validated by Pearson Edexcel at Level 4 and 5, and courses delivered as part of non-franchised partnership agreements[17]. It covers both part-time and full-time study modes, and any and all hybrid variations on those modes of study for all programmes for which the College has fee-setting authority.

This plan does not cover any programmes of study delivered by, or at, the college as part of franchise agreements such as foundation degrees, bachelor's degrees or 'top-up' degrees with Higher Education Institutions. Fees for these courses and programmes of study are set by the respective validating universities[18] and are covered by their Access and Participation Plans.

5.2 Students Included within this Plan

Subject to the course conditions outlined in 5.1 above, this plan is applicable to all home and European students studying a higher education programme at Solihull College and University Centre.

Students deemed to have equivalent level qualification (ELQ) status should in the first instance contact our HE Admissions Officer in Student Services as there may be other considerations with regards to tuition fees, and financial obligations.

Non-EU students, and students who are classified as Overseas Students are not covered by this plan.

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[16] Formerly HEFCE
[17] Currently Coventry University, Newman University and the University of Northampton
[18] Currently Oxford Brookes University and University of Warwick

6　Access Records and Assessment of Performance

As confirmed by Solihull College and University Centre's most recent QAA Higher Education Review, our policies, procedures and operation of recruitment, selection and admission[19] meet the Expectation in Chapter B2 of the Quality Code[20] in that they adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes.

In developing this Access and Participation Plan (and our previous Access Agreements) we assess our performance utilising applicable HESA and Teaching Excellence Framework 2 (TEF) core metrics, and additional internal data to ensure that we either maintain or improve our access and achievement records year-on-year.

Data analysis shows no statistically significant gaps in achievement[21], in equality of opportunity in relation to access, success and progression for any of the demographics listed in this section, either in terms of national benchmarks[22], or internal comparisons at course level where student numbers are below publication thresholds.

Due to our[23] high proportion of individual students categorised as belonging to multiple WP-related demographics, and that the total cohort size is too low to compare against data such as the UCAS Multiple Equality Measure[24], identifying single characteristics which may mask or underestimate the extent of a gap that needs addressing for a particular sub-group of students cannot be achieved with any high degree of statistical confidence.

However, as part of our attempts to generate statistically significant data which can be used with any degree of confidence[25] to formulate targeted action plans[26], our intention for 2020 is to attempt the aggregation of partner HEI student profiles[27] along with what we know about the remainder of our cohort. This has not been possible in previous years as our partners have been unable to disaggregate "our" students from those taught elsewhere (i.e. either at the partner HEI or at another college with whom that HEI has an agreement), and we are aware that data generated in this way is not ideal as our five partners do not necessarily recruit from the same local areas, offer different types of programme, and have their own individual sets of priorities.

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[19] All of these were adopted by Stratford-upon-Avon College as a result of the merger from February 2018
[20] See http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-chapter-b2-recruitment-selection-and-admission-to-higher-education
[21] Courses delivered by Solihull College and University Centre but covered by our partners' Access and Participation Plans confirm this where analysis at course level is statistically possible.
[22] Solihull College and University Centre's 2017 TEF Gold Award highlighted positive achievement against national benchmarks in the major groupings
[23] Including approximately half of the College's total HE cohort which are covered by partner Universities' Access and Participation Plans
[24] 2017 data required a combination of at least 500 students, whereas Solihull had around 100.
[25] To ensure a statistical confidence limit of 95% with a confidence level of ± 3 requires a sample size of 92 out of 100
[26] For any particular demographic which may be identified as underrepresented such as White Males.
[27] SCaUC currently has five University partners plus Pearson Edexcel as a validator for Higher Nationals

As described in Sections 3 and 4, our core recruitment at all educational levels is of local students from low participation areas, low income families, multiple ethnicities, and is almost exactly equally split between genders[28].

6.1 Evaluation of Access, Success and Progression

6.1.1 Part-Time

There has been an increase in the number of part-time students studying HE at the College from 107 in 013/14 to 203[29] in 2017/18. This has had a direct impact on the participation of traditionally under-represented groups as disadvantaged young students are twice as likely to study part-time compared to the most advantaged. In keeping with national statistical norms, the predominant growth demographic has been with mature learners who have increased in number by over 20 per cent since 2014 and it is part of the College's business planning to continue developing provision, particularly work-based, which will build on our successes in this area.

6.1.2 Non-traditional Entry Requirements

Solihull College and University Centre has a historically strong access record for welcoming applicants with a wide variety of entry qualifications including BTEC Diplomas and Access to HE and in certain cases, no formal qualifications but have been admitted based on their work experience and successful interview. For the last three years, over 70% of the students (full or part-time) were classified as non-tariff (TEF metric contextual data) – and around 12% of students held high or medium tariff grades. The College does not operate any specific recruitment targets for students of this type but will continue to monitor and review the situation to ensure that the current position is at least maintained.

6.1.3 Internal Progressions from Deprived Areas

The recruitment of internal Level 3 students (an annually-constant 35% are from the three lowest POLAR3 Quintiles) is promoted through a range of activities which includes presentations at level 3 tutorials, inviting students to higher education events and attendance at the higher education fairs. That we currently[30] have over 100 First year HE students who have progressed from our Level 3 programmes is indicative of our successes in increasing widening participation in the local area.

6.1.4 Mature Students

In 2017 over 50% of our total HE students[31] were aged at least 21, of whom 69% were on one of our full-time courses[32] – predominantly work-based. Both of these figures have

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[28] The College does not currently have any students who do not self-identify as either Male or Female.
[29] On our non-franchised provision: a slight drop from 2016/17 but the total number of PT students has actually increased to 236
[30] September 2017 starts
[31] 42% of our validated provision and 65% of our franchised provision.
[32] Either validated or franchised.

increased significantly in the last few years, and demonstrate the effectiveness of our employer liaison activities, and how well our curriculum offer aligns to local employment needs.

6.1.5   Care Leavers

The College has Looked After Children studying on programmes for 16-18 year olds, and who will become care leavers at the age of 18. If any of these students progress onto our HE programmes, we continue to support them with our Welfare Officer, and also make any additional support arrangements through Student Services.

6.1.6   Low-participation Neighbourhoods

The College has an established record of successfully recruiting from areas that have low participation indices for both adults and school leavers entering Higher Education. Typically, over 35% of our students come from POLAR3 Quintiles 1 and 2, with only 25% coming from high participation areas, and therefore the College does not set specific targets for increasing recruitment from these demographics, but continually reviews its position to ensure that these achievements are maintained.

6.1.7   Students with a Disability

Dedicated student services staff considers each application to study HE at the College individually to ensure that every student has access to the most appropriate support for their needs. Information regarding disabilities, learning difficulties or other identified support needs is dealt with sensitively, and prospective students are advised to disclose conditions which may affect their learning prior to interview so that expert advice and guidance can be provided prior to enrolment.

Members of the course teams are accompanied at interview by support staff, and agreements made with students identified as having particular needs as to how the college will provide the necessary support during their studies.

Typically, over 10% of our HE students self-identify as having a disability, with approximately another 5% identified through our induction processes to highlight conditions such as dyspraxia and dyscalculia of which the student may not previously have been aware.

Where appropriate, the HE Additional Needs Tutor liaises with course teams to provide advice on adjustments to a programme of study which may help a disabled student to achieve at levels comparable with their peers, and our data confirms that there is no difference in either retention or attainment from students with identified needs and those without.

Although only a small number of students[33] receive a Disabled Student Allowance (DSA), the college does have dedicated student needs assessors to support applications from both current HE students and learners on our Level Three courses who wish to progress.

All students are allocated a course tutor who ensures that support is both effective and remains consistent with need, particularly in cases where needs may change during a programme of study.

Wheelchair access is possible at Blossomfield, Woodlands and Stratford-upon-Avon campuses, with lifts and other assistive facilities such as handrails and braille signage also available.

We support HE students who have been identified at the start of the programme as in need of further help with Dyslexia testing by financing additional staff to help with enrolment and identifying assessment arrangements such as suitable examination support, or conditions. Testing and assistance of this type is currently provided for non-HE students, and as part of existing arrangements for our HE cohort, and we have steadily increased the scope and intensity of what we do, particularly during a student's first ten weeks of study over the last few years, as evaluation of our support processes has highlighted their efficacy. We also provide additional support for students across the HE provision with study skills, English, maths outside their main programme of study as a supplemental aid to improving retention and success of these targeted groups.

6.1.8   Schools Liaison

Solihull College and University Centre employs as part of its commitment to widening participation and improving access in the local area, a full time Schools Marketing and Events Officer with specific responsibility for providing a dedicated point of contact between schools and sixth forms in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area[34], and the students/learners and parents of student/learners attending those institutions.

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[33] Usually around 25 students in receipt of DSA, and slightly fewer who are not in receipt of DSA
[34] Since the merger of February 2018, this liaison includes schools around the "M40 corridor" between the Blossomfield and Stratford-upon-Avon campuses.

7 Financial Support for Low Income Students

The College offers bursaries to students from low income households and will review the use of bursaries and fee waivers to identify whether the provision of bursaries has had a corresponding improvement in retention or success.

In order to be eligible for a bursary, students must:
- be studying on a full-time or part-time (first year only) validated level 4, 5 or 6 programme;
- be liable for the new tuition fee rates;
- have a Tariff Point score of at least 112 (equivalent to DMM)
- be from England or part of the European Union (except for other UK countries);
- be studying at least 25% intensity of the full-time course;
- have a household income of £26,000 or below.

The following criteria will mean that the student is not eligible for a bursary:
- the student is transferring in from another institution;
- the student is NHS-funded for their course;
- course fees are paid or part-paid through a sponsorship arrangement (such as if an employer is covering the full or part cost of the course);
- the student is normally a resident in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland;
- the programme of study is covered by a partner institution's Access and Participation Plan;
- the student is undertaking a postgraduate initial teacher training course leading to qualified teacher status;
- the student is undertaking a postgraduate qualification.

Recipients of the full-time scholarship receive a £1,000 cash payment subject to satisfactory attendance and submission of work for each year of their course[35].

Evaluation of the success of our bursaries and scholarship scheme produced enough evidence to warrant an increase in the number of part-time scholarships for students without significant employer support. Although the college has not raised the amount of individual financial aid granted, it has increased the number of available scholarships from 2017, and introduced a targeted programme of raising awareness amongst part-students and staff who work with those students, to encourage applications. Recipients of the part-time scholarship receive a proportional fee waiver of up to £1,000 against their first year course fee liability.

7.1 OfS high fee commitment in 2019/20

We will spend a minimum of £85,250 on bursaries, scholarships, fee waivers and financial support for higher education students studying on validated programmes at Solihull College and University Centre in 2019/20.

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[35] For example, £1000 per year up to a maximum of £3000 for a three-year degree

7.2   Investment

The college's total project investment in access and participation activities for the academic years starting in 2019 (excluding financial support) is £200,000, of which £25,000 is APP countable.

Further details can be found in the college's Resource Participation Plan, but can be summarised as:

Access and Participation Plan investment from higher fee income in 2019-20	£	% of higher fee income
Total Higher Fee Income 2019-20	130,520	n/a
Access investment	10,000	7.7
Success investment	10,000	7.7
Progression investment	5,000	3.8
Investment in financial support	85,250	65.3
Total investment	**110,250**	**84.5**

8 Record of Student Success

The majority of our Higher Education programmes have Success Rates above 85%[36] with a uniform level of attrition proportionately spread across all student demographics, and no statistically significant differences in performance levels whether or not the students are non-representative/disadvantaged or representative/non-disadvantaged students.

We are therefore confident that any college initiatives having positive impacts on retention and/or achievement levels generally also result in corollary improvements in the retention and/or achievement of disadvantaged/non-representative students.

As a consequence, Solihull College and University Centre will continue to focus on:
- Collecting, analysing, monitoring and evaluating student feedback to enable swift resolution of issues that may contribute to attrition/achievement through;
  - Student Surveys
  - Programme Quality Boards
  - Student Focus Groups
  - Student Representation at/on Boards and Committees
  - Personal Tutor Scheme
- Developing our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) so that engagement can be maintained with at-risk students if their attendance is not possible;
- Pre Induction, induction and transition programmes to develop study skills and the provision of bookable academic support sessions with specialist staff in addition to course team and personal tutor input;
- Support with English, Maths and IT across HE areas for students who are identify as , or who are identified by the personal tutors as likely to benefit from, further support to aid retention;
- Specialist Examination and Study Skill support;
- Monitoring and tracking of attendance with 1:1 personal tutor reviews which can identify any issue which may inhibit or impact upon academic achievements;
- The setting of SMART targets to help students manage personal and/or academic issues;
- Sharing successful strategies to support at-risk and other students through our long-established HE Forum, HE Quality and Standards Committee and HE Strategy Group;
- Managing student expectations by ensuring that all advice and guidance provided in relation to the college and its programme of study is accessible, accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and covers not just the academic requirements, but also the demands and pressures which may be expected from studying HE.

As the college is currently in the first year of operation (at the time of writing this Access and Participation Plan) with regards to receipt of the higher-fee income[37] that it can specifically allocate, evaluation of the relative successes of initiatives put in place, expanded or re-focussed as a result of any increase in revenue cannot be conducted with any degree of confidence.

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[36] As the college moves its curriculum offer from 2-year HE courses with a 1-year top-up to full 3-years, it has been calculated that if all current numbers remain the same, success rates will fall slightly (years 2 to 3), and therefore there will be a need to increase welfare spend in order to match current statistical performance levels

[37] Higher Fees only applied to a small proportion of students starting their course/programme in September 2017

9   Student Support

The College is committed to ensuring that all students have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, particularly those whose circumstances mean that additional support and attention may need to be in place, which means that a high proportion of our pre-HE student demographic is comprised of those from the list below, maintaining, or increasing, the overall student numbers who progress onto Higher Education will continue to ensure that these target groups are recruited into an environment with which they feel comfortable and supported, and that their career aspirations can be aligned with local economic need.

Our student cohort has in significant numbers (the list is not intended to be exhaustive) individuals who are:

- care leavers;
- carers;
- diagnosed as having behaviour management issues;
- diagnosed as having mental health issues;
- disabled;
- ex-offenders;
- following a variety of religions and belief systems;
- from low-income backgrounds;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender;
- mature;
- minority ethnic;
- not typically using English as their first language;
- past sufferers of different forms of abuse or neglect;
- registered as DSA (whether in receipt or not);
- single parents;
- women returners

The College employs a wide range of successful methods to identify these high risk students at an early stage and support them in a number of different ways throughout their course and enable them to progress, such as providing bursaries, academic scholarships, specialist software (e.g. for those identified as dyslexic/dyspraxic/dyscalculic/Asperger's/autistic), expert support staff and counsellors.

10 Student Engagement and Consultation

Student engagement is integral to college strategy[38], policy, management and curriculum delivery, and takes place at all levels and in many different formats within and across Solihull College and University Centre. It is a key component of the college's monitoring activities with student representation on the HE Quality and Standards Board, HE Strategy Group, Governing Council (we have 2 Student Governors) and our Student Voice Steering Group[39].

Gathering and reacting to student input with regards to course management and monitoring is factored into action planning for the year ahead when and where appropriate, with documentation such as this Action Plan approved through our clearly defined student representative system[40] whereby student input, feedback and opinion is formally sought and acted upon at all levels.

In addition, documents such as this Action Plan are published on the College Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as a way of eliciting student responses in addition to the other feedback and management mechanisms which the college recognises may not be the most efficient ways of interacting with all students, particularly those on part-time courses.

Implementation , monitoring and evaluation of this Plan will be conducted alongside our other engagement activities, with formalised consultation through the student representatives, opinions and feedback gathered via the VLE and Annual Student Focus Groups, and at the Boards and Committees on which student membership is a integral part of our operational procedures (as in the first paragraph of this section).

HE provision is delivered at all three of our campuses, and it isn't typical, or practical, for students across all programmes to associate with students other than those on their programme of study. The common rooms at Stratford-upon-Avon, Woodlands and Blossomfield have provided more communal social spaces for our HE students (access is restricted to prevent non-HE students entering or using the areas). However, the college does take great care to ensure that focus groups and other student gatherings are administered in ways which allow and encourage participation from all students regardless of their mode of study, programme area or campus.

All HE courses, regardless of the awarding body have a named student representative logged with the Student Enrichment Coordinator who is responsible for their training. They either volunteer or are nominated by their cohort[41], and if there is more than one nominee, the role is either shared or a ballot takes place.

Written guidance on the representative role is provided on the HE Student Hub (part of our internal VLE) and the College makes efforts to ensure that responses are provided to students

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[38] The Student Voice Engagement Strategy is available on the College website.
[39] This Action Plan was reviewed, revised and finally formally approved at all these.
[40] As the system is representative of the total cohort, this process ensures that students from a range of backgrounds are included in all our consultations, not just this Action Plan.
[41] As some groups are primarily one demographic, this helps to ensure that all groups and sub-groups of students are represented.

when they provide feedback, either via the meeting and reporting structures outlined above, taking part in surveys or giving informal feedback in class.

The student representatives, in addition to training for their role at all levels of the college's management structure have dedicated pages on the Student Hub intranet to help to ensure that they are aware of duties for the year, events as they come up, and for general consultation on cross-college matters such as the content of this Access Plan which required their comment, input, feedback and finally approval.

There are several job roles in our student representative system as indicated on the Solihull College and University Centre Student Representation Schematic Diagram reproduced as Figure 1 at the end of this section.

HE Student Council comments are fed back to the Student Voice Steering Group as an iterative mechanism to encourage students' involvement in our feedback systems with all matters raised in meetings attended by Student Representatives responded to through the meeting system and on the Student Hub section of the intranet.
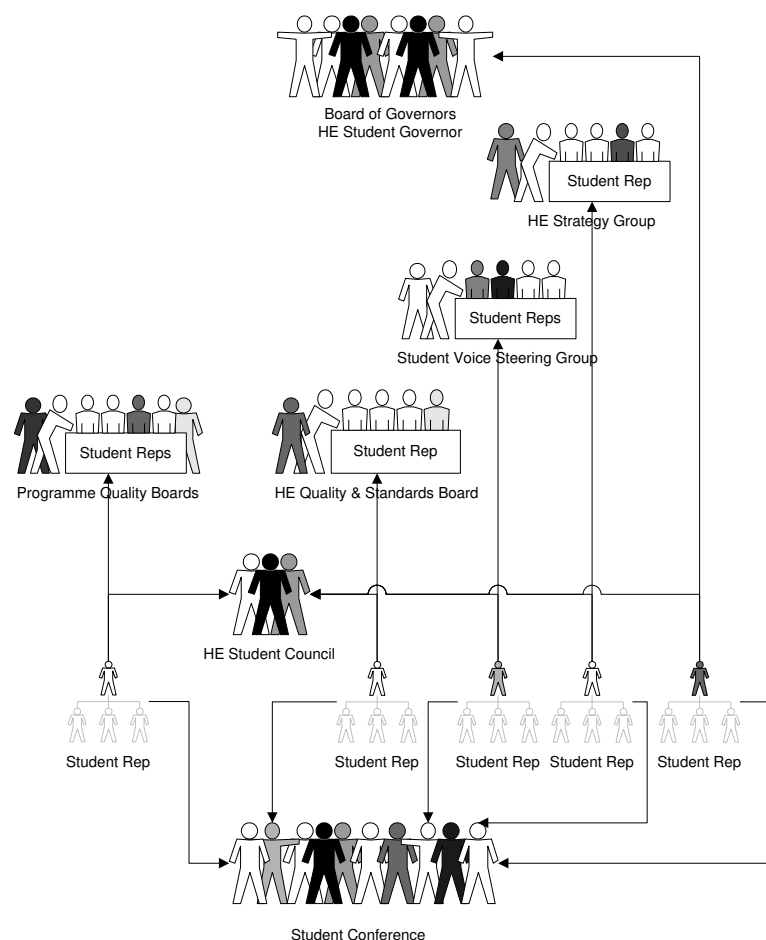

Figure 1: Schematic Diagram Showing Student Representation at SCaUC

11 Equality and Diversity Statement

In preparing this Access and Participation Plan, Solihull College and University Centre has taken into consideration its responsibilities as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

We value and celebrate the diversity of all our students, staff, visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, former staff and students, and are committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation, where all members of our community are treated with respect and dignity, and valued for their individuality and contributions.

We strive to ensure that every person associated with the functions of the College does not face discrimination with regard to any aspect of their identity, such as age, disability, gender (including gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy and maternity), ethnicity (including race, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including non-belief) or sexual orientation.

The principles of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusivity also apply to the way in which staff and students should treat each other, visitors, contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, suppliers, former staff and students and any other persons associated with the functions of the College, including those who seek to apply to work or study with us and/or who have previously worked or studied with us.

Solihull College and University Centre promotes equality of opportunity for all through:

- collecting and maintaining student and staff equality profile data analysis that allows us to support our aims and monitor our effectiveness;
- compliance with legal obligations;
- embedding equality into our strategic and operational planning;
- ensuring that all staff are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion;
- ensuring student and staff support services, buildings, facilities and media are, as far as reasonably possible, accessible to all;
- ensuring that staff, students and their representatives are provided with appropriate forums and network groups to raise and discuss equality and diversity issues;
- ensuring that all contractors and service providers operating on our premises or on our behalf are aware of, and adhere to, our policies on equality and diversity;
- implementing, operating and continually evaluating the effectiveness of strategies to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- involving all community stakeholders in the development and delivery of our equality and diversity aims and priorities;
- promoting a culture of mutual respect in our internal and external communications.

While specific responsibility falls on **all students and staff** to ensure that their behaviour towards each other is respectful, non-discriminatory, and encourages a fully-inclusive environment, it is expected that the whole-college community shares in the obligation to maintain these aims and intentions.

12 Provision of Information to Prospective Students

Clear information about the tuition fees[42] that apply to Solihull College and University Centre's Higher Education and the financial support available to students is, and will continue to be, publicised on the College website at www.solihull.ac.uk.

This Access and Participation Plan (and other documents) is published on the college website in an Accessible Format, with other formats such as Braille produced on request and sent to current or prospective students by our Student Services Department who can be contacted by telephone and/or in writing for additional guidance, and to respond to questions or requests for supplementary information, and individual advice is always provided at course interview prior to any offers of a place.

We provide such information to UCAS and to the Student Loans Company in a timely fashion for incorporation in their databases for each academic year and ensure compliance to the mandatory information required in relation to Key Information Sets and Wider Information Sets as required for OfS, Unistats, and other bodies to whom we report as part of our normal college operating procedures.

Information specific to the costs of College-owned and other local accommodation is given on the College website and individual advice can be provided by Student Services upon request either by e-mail, telephone or at personal interviews which can be arranged by appointment.

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[42] See also Section 1.

13 Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The Deputy Principal (Solihull)/Chief Operating Officer (Stratford), Vice Principal (Solihull) and the Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation are responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this Access and Participation Plan.

Our evaluation framework (see Section 14 at the end of this Action Plan for a detailed table showing activities and measures) is based on three core themes: Attainment, motivation and progression (either onto higher educational levels or into and through employment)

Attainment is evaluated through:

- Quantitative measures of assessment and qualitative measures of impact,
- Session Observations, both by peers and external consultants,
    - In addition to a HE-specific observations, teaching staff[43] are also appraised as part of the college's wider FE and Adult Educational activities. The skills which must be demonstrated as a part of this process are universally applicable to Widening Participation students at all levels of education as they include differentiation, support, communication, integration and encouraging collective and cohesive groups of disparate individual students.

Motivation of students to maximise effort and understand the importance of education to their future is evaluated through:

- Student Focus Groups, Start-of-Year on Programme Surveys, End-of-Year course and module surveys, formalised interviews which include aspirations and attitudes to careers and progression possibilities,
- Assessments, productions and other pieces of work which requires students to work in ways expected of them in their chosen careers.
    - The use of similar assessment types in each year of a course allows us to accurately measure progress from say one year's group presentation to the next.

Employability and Progression is evaluated through an analysis of:

- The numbers choosing to study on a higher-level course at the college;
- The numbers who choose to study at a partner university;
- The number of students who choose to study at a university SCaUC has no formal agreement with;
- The numbers of Full Time students going directly into employment in a field relative to their HE qualification (or in the case of part-rime students the numbers;
- Progression from our internal FE courses onto HE;
- Progression from SCaUC's own Access Courses onto HE;

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[43] All of our teaching staff are qualified to, or working towards, teaching qualifications such as PGCE

- Non-continuation from year-to-year after initial enrolment on a HE course, and whether there are any emergent trends for any particular demographic[44].

These measures, which help inform continuous improvement by generating hard evidence, are supplemented by other management processes which disaggregate WP status and protected characteristics from other data such as registrations, NSS, TEF, HESA, etc and analysis carried out by our partner HEIs

Monitoring and evaluation of progress against the targets related to our outreach[45] activities will be measured using internal data streams and external data sources via UCAS and HESA, and reported through the Higher Education Strategy Group and Senior Management Team, and ultimately to the College Governors.[46]

As part of our existing management processes, data will be attributed to each and every activity covered by this plan and will be collected through two routes: feedback from participants in specific events and student consultation. Both sets of data will be collated throughout the year and reported through the College's management structure to ensure that evaluation is embedded in the College's strategies.

This will ensure that evidence will continue to be used to shape future policy decisions and that the activities can be evaluated for their effectiveness in supporting disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, and if it is found there are any gaps in performance of these demographics, particularly in they do not align with the remainder of the cohort, measures can be, and will be, taken to address any differences.

Evaluation of progress against the targets will feed into the College's Equality and Diversity Annual Report and action planning to help prioritise the most effective activities and initiatives.

The action plans, will include, but not be limited to, increased oversight, re-allocation of resources such as staff (both teaching and support personnel) and facilities, and the determination of more effective metrics which will allow the earlier identification of any attainment gaps.

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[44] The numbers are currently too small for any statistically significant demographic to emerge, however the analysis is repeated annually.
[45] And "inreach" targeted at our own Level 3 students as described earlier.
[46] As noted earlier: HE Strategy Group and College governance includes student representation

14 Outreach Activities

At the time of producing this Access and Participation Plan, the College is committed to collecting data about, monitoring, evaluating and continuing with all of the following outreach[47] activities.

Due to the complex nature of college funding, and that many initiatives and activities apply to most or all students at the college (FE/HE/Adult Education etc), it is not possible to allocate specific financial spending towards Outreach Activities which are solely HE and WP countable.

The college does not differentiate by validator, franchise or funding (e.g. whether a course is paid for by the student, an employer or has fees waived) when it comes to the provision of support services which are available to all students whether covered by our own Access and Participation Plan, or that of one of our partners[48].

However, if it is assumed that 5% of the funding for cross-college activities comes from student numbers on Higher Education programmes which are APP countable, the minimum proportional cost contributions are as follows: Liaison Work with Local Schools is £1,000, College Support Schemes £5000, Careers Service £10000, Progression Activities Within the College £1000, Tutorial Programme £10000, Disability Support £20000, Personal Development Planning £10000, Collaborations £10000.

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[47] That the majority of these activities are additionally re-purposed for Solihull College students ("Inreach") on courses which may, or can, lead to below Higher Education, such as FE and Adult Education, enables us to achieve economies of scale both in terms of staffing and facilities, and the provision of physical resources.
[48] Students covered by partner HE Access and Participation Plans can access support services at both institutions

Outreach Activity	Aim(s)	Target Group(s)	Outputs/Results	Measure(s) of Success/Failure/Impact.
Liaison work with local schools	To raise aspirations and understanding of HE in school-age students	Teenage students in schools, sixth forms and other colleges with Level 3 provision within Solihull College's catchment area	Increased awareness of HE generally, increased understanding of the accessibility of HE and the opportunities available to young people	KPIs include: • Applications of school students to College courses. • Feedback from school students and teachers • data of local young people through College into HE.
College support schemes	To provide financial support to young people from low income families to study at College at FE level and then later progress into HE	Students from low income families	Increase in the FE participation rates of students from low income families and increased staying on rates of those young people, into HE	• Student data
Careers services	To provide careers information, advice and guidance in local schools and within the College	Teenage students in schools within the College's catchment area and all current College students	Increased awareness of career opportunities and routes through HE Increased understanding of the accessibility of HE	KPIs include: • Feedback from school students/learners and teachers. • Applications of school students/learners to College courses. • data of local young people through the College into HE.
Progression activities within the College	To provide focused information and support for progression through FE and into HE for College students	Full time College students aged 16-19	Increased number of applications to providers of HE (including, but not restricted to, Solihull).	Number of UCAS applications from College students.

Retention Activities	Aim(s)	Target Group(s)	Outputs/Results	Measures of Success/Failure/Impact.
Tutorial programme	To provide 1:1 support and target setting for students	All HE students, with individualised tutorial support for each student	Target setting and tutorial support enables and enhances student progress on programme and beyond. Individualised academic and pastoral support aids the retention of students.	KPIs include: • continuation data, • success, • destinations (– analysis of the data on progression to postgraduate programmes or employment.) Student feedback is consistently positive, however the College has identified key areas of operation to focus on as a result of collecting and analysing these opinions which includes adding to tutorial provision
Scholarships and Bursaries	Provide financial assistance to students who would otherwise be at risk of not completing.	Students from low income families and/or students unable to support themselves sufficiently during their programme of study.	Students identified as requiring assistance retained to the end of each academic year & therefore eligible/able to progress.	Increased number of at-risk students on programme at the end of each academic year
HEI partner activity	To provide access to the relevant HEI partner to inspire and support progression to post graduate study or employment	All HE students who study on a programme that is linked with a HEI	By providing access to the HEI, through visits, liaison with HEI staff and access to student unions and resources, progression and retention are aided.	KPIs include: • Destination data; • Feedback from students; • Feedback from HEIs.

Identified disability support needs	Provide expert support and assistance via trained staff and targeted resources	Students identified as dyslexic, dyscalculic, Asperger's, autism diagnosed as having dyspraxia etc	Individual student attainment levels in line with students not diagnosed as dyslexic, dyscalculic, Asperger's, autism, diagnosed as having dyspraxia etc	KPIs include: • continuation data, • success, • destinations. .
Work-based learning projects	To provide opportunities for students to gain work place experience and therefore employability skills	All programmes where work based learning is appropriate/ applicable	By participating in work-based learning projects, students gain employability skills and industry awareness. These activities also aid retention by providing a realistic and engaging experience of the work place, relevant to the programme of study.	KPIs include: • Continuation and retention data; • Student feedback; • EE reports; • Employer feedback. Employer feedback has been very positive as demonstrated with the good practice points noted in the College's HER of 2016 EE reports also praise the high quality of provision and opportunities with these programmes

Educational visits	To provide enrichment and relevance to HE study by supporting the learning with visits to employers, trade shows, HEIs etc	All HE students, with visits relevant to the programme of study	Improved understanding of industry and subject area, enriched learning opportunities and a widened educational experience aid student retention and support progression: both through the programme and after graduation.	KPIs include: • Continuation and retention data; • Student feedback (Students appreciate and request more visits in their feedback); • EE reports; • Employer feedback. The College has identified, and will continue to find, opportunities to embed more educational visits into its HE provision.

Enhancing Student Success/Reducing Attainment Gap Activities	**Aim(s)**	**Target Group(s)**	**Outputs/Results**	**Measures of Success/Failure/Impact.**
Study Support	To provide students with additional support and teaching over and above that given as part of their course	Students identified as requiring, or desiring, additional academic input to maximise their achievements.	Increased grade profile across HE cohort	KPIs include: • continuation data; • success; • destinations; • Student feedback.
Personal Development Planning	Use of the PDP process to enhance student success	All HE students	Use of the PDP process and output to support students in their success on programme and development of employability skills.	Individual success data. Student feedback.
Tutorial programme	To provide 1:1 support and target setting for students	All HE students, with individualised tutorial support for	Targets and tutorial support enables and enhances student	KPIs include: • Continuation data;

		each student	success and therefore progression. Individualised support aids the reduction of attainment gaps.	• Success data; • Destination data; • Student feedback.
Quality Improvement Plans	Targeted action planning focussed on improving relatively low success rates and reducing attainment gaps	Programmes with success rates below expected or acceptable levels	Action plans written to address specific issue(s) which are monitored throughout the academic year by SLT	KPIs include: • Reduced attainment gap • Increased success rate • Student feedback • EE reports. Courses identified for QIPs demonstrate that this process has a positive impact in addressing areas for improvement.
Programme Self-Assessment monitoring	To monitor the progress and achievement of students and analyse data and staff / student feedback to continually improve students success and experience	All HE students	Course Leaders self-assess and report to a Senior Manager on progress made and action planning who in turn reports to monthly HE Strategy Group meetings.	KPIs include: • continuation data; • success; • destinations; • Student feedback.

Collaboration	Aim(s)	Target Group(s)	Outputs/Results	Measures of Success/Failure/Impact.
University partnerships	To raise aspirations and develop awareness of offer available from the College and University	Level 3 students; Current HE students on Level 4 and 5 programmes	Visits to University Talks from HEI staff Increased links and collaborative working between partner HEI and the College	Number of UCAS applications from Solihull College students..
Local schools	To raise the aspirations of young people in the local area and provide information and guidance as to what HE study and life at a HEI (as well as at a College) entails.	School age learners/students	Effective collaboration between Solihull College and local schools to raise awareness of Higher Education options and opportunities available.	KPIs include: • Feedback from school students and teachers. • Applications of school students to College courses. • Progression data of local young people through College into HE.
Local and national employers	To provide opportunities to develop awareness of employment opportunities and employability skills through engaging directly with businesses.	School age students. FE students, HE students	Work placements. Visits to and from employers. Internships. Interview practice.	Destination and DLHE data. Employer feedback.

* 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.		
It is an integral part of college policy that the course fee remains constant for each year of a student's course (i.e. students are charged the same fee for the second year of their course as the first), and that the College will only increase any maximum fees for new students in line with inflation subject to governmental agreement, for example through the TEF or other permissions, but may raise programme fees set below permitted levels up to those permitted levels if additional, and at the time of setting unforeseen, factors necessitate increases to maintain economic viability.		

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Coventry validation	£8,000
First degree		£7,500
Foundation degree		£7,500
Foundation degree	Students who started in academic year 2018/19	£7,500
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£6,000
HNC / HND	Students who started in academic year 2018/19	£6,000
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	Coventry University 10001726 - aircraft maintenance specialist curriculum	£4,000
First degree	University of Northampton 10007138 -	£3,750
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND	Pearson 10022490 -	£3,000
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

								Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					

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	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
T16a_01	Access	Mature	**Other statistic** - Mature (please give details in the next column)	The College is committed to removing the barriers for mature students accessing HE and has set a target to increase their recruitment, and as part of this strategy has increased the amount of financial support available to low income backgrounds from 2018	No	2016-17	208	216	216	217	218		The target applies to mature students on all our HE programmes
T16a_02	Access	Part-time	**Other statistic** - Part-time (please give details in the next column)	As above	No	2016-17	201	220	220	220	221		
T16a_03	Progression	Multiple	**Other statistic** - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Changes to curriculum content to suit employer needs as highlighted in 2016 QAA Review	No	2016-17	91%	93%	93%	93%	93%		% of achievers for whom we have data (TEF)
T16a_04	Progression	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	**HESA T1c** - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, other undergraduate entrants)	Outreach to North Solihull & inner city Birmingham	No	2016-17	74	80	80	80	80		Previously POLAR 2 - change to drop down menu
T16a_05	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	**Other statistic** - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Support measures targetted at early intervention	No	2016-17	89%	91%	91%	91%	92%		development of bridging modules and academic support outside main programme

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	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
T16b_01	Access	Attainment raising	Other (please give details in Description column)	"Buddy" system where curent HE students are paired with (pupils from) the schools they attended	No	2017-18	0	6	9	12	12		Scheme to start identifying/recruiting mentors from this year's HE intake. Milestone target shows number of student mentors, not number of pupils mentored or number enrolling at the college as a result of the initiative.

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