

Middlesbrough College

Access and Participation Plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Introduction

The College has an excellent reputation and has a good track record of positive performance in its Higher Education provision. Over the last two years this has been recognised by [the award of TEF Gold](#); a highly successful review by the Quality Assurance Agency; registration with the Office for Students; and approval for direct funding.

Positioned as it is in the Tees Valley, the College is strategically committed to promoting its Higher Education programmes to students from widening participation categories. Covering over 3,300 square miles, the Tees Valley comprises five local authority areas including: Darlington, Stockton-On-Tees, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, and Redcar & Cleveland. The Tees Valley is highly urbanised, with 90% of the population in urban areas. The population is concentrated in the five main town centres (35%) with the remaining population located in the suburbs, in smaller settlements, or rural areas.

A significant proportion of the Teesside population lives in areas with significant indicators of multiple deprivation (IMD). Of the five Boroughs and out of 326 districts nationally, Middlesbrough has the highest proportion of lower layer super output areas within the national most deprived 10%, with Hartlepool 10th, Redcar & Cleveland 33rd, Stockton-On-Tees 47th and Darlington 58th. A significant proportion of the Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland IMD wards, where the majority of College recruitment is drawn from, are also classified as POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 areas.

Despite continuing levels of robust new business registration, the Tees Valley business density remains one third below the national average. The Tees Valley, despite significant recent improvements, retains relatively high levels of economic inactivity. Unemployment in the region is 7.9% compared to the national average of 5.1% with fewer highly skilled and hence highly paid jobs available.

The location of the Tees Valley in the North East of England and the fact that the College recruits primarily from the local area, aligns the College to the Governments Opportunity North East initiative.

The number of students studying higher education courses at the College has grown steadily over the last three years to the current level of 682. This pattern is anticipated to continue over the next 5 years as the College follows a planned schedule of growth through new course development.

Until 2018/19 all HE students taught at the College were registered with a previous partner university. Consequently, there are no data available on past performance in the provider metrics drawn together by the Office for Students. In the absence of this data, the content of this plan is informed by data drawn from internal College sources and any available national datasets across the student lifecycle. All historic data relates to students taught at but not registered by the College. This Plan will be monitored and if necessary revised as data on registered students becomes available.

1. Assessment of performance

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

1.1.1 Access

College recruitment to higher education courses, is primarily drawn from the Tees Valley. College data shows that 92% of HE enrolments in 2017/18, were from Tees Valley postcode areas (table 1). Over 45% of College HE enrolments progress from current College based level 3 programmes. These students cite direct progression and its associated benefits as a key reason for application. Central to this motivating factor, is the familiarity of the surroundings and the removal of some of the uncertainty about what progression to HE means. These factors are particularly important to students who have no previous family experience of higher education upon which to draw.

Table 1 - Percentage of HE Enrolments by Postcode (2016/17)		
Enrolments by postcode	Tees Valley	92%
	Other Areas	8%

College data identifies wards that attract a disadvantage uplift for SFA funding purposes as IMD Q1. This is a reliable measure as the SFA funding formula calculation is based on the Gov.UK English Indices of Deprivation 2015 (see [AEB Funding rates and Formula 2017 to 2018](#)). The College is committed to tackling inequality and supporting economic regeneration of the region and ensures that all students are encouraged and supported to participate in higher education regardless of socio-economic background. Of all student enrolments in 2016/17, 46% were from disadvantage uplift wards (IMD Q1) compared to 24% wards with no disadvantage uplift (IMD Q5).

In addition to the high incidence of IMD areas, the Tees Valley has a high proportion of POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 areas. Table 3 shows that 47% of higher education students at the College are from POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2 classification areas. This profile has remained relatively consistent since 2015.

Table 3 - Percentage of HE enrolments by POLAR4 Classification (2017)				
		Full-time	Part-time	Total
POLAR4 Quintile	1	30%	27%	29%
	2	19%	16%	18%
	3	14%	10%	13%
	4	21%	21%	21%
	5	16%	27%	20%

1.1.2 Success

Until 2018, 93% of HE provision at the College was up to level 5 and as such, success was recorded in terms of pass and progress only. The remaining 7% were enrolled to one course and the numbers of students make any meaningful analysis of grade profiles unrepresentative. In the absence of grade profiles, this plan uses pass rate as a measure of attainment. A key part of the current HE strategy is to grow the number of level 6 programmes available at the College, which will provide a valid basis for future comparisons of performance.

Table 4 - Comparison of continuation and pass rates for students from disadvantaged wards (2016/17)				
	Full-time		Part-time	
	Continuation	Pass	Continuation	Pass
Students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1)	86%	84%	90%	89%
Students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)	89%	85%	96%	94%

Table 4 shows that continuation rates for full-time students from the most disadvantaged wards in the region are 3% lower than for those from wards with no disadvantage, whereas the difference in pass rate for the two groups is 1%. Continuation for part time students from disadvantaged wards is 6% lower than those with no disadvantage, whereas the difference in pass rate 5%. The data illustrates that the main challenge for the College is in removing barriers to continuation for students from disadvantaged groups to close the gap in continuation/pass rate.

As all HE students enrolled at the College registered up until 2018/19 were registered with a partner HEI, data on the performance of students by POLAR area is limited and therefore not reported at this time. Moving forwards, the College will capture and record student performance data by POLAR area to monitor and address any gaps between student groups that may arise.

A key factor affecting the continuation rate of students from low participation neighbourhoods, as well as those from disadvantaged wards, are not course specific in the majority of cases, but are linked to wider socioeconomic issues. A significant factor that influences students to leave their course of study, is the opportunity of employment or advancement in their current job role. The recent economic changes that have affected the region since 2015, with the closure of some large employers (SSI and Corus) has led to significant shifts in employment patterns across the region. Consequently, continuation rates have shifted considerably across particular cohorts, particularly in engineering, which accounted for approximately 25% of HE enrolments in that period. In 2016, following the SSI closure, a significant number of students withdrew from their studies and left the region to seek employment elsewhere. The impact of this factor alone moved the continuation rate of students without a disadvantage above that of students with a disadvantage.

Comparison of continuation and pass rates for students from POLAR4 areas

As 2018/19 is the first year that the College has registered HE students, it is not possible to provide any analysis of continuation or pass rate at this time. Moving forwards, the College will monitor the performance data of students in this category carefully as data becomes available. Adjustments to the Plan, including the addition of targets to address any performance gaps will be added if required. It is intended that this analysis will commence in 2019/20 as the data becomes available. Given the high proportion of students from POLAR4 Q1&2 areas across the Tees Valley and the subsequent high number of students from these areas enrolled at the College, the importance of ensuring that the gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups is as close to zero as possible and above the national rate (4.4% nationally), is a high priority for the College.

1.1.3 Progression

Table 5 – Disadvantaged student progression to highly skilled employment or further study (2016/17)		
	Full-time	Part-time
Students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1)	92%	97%
Students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)	91%	98%

Table 5 shows that student progression to highly skilled employment or further study is better for full-time students with a disadvantage than for students without a disadvantage. While the data are good on average, underlying data shows that this position is not consistent across all subject areas. Further analysis shows that;

- In some subjects and up until 2018/19, College HE provision did not offer progression past level 5, by agreement with our partner HEI at the time. This meant that opportunities for further study beyond level 5, were restricted in the local area. Some students on these courses chose to delay immediate progression until they identified a suitable course of study, leading to a gap in progression. This disparity has been addressed for 2018/19, with the introduction of progression pathways to level 6 for all students.
- One student group that graduated from a course at level 6 traditionally move into an employment market which is firmly based in the ‘gig economy’. Alumni records show that the majority of these graduates have achieved their ambitions and are operating on a self-employed basis. As employment patterns are not consistent however, DLHE data for these students show periods of unemployment.

Part-time student progression to employment or further study (DLHE) is slightly lower for students with a disadvantage than for those without a disadvantage. Further analysis of the part time student data shows that the indicators were affected by economic factors, in particular the closure of a major employer leading to redundancy. All other courses in this category show employment or further study rates at 100%, which is as would be expected as the students on these courses are in employment when they enrol.

Comparison of progression to highly skilled employment or further study for students from POLAR4 areas

As 2018/19 is the first year that the College has registered HE students, it is not possible to provide any analysis of progression to highly skilled employment or further study at this time. Moving forwards, the College will monitor the performance data of students in this category carefully as data becomes available. Adjustments to the Plan, including the addition of targets to address any performance gaps will be added if required. It is intended that this analysis will commence in 2020/21 as the data becomes available.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

		Full-time %	Part-time %	Total %
Ethnicity	White	87%	92%	90%
	Black	4%	NR*	2%
	Asian	6%	4%	5%
	Other	3%	NR*	3%

* NR – data not reported to ensure the anonymity of the information provided.

1.2.1 Access

The proportion of HE students in the College from BME communities is 9.6%. Further analysis of the group by disaggregation of the data into constituent communities is unhelpful because of the relatively small student numbers. However, this percentage is higher than the wider Tees Valley BME community percentage which is 5.2% ([Tees Valley Economic Assessment](#)). As the College recruits primarily from the Tees Valley, this fact shows a positive outcome in terms of ensuring equality of access. The level of BME recruitment at the College has remained consistently high since 2015.

1.2.2 Success

	Continuation	Pass
White students	91%	87%
BME students	92%	90%

Until 2018, 93% of HE provision at the College was up to level 5 and as such, success was recorded in terms of pass and progress only. Consequently, meaningful analysis of grade profiles is not possible. In the absence of grade profiles, the pass rate is provided as a measure of attainment.

As shown in table 7, the continuation rate of BME students is marginally higher than continuation for students who describe themselves as white as reflected in the College 2016/17 overall continuation rate comparison: White British = 91.5%; BME = 91.8%. This is a slight increase on the previous year’s data which showed continuation for BME students at 90% (white students 89%). Historically the difference between the two sets has been relatively similar. The difference in pass rate between the two groups is slightly wider at 3%. There are some wider differences in performance between specific groups when this data is overlaid with other categories of disadvantage – see section 1.6.2.

1.2.3 Progression

	Full time	Part Time
White students	92%	96%
BME students	94%	100%

As shown in table 8, progression to highly skilled employment or further study for BME students is good compared to white students, both in full-time and part-time study modes. The relatively small data set makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from this statistic, but the outcome reflects the College's intention to support progression for all students, regardless of ethnicity. There have been some minor shifts in the relative differences between the two groups since 2015, but BME student progression to employment or further study has always been as good as or better than that for white students.

1.3 Mature students

1.3.1 Access

Table 9 – Student enrolment by age group (2016/17)			
Age	Full-time %	Part-time %	Total %
Under 21	75%	30%	36%
21 – 30	20%	44%	30%
Over 30	5%	26%	34%

Table 9 shows that 64% of HE students are classified as mature. Although overall applications from part-time students have declined in recent years (which is in line with national trends), enrolments on HE courses at the College are similar to full-time. This balance reflects the College's commitment to working with employers and ensuring that new course developments are aligned to LEP priority areas.

Access for mature students is also supported through higher apprenticeships, which the College delivers to 193 students across a range of subject areas. In 2016, the College acquired the apprenticeship provision of the North East Chamber of Commerce and formed the [Northern Skills Group](#) (NSG). The new organisation works with businesses across the North East of England and Yorkshire to deliver apprenticeship programmes to almost 2,000 apprentices (all levels). This action has supported the continued development of higher apprenticeships at the College.

1.3.2 Success

Table 10 – Continuation and Pass rate by age group (2016/17)				
	Full-time		Part-time	
	Continuation	Pass	Continuation	Pass
Young students	89%	88%	96%	94%
Mature students	96%	95%	96%	95%

Until 2018, 93% of HE provision at the College was up to level 5 and as such, success was recorded in terms of pass and progress only. Consequently, meaningful analysis of grade profiles is not possible. In the absence of grade profiles, the pass rate is provided as a measure of attainment.

As shown in table 10, the continuation and pass rates for full and part-time mature students are excellent. In comparison, young full-time student continuation, is lower than that amongst part-time students in the category. This statistic is influenced by the socio-economic challenges facing the region. The continuation/pass rate for this particular cohort has displayed a spikey profile since 2015,

with the gap ranging from 1% in 2015, to the lowest point in 2016/17 of 4.2%. Closing this gap is a target for the College.

1.3.3 Progression

Table 11 – Mature student progression to highly skilled employment or further study (2016/17)		
	Full-time	Part-time
Young students	92%	87%
Mature students	94%	97%

Table 11 illustrates that a higher proportion of mature students progress to highly skilled employment or further study than young students. Mature part-time students at the College, generally have a structured plan of progression when they enrol, linked to their career. Many are already in employment and around 50% of enrolments each year are drawn from employers in one industrial sector. The relationship between the College and these employers is well established and leads to some excellent progression opportunities for students.

In contrast, young part-time students at the College, are frequently unable to take full-time study options because of a range of issues, including caring responsibilities and a reluctance to take on high levels of debt. Their motivation for entering higher education is to improve their employment prospects and earnings potential.

The motivation to remain local has also contributed to lower progression in some cases amongst this student group. The lack of a suitable progression option for some cohorts (reported in 1.1.3) has historically lead to deferred progression. It is anticipated that providing a local opportunity to study and maintaining a lower fee base will assist in closing this continuation rate gap between full time young and mature students.

1.4 Disabled students

1.4.1 Access

10.4% of HE students in 2017, declared a disability. This percentage is significantly higher than the proportion of residents in Middlesbrough (5.9%) in receipt of Disability Living Allowance ([Middlesbrough Council Annual Equality and Inclusion report](#)). The relatively high participation rate reflects the Colleges positive action in supporting students with a disability. The number of students declaring mental ill health at enrolment has increased in recent years, representing almost 1/3 of declarations in 2017. Although this represents a relatively small proportion of overall enrolments reflects national reported trends across the sector. Students with a disability have consistently been above the regional average since 2015.

1.4.2 Success

Table 12 – Continuation and Pass rates for students with a disability (2016/17)		
	Continuation	Pass
Students with a disability	85%	85%
Students without a disability	96%	96%

Until 2018, 93% of HE provision at the College was up to level 5 and as such, success was recorded in terms of pass and progress only. Consequently, meaningful analysis of grade profiles is not possible. In the absence of grade profiles, the pass rate is provided as a measure of attainment.

As shown in table 12, the continuation and pass rate for full-time students with a disability is the same and below that of students without a disability. The number of part-time students with a disability is statistically insignificant and insufficient to draw any meaningful conclusions.

The college provides a full range of support to students with a disability and wherever possible, ensures that appropriate assistive technologies are available as standard on the College IT network. In addition, simple support mechanisms are available such as; increased printer credits for students to reduce dependence on reading from computer screens; increased loan periods for library resources; drop-in support for additional learning support. Specialist support is contracted in from agencies that have expertise in given areas. The College has identified that more in-house support may be beneficial for supporting disabled students with a range of activity, as well as providing more coordination between existing College services, external agencies and academic staff. The relatively small data set has made meaningful longitudinal comparison difficult. The gap shown in table 12 however, represents an improvement on the previous year of 1%.

There is no significant difference between the continuation rates of students with a physical disability and those with declared mental ill health. However, a pattern that has begun to emerge over the past two years, has been an increase in the number of students who present mental ill health as a cause of non-continuation. The number of these cases that are supported with medical evidence however is low. Consequently, the data and supporting information is insufficient to draw meaningful conclusions.

1.4.3 Progression

Table 13 – Progression to highly skilled employment or further study for students with a disability (2016/17)		
	Full time	Part Time
Students with a disability	83%	NR
Students without a disability	94%	97%

Progression to highly skilled employment or further study for students with a disability is excellent for part-time students and above that for students without a disability. Progression to employment or further study for full-time students with a disability however is significantly lower than that for students without a disability. This represents a 1% improvement of the previous year but clearly remains an area for improvement that will be addressed moving forwards.

1.5 Care leavers

According to data from the [Department for Education](#), the number of all care leavers aged 17-21 across the Tees Valley in 2018 represented 0.11% of the population. The proportion of care leavers on HE study programmes at the College is 0.54% which is broadly in line with the number of 16-19 year-old students currently studying at the College recorded as being in care, who study at Level 3 and below, (0.48%).

Of those HE students studying at the College that declared they were care leavers in 2016/17, all are on full-time study programmes and 100% have passed/are continuing which is better than the national picture. According to the [National Network for the Education of Care Leavers](#) care leavers in higher education were over a third more likely to withdraw than otherwise-similar students in 2015. In the two previous years, the pass rate was 90%, (which represented a 0.2% variance against students not identified as care leavers. 89% of care leavers that have left the College over the past 3-years, have progressed into work or further study, which is in line with students not classified as care leavers over the same period.

While the figures above show that College has a good track record across the student life-cycle of care leavers, the data is statistically insignificant and insufficient to draw any meaningful conclusions.

Based on the care leaver population across the Tees valley it is unclear whether it is possible to significantly increase care leaver recruitment beyond current levels. To assist in understanding this group, additional focus will be placed on improving the recording of data on this group. Care leavers that progress from a Level 3 course at the College to an HE course, continue to be monitored by Student Services to ensure early intervention and support is provided if required. Data on all care leavers are captured at enrolment via a section in the enrolment form that invites students to indicate whether they are a care leaver, but completion of this field is not mandatory. While formal declarations are not always made, some care leavers reveal this information to academic or support staff in the course of their studies. Teaching teams and student support staff are briefed on recording any self-declarations made post-enrolment. Once the information is recorded, options for students to engage with additional support networks are introduced.

Improving approaches to data gathering on this group, with a view to improving understanding of performance, will form part of the College strategy in delivering this plan. It is anticipated that an analysis of the approaches taken and any improvements will be completed by January 2020. Performance in this context will include, exploration of whether the College is adequately supporting care leaver access to higher education as well as providing appropriate support.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

1.6.1 Access

The evidence shows that the College has a good track record of encouraging and supporting access to higher education across all disadvantaged groups. Consequently, although specific targets to improve Access have not been set, the College will continue to focus on maintaining this level of performance and ensure that planned levels of investment to support and encourage Access are maintained.

1.6.2 Continuation

Full time white males from disadvantaged wards + Full time students with a disability

The 2017/18 continuation rate for full-time young white male students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1), is 3.2% lower than that of full-time young white males from areas without a disadvantage (IMD Q5). The College is working to close this gap in performance.

The categories of full time white males from disadvantaged wards and full-time students with a disability intersect. Although the percentage of students captured in this intersection is very low the continuation rate is 4.2% below that of all full-time white students. Given the size of the group of students, it is anticipated that the strategies identified in Aim 2 and Aim 3 will address the issues identified. However, the group will continue to be a focus of attention moving forwards.

A further sub-set of this intersect are the number of these students declaring mental health issues as a reason for non-continuation, which has increased in recent years. Universities UK indicates that being first in family to attend university (which many of these students are) has been identified as a risk factor for poor mental health amongst students (OfS Regulatory advice 6). Given the socio-economic profile of the region, this is of particular interest to the College. While the data that supports this intersection only represents a small fraction of the student body, it is recognised that not all students would necessarily declare this information. Given the size of the data set, it is not intended to set a separate target from those identified in Aim 2&3, but it will be kept under review.

1.6.3 Progression

Despite relatively positive rates of progression into highly skilled employment or further study in general for graduates, there are some minor intersections of data for groups of part-time young students and students from disadvantaged wards. Given the low number of students in the group, it is not intended to set a specific target at this point. However, the attainment of this group will be monitored closely to ensure that the existing strategies are effective in addressing any disadvantage.

1.6.4 Improving our understanding

The College Higher Education Office (HEO) supported by the Registry and Quality Teams monitors all trends in enrolment, continuation and progression. In addition to data analysis, the HEO employs a range of qualitative approaches to monitoring student performance and satisfaction to ensure that the College is supporting students effectively and meeting their needs.

All students have direct access to the HEO. The department is based adjacent to the main HE student study area and provides a drop-in service to all students. There are two key benefits to this process:

- The HEO captures and records all specific issues that students may raise;
- The HEO deals with any issues raised immediately either through direct action, or as an advocate for the student.

The HEO also operates a network of Higher Education Working Groups, each of which provides a forum for students and the HEO to raise any issues with the manager responsible for that specific

aspect of College activity. The benefits are that any lessons learned from the escalation of the issue inform policy and process moving forwards.

The opportunities for qualitative analysis of areas of disadvantage experienced by students at the College that are provided by the mechanisms outlined above, are critical to informing understanding.

The completion of this plan has highlighted some additional activity that the College could undertake to ensure that this understanding is enhanced particularly around data collection methods. Moving forwards, the College will further customise its data collection models to align them to Office for Students targets and measurement criteria. This will ensure greater consistency in both the recording and reporting of data for future versions of this plan and ensure that there is a good fit with national benchmarks. It is anticipated that this alignment will take place during 2019/20 as the OfS data becomes available and the College has 1 full year of operating as a directly funded provided

2. Aims and objectives

2.1 Target groups

The College has been on a journey since 2014, to align its curriculum offer and support mechanisms to the needs of its students and the wider Tees Valley. In so doing, it has identified and reduced the impact of a range of barriers to student participation and success in higher education.

As demonstrated throughout the analysis of performance, the College has been successful in its approaches to increasing and supporting access to higher education for students regardless of their background. This is supported by a range of activity designed to support participation and monitor progress. Examples of Some of the practical activities that are currently in place and will continue in future include:

- The College Equality and Diversity Committee, supported by the Higher Education Office, monitors application data to ensure that the College student profile is representative of the region and reflects regional and national initiatives to tackle inequality.
- The College has initiated a range of work with local feeder schools to support students identified as underperforming at Level 2 and likely to become NEET (not in employment, education or training). Through this work, the College is encouraging this group of students to continue in education to Level 3 on College vocational programmes in a supportive learning environment. All of these students receive a minimum entitlement through the College's Advantage Programme to encourage and support progression into higher education or employment.
- The College is part of the successful NECOP partnership and through the 'Future Me' initiatives, plays an active role in supporting students from NCOP target postcodes to progress into higher education.
- The default model for study programme design is a model that provides flexibility of study patterns to allow students to break their study into shorter blocks and remove concerns about committing to 3-year programmes.
- The College is committed to ensuring that students receive value for money as evidenced by lower fees and higher contact hours for all courses.
- All HE programmes of study have a strong vocational core linked to the needs of employers.

Given the success in removing barriers to participation and promoting access, the College plan is to maintain the existing activity and investment in this area to ensure continued success. The activity will continue to be evaluated to ensure the continued efficacy of the strategy.

As demonstrated in the analysis of performance, the data shows that there are some areas for further improvement in improving continuation, attainment and progression amongst some groups of students. These areas of under-performance will shape the focus and hence aims of this plan.

2.1.2 Strategic Aims

- **Aim 1:** Maintain high participation rates for students from low participation neighbourhoods.
- **Aim 2:** Close the gap in continuation rate between full-time students from disadvantaged Wards (IMD Q1) and full-time students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).
- **Aim 3:** Close the gap in continuation rate for full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) and full-time young white male students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).
- **Aim 4:** Close the gap in continuation rates for full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.
- **Aim 5:** Close the gap in rate of progression to highly skilled employment or further study between full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.
- **Aim 6:** Close the attainment gap between part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) and part-time students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).
- **Aim 7:** Close the attainment gap between full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.

2.2 Aims and objectives

2.2.1 Aim 1

Maintain high participation rates for students from low participation neighbourhoods.

Objectives

1. Ensure that the current positive participation rates of students from low participation neighbourhoods are maintained.

2.2.2 Aim 2

Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) compared to full-time students from areas with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)

Objectives

1. Review underlying academic issues that may contribute to higher rates of non-continuation among students from disadvantaged wards.
2. Review underlying non-academic issues that may contribute to higher rates of non-continuation amongst students from disadvantaged wards.
3. Review current approaches taken to support the issues identified in 1 & 2 above.
4. Improve the continuation rate for students from disadvantaged wards (full-time and part-time) by 2024 to match those of students from wards without a disadvantage.

2.2.3 Aim 3

Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) compared to full-time young white males students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).

Objectives

1. Review underlying academic issues that may contribute to higher rates of non-continuation among full-time young white male students from disadvantaged wards.
2. Review underlying non-academic issues that may contribute to higher rates of non-continuation amongst full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards.
3. Improve the continuation rate for young full time white male students from disadvantaged backgrounds by 2024.

Key to supporting this activity will be the collation and analysis of data moving forwards which will be supported by additional staff resource.

2.2.4 Aim 4

Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time students with a disability and full-time students with no disability.

Objectives

1. Review underlying academic issues that may contribute to higher rates of non-continuation amongst students with a disability.
2. Review underlying non-academic issues that may contribute to higher rates of non-continuation amongst students with a disability.
3. Create a new post to support students with disabilities and provide improved in-house coordination between internal and external sources of expertise as well as with academic staff.
4. Close the continuation rate gap between students with a disability and those without by 2024.

2.2.5 Aim 5

Close the gap in progression to highly skilled employment or further study between full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.

NB – the target for closing this gap is set beyond the life of this plan in 2028/29. The rationale for this extended target is to allow time for historic data to filter through to assess performance. Should the position improve as data is received, the target date will be amended to reflect the position.

Objectives

1. Review barriers to progression to further study or employment for graduates.
2. Create a new post to support students with disabilities and provide improved coordination between internal and external agencies to improve progression rates.
3. Close progression to highly skilled employment or further study for students with a disability compared to those without a disability by 2028/29.

2.2.6 Aim 6

Close the gap in attainment between part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) and part-time students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).

Objectives

1. Review underlying academic issues that may contribute to lower attainment rates of amongst students from disadvantaged wards.
2. Review underlying non-academic issues that may contribute to lower attainment rates of amongst students from disadvantaged wards.
3. Close the attainment rate gap between students from disadvantaged wards and those from other wards by 2024.

2.2.8 Aim 7

Close the gap in attainment between full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.

Objectives

1. Review underlying academic issues that may contribute to lower attainment rates of students with a disability.
2. Review underlying non-academic issues that may contribute to lower attainment rates of students with a disability.
3. Create a new post to support students with disabilities and provide improved in-house coordination between internal and external sources of expertise as well as with academic staff.
4. Close the continuation rate gap between students with a disability and those without by 2024.

2.2.8 All Aims

Objectives

1. Review the approaches taken to addressing access and participation with the other institutions through the Association of Colleges and the North East Colleges Training and Research group.
2. Draw on any examples of good practice that will assist in improving performance in achieving objectives and analysing performance.
3. Improve data monitoring to support early identification of any issues relating to access, attainment or outcomes for students.

3. Strategic measures

Table 14 – Access and Participation Plan outcome diagram			
<p>Strategic Aim 1 – Maintain high participation rates for students from low participation neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 2 – Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) compared to full-time students from areas with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)</p> <p>Strategic Aim 3 – Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) compared to full-time young white males from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).</p> <p>Strategic Aim 4 – Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time students with a disability and full-time students with no disability.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 5 – Close the gap in progression to highly skilled employment or further study between full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.</p> <p>Strategic Aim 6 – Close the attainment gap between part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) and part-time students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).</p> <p>Strategic Aim 7 – Close the attainment gap between full-time students with a disability wards and full-time students without a disability.</p>			
Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Date
1. Continue to invest in current strategies to support positive outcomes for students, until or unless an alternative strategy is confirmed by Academic Board		Maintain current standards as a minimum pending the identification of alternatives approaches	July 2019
2. Form a Working Group to review current approaches taken to support students and identify any key issues impacting on student performance not being addressed. (Group to be drawn from HE Office; Academic staff; Student body; Student Services; Head of Teaching & Learning; LRC Manager)		Improved understanding of the efficacy of the range of support provided to students and the ways in which it could be improved	August 2019
<p><u>WG Remit A</u></p> <p>Evaluate the efficacy of current strategies, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible study patterns that enable students to break from study and return at a point which suits them; • Maintaining an average fee level that represents good value for money for all students; 	Divest any strategies currently employed that are ineffective in supporting student continuation or progression.	Improve the rate of student continuation amongst the following groups; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full and part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1); 	December 2019

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support for students dealing with hardship (College-based support including bursaries and other financial support); • A range of specialist support services both in-house and through external referral to support with physical and mental health, domestic violence and abuse, financial management and support, accommodation, healthy lifestyles; • E-resources and equipment loan to support study from home to offset challenges presented by working and studying at the same time; • Access to resources and specialist areas both during and outside formal scheduled teaching; • Learning and teaching process; • Student Services support, advice and guidance; 	<p>Identify any enhancements to current strategies that may improve the support provided to students, e.g. additional mechanisms and channels to provide support as well as a review of financial support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1); • Full-time students with a disability. <p>Improve the rate of student attainment amongst the following groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1); • Full-time students with a disability. <p>Improve the rate of progression to highly skilled employment or further study amongst;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time students with a disability 	
<p>WG Remit B Explore alternative strategies</p> <p>Examine areas of good practice through support partners (AoC, NECTAR group, Academic Reviewer network, OfS, NECOP group) to identify alternative approaches.</p> <p>Establish annual approach to continuous review of alternative strategies.</p>	<p>Report from the Working Group into alternative strategies used by other institutions to support positive student outcomes. Specific focus should be upon strategies designed to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards; • full-time students with a disability. <p>New strategies to be identified as a direct result of the research into alternative working practices identified.</p> <p>Working group to recommend to AB the</p>	<p>Improved strategies and measures adopted which will assist in improving;</p> <p>The rate of student continuation amongst the following groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full and part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1); • Full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1); • Full-time students with a disability. <p>The rate of student attainment amongst the following groups;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1); • Full-time students with a disability. 	<p>January 2020 Annually thereafter</p>

	adoption of appropriate strategies. AB to direct the HEO to ensure implementation of new strategies and provide update reports on their efficacy.	The rate of progression to highly skilled employment or further study amongst; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time students with a disability 	
3. Invest in additional staffing to support the analysis of student data.	Additional staff to support HE student data analysis.	Improved outcomes for students from target groups	May 2019
4. Develop additional data analysis tools to assist in data analysis.	An enhanced data analysis tool to support understanding of outcomes for students	Improved outcomes for students from target groups	August 2019
5. Invest in additional staffing to provide more support to students with a disability and better coordination between external agencies and College staff.	Additional staff to support students with disabilities	Improved rates of progression to highly skilled employment or further study for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full-time students with a disability. 	August 2019
6. Annual review of plan			Annual targets

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

The College Access and Participation Plan is embedded in the College approach to management of its higher education provision.

Oversight of Higher Education at the College rests with the Academic Board, operating under the authority delegated to it by the Board of Governors. The Chair of Academic Board reports to the full Governing Body and its sub-committees throughout their meeting cycle. Key HE activities, including the implementation of this Access and Participation Plan, are included in these reports.

The College HE Strategy is a sub-strategy of the College Strategic Plan and focusses upon addressing the specific needs of the region, including the issues outlined in the introduction to this plan. Central to this strategy is to create a portfolio of programmes of study that are designed to support student progression into higher education and successful progression to further study or employment.

The aims of the HE strategy are to:

- develop a higher education portfolio that leads to positive vocational outcomes for all students;
- provide a flexible HE portfolio that represents good value for money for all students;
- maintain a high level of quality, both in terms of delivery, student outcomes and resources;
- maintain positive growth in HE numbers through continuous programme development and review;
- engage effectively with students in all aspects of HE policy and process.

Given the socio-economic structure of the Tees Valley, and the profile of the higher education student body at the College, the strategy supports students throughout their lifecycle. The investment outlined in this plan is designed to continue to underpin the strategy and support all students, particularly those from under-represented groups.

3.1.1 Relationship between the Access and Participation Plan and other College strategic measures

3.1.1.1 Supporting participation by aligning HE curricula with students and the jobs market

The College has demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of raising participation in higher education, particularly amongst the target groups identified in this plan and targeted by the Office for Students. This activity will continue to be a key element of the the annual cycle of activity undertaken by the central College Admissions and Schools Teams These teams ensure that information and guidance is provided to both prospective students and appropriate gatekeepers (e.g. schools and advisors) on the range of support available to students with protected characteristics. Included in this activity are;

- An annual programme of outreach visits to local feeder institutions to establish early links and raise aspirations and targets;
- An annual programme of Discovery Days targeted at supporting and encouraging application;
- Open events where target students have the opportunity to visit the College and speak to academic staff and employers to explore the range of career opportunities available through specific study paths.

- Taster events where target students can gain valuable insight into what HE study in a College environment is like.

The College Strategic Plan is designed to meet the needs and expectations of all students regardless of background or profile. It is also designed to address the specific concerns raised by prospective students when considering the relative merits of choosing further study over seeking employment. This plan reflects these values and is underpinned by the College Higher Education Strategy which uses employability outcomes as a tool to removing barriers to participation in the region. The evidence of the Colleges achievements in this respect provides a powerful message to potential students and raises regional participation rates. This alignment also supports and encourages students to recognise the value of continuing with their studies which has assisted in placing College continuation rates amongst the highest in the region (TEF data). Investment in relationship building with employers through a range of initiatives, including;

- Payments to secure high quality workplace mentors to ensure positive outcomes for students in work-based learning settings;
- Aligning programme development to labour market intelligence to support student progression into graduate employment;
- Embedding professional qualifications into higher awards to support direct progression to employment upon graduation.

While the above activity will be maintained moving forwards, the focus of investment will move marginally more towards supporting students in their studies

3.1.1.2 Supporting student attainment and continuation with effective teaching and academic support

To ensure that all students are supported effectively, the standard HE teaching model is built around a combination of formal scheduled teaching and academic support. The benefit of this model is that the academic support sessions ensure that students receive the level of support that they need and require, independent of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic group, background or other characteristic. For those students who occasionally have difficulty attending taught sessions, particularly those in work and studying part-time, the same level of academic support is provided via the [College VLE](#). The delivery model is underpinned by a range of additional support and resources, provided by specialist teams across the College business support areas, this includes; Student Services; Disability Support Services; Finance; the Learning Resource Centre. Moving forward, additional investment will be focussed on providing extra staff resource to all of these areas to support student continuation and attainment.

The College HE Learning and Teaching process, which is a sub-set of the College Teaching and Learning Policy, is designed to reflect the dimensions of the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education ([UKPSF](#)). Underpinning this process is a requirement for all staff to hold PgCE qualifications. From 2019, an additional requirement is being added supporting staff to apply for HEA Fellowship. As the strategic aims of this APP are designed to improve continuation rates, the approach to learning for all HE students and in particular those in target groups, will be an important element in the approach to delivering the stated strategic aims of this APP.

As identified in 3.1.1.1, further support will be channelled to support students from 2019/20 to build on the success of the current model, particularly providing additional staff time for student support.

The Head of Teaching and Learning will be involved in the Working Group tasked with addressing the objectives outlined in the APP Strategy. The lessons learned from the outcomes of the Working Group activity, will be used to inform future development of the HE learning and teaching process.

3.1.1.3 Ensuring equality of opportunity and outcome for all students

All College services, programmes and operations, reflect a commitment to and implementation of, equality, diversity and inclusion. This commitment is reflected in the College's core values of *driving inclusion* and *promoting mutual respect* and wellbeing for all. The approach to the management of equality and diversity is monitored and reported upon by the Vice Principal, Staff and Students. All reports on College activity relating to equality and diversity are reported to the Governing Body through the Equality and Diversity Committee. The VP Staff and Students is part of Academic Board and so will represent the views of the Equality and Diversity Committee in the oversight of the strategies included in this APP. This will ensure that the actions identified in the strategy to review and improve the mechanisms for support for under-represented groups are embedded in cross-College reporting mechanisms.

The College aims to be a leading organisation in the promotion of equality and diversity and acknowledges that equality of opportunity and the recognition and promotion of diversity, are integral to its success.

Middlesbrough College recognises its legal and moral obligations to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Key to meeting these obligations and supporting student success on programme, is the removal of barriers to engaging with the support and expertise outlined in 3.1.1.2. The range of additional financial support provided through this plan, will assist in facilitating this action by removing some of the barriers to attendance that students face because of financial hardship. This includes

- Bursaries;
- Hardship payments;
- Professional accreditation fees;
- Subsidised meals in the College catering facilities;
- Payment of costs associated with trips and visits;
- Standard minimum levels of teaching and academic support for all students which are above the sector average regardless of subject.

3.1.1.4 Supporting Progression

A key focus of the College higher education portfolio as described in 3.1.1.1, is to ensure that there is key vocational theme throughout the student lifecycle. Consequently, the message that a higher education award at Middlesbrough College is part of a journey into employment is central to all activity. This influences and includes;

- The content of advertising and promotion campaigns;
- Programme design and development/redevelopment;
- Programme structure and delivery models (fitting around employment);
- Embedded work-based learning in all programmes including paid mentors;
- Subsidised vocational trips and visits.

All of these activities are the responsibility of the academic faculties and embedded in curriculum planning. The HEO oversees this process and monitors that all stated aims linked to student support are embedded across the student lifecycle.

3.2 Student consultation

The College Student Union is an independently elected body comprising both FE and HE students. The student body has also elected a HE student representative to sit on Academic Board. The role of this individual is to engage in discussion on policy and procedure relating to higher education and feedback/feedforward, student views from the cross-college student representative group.

The innovative design of the College HE delivery model, resting as it does on flexible study programmes and the opportunity to step in and out of study, creates a challenge in retaining a consistent student body able to engage with wider activity. In addition, the size of the HE student population half of which is part-time, presents further challenges. To ensure that HE students have every opportunity to engage with College activity, the College has a Head of Student Engagement who provides a mechanism to support continuity and an administrative infrastructure to support the activity of the Student Union. Key to this role is the guidance and support provided to students to ensure that they are able to engage with the range of fora available to them to present their views, share opinions and consult on College plans and policy.

To ensure that HE students at the College have a distinct voice, the College provides a series of HE specific platforms for student engagement and input. These platforms ensure that student representation is meaningful and regular. Platforms includes HE Representative Meetings (organised by the Head of Student Engagement), Programme Boards, HE Working Groups and Academic Board.

The HE Working Groups run at least termly and provide the opportunity for students from all subject areas to engage with and present their views to key managers of both academic and student support services. The HE Office administers these groups and ensures that student views from all fora are represented. Direct response is provided to all HE Students and their representatives via the VLE. This approach ensures that all students have a voice and also allows specific focus for students with protected characteristics.

The key approach to gathering student views in the development of this APP were as follows:

- All data that was used to inform this plan were approved by Academic Board. Their inclusion and use was approved by the student representative on Academic Board.

- In approving this plan, Academic Board asked the student body to comment upon content and identify if there are any areas being overlooked by the College. The students agreed that the content of the Plan was appropriate, but felt that an analysis of all current strategies designed to support access and participation should form part of the remit of the Working Group, to ensure that they were still fit for purpose. This inclusion was approved.
- It was also requested by the student body - and agreed by Academic Board - that progress towards achieving the stated aims would be reported to the student body on a regular basis and at least termly.
- In addition to the approach outlined above, the HE Office engaged with individual students from under-represented groups, particularly those within the intended scope of the activity, to ensure that they felt that the stated aims represented their views. Feedback was positive in all cases.

The College will ensure that this engagement continues during the implementation and evaluation phase. Given the length of time it will take to fully implement the plan and the challenges presented to student engagement by the flexible study model offered by the College (see Section 3.1 and 3.2 for an explanation), the approach to ensuring the whole student body receives and understands the feedback on outcomes, is as follows.

- The student body is briefed on all key documents, policies and processes pertaining to their time as a student at the College. A key element of this induction is a review of the [Essential Information](#) page of the College website. This page includes the Access and Participation Plan. The page is also hyperlinked from Canvas the College Virtual Learning Environment, which all students access throughout their studies.
- The Student Representative network receive an update at the beginning of each year on the activities that they are asked to be engaged in, comment on or contribute to. For new Student Representatives, this is covered during the Student Representative induction process. The Access and Participation Plan is included in this annual update/induction.
- Developments and progress towards attainment of objectives of the Access and Participation Plan will be feedback to all students in-year via the feedback mechanisms and channels described in Section 3.2.
- The Higher Education Office will support the dissemination of information on progress towards meeting objectives through Canvas via the Student Section of Canvas. All new announcements on this site appear on every student's homepage when they log into Canvas.

All students will have the opportunity to raise any specific questions or concerns about the Access and Participation Plan as well as any other aspects of College activity through the fora described in Section 3.2.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

The approach to evaluating this strategy will take place both during the life of the plan as well as at the end. It is anticipated that by maintaining this level of scrutiny, any lessons learned and issues that emerge, will be picked up in a timely manner and fed back into the process to improve the final outcome. In addition to the College data used to inform this plan, the targets will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OfS dataset when that becomes available.

Evaluation will take place across the life of the plan at Assessment points 1 – 5 annually. The process of evaluating this strategy will be the responsibility of Academic Board following the intended chronology of the strategy as outlined in 3.0 above. While the current approaches to supporting students throughout their lifecycle are considered to be effective and are well received by students, the intention is to build on past success and ensure that outcomes for all students across their lifecycle are positive. The implementation of any new actions taken by the College as a result of the work undertaken by the Working Group, will be the responsibility of the HEO. In all instances, the findings will be continuously evaluated to ensure that any lessons learned or good practice identified, is reflected in and embedded across;

- The HE strategy;
- Programme design;
- Outreach activity
- Academic and additional support mechanisms;
- Financial support;
- Other specialist and general student support.

As well as ensuring that the stated targets are achieved, the evaluation process will also be used to consider the performance of the College relative to the sector as a whole. A process that will be enhanced when the College is able to access OfS data as well as other sectoral information to compare with 2018/19 College data.

As the size and profile of the HE student body changes in line with planned growth, it will be important to ensure that the current mechanisms in place remain effective at evaluating performance against plan. Academic Board keeps the growth of higher education at the College under review and identifies any essential increases in scale of operation.

3.3.1 Quantitative data analysis

Comparative assessment of student performance and outcomes will be based on College data. The College operates a process of analysing student data at 5 points in the year (AP1 to AP5) using a combination of current student performance in assessment (formative and summative). The data provided is analysed according to the target outcome. Moving forwards, the College will adapt this approach to incorporate OfS data as it becomes available in 2019/20.

The new data collection tool being established as part of this plan will be set to enable comparison of the same student group throughout its lifecycle to ensure consistency of results.

Each of the target groups will be evaluated against the following criteria;

- Performance relative to the current position;
- Performance relative to the student body as a whole;
- Performance relative to students without the protected characteristic that is the focus of the plan;
- Performance relative to the target outcomes.

The data will be collected by the Registry Team using the same criteria at each AP to ensure that comparisons are consistent.

3.3.2 Qualitative analysis

The size of the HE student body at the College and in particular the size of the target groups of this plan, will make meaningful statistical analysis difficult. While a numerical measure will continue to be used to support decision making, the current forms of evaluating the effectiveness of measures to support students will form an integral and important part of the evaluation process.

3.3.2.1 Survey Tools

The current range of survey tools employed by the College will continue to be used to assist in assessing factors that affect academic performance. Specifically, module evaluation questionnaires and student satisfaction surveys. However, while the output from these surveys will provide some insight into general student perceptions, it will be limited to the views of the student population rather than the target groups.

In addition to the current range of survey tools, an additional survey will be added to any support processes accessed by students with protected characteristics, such as financial support, disability support, etc. All students that access these services, will be asked to participate in a satisfaction survey to identify their perceptions on whether the model meets their needs effectively. Selection of students for these groups will be based on College records as well as those that self-declare membership of the group.

3.3.2.2 Interview Tools

To address the specific challenge of the small data sets associated with the target groups, the College will utilise a series of focus groups with students from these groups. The approach to data gathering will utilise a semi-structured interview, using the questions from the standard College survey tools as a basis. This will enable comparison with the student body as a whole and will provide useful guidance on how effective these tools are at indicating student perceptions regardless of characteristic.

The interviews will also provide the opportunity to identify whether there are any specific aspects of the characteristic of the target group that are being overlooked by the survey tools. This information will be gathered through discussion to identify what in addition could be done to enhance student satisfaction in the areas identified in the survey.

3.3.2.3 Informal Feedback

The range of fora provided for informal student feedback will continue to be utilised to gather any ad-hoc data on student views and perceptions. It is anticipated that this approach will be important in addressing any gaps in information that may arise from the methodologies outlined above.

In each of the above approaches, the survey will focus upon the specific activities designed to support each aspect of the student lifecycle to provide the College with an understanding of the efficacy of the steps taken to support access, success and progression.

3.4 Evaluating progress against delivery of the plan

The approach to evaluating the effectiveness of the plan and the activities involved will be undertaken across the life of the plan to ensure that the intended outcomes and direction of travel are achieved. The key milestones of this process are shown in Table 14. NB. As 2018-19 was the first year that the College registered its own HE students, many of the current initiatives are to be reviewed both through internal mechanisms and through external consultants to identify the efficacy of the strategies employed. Included in this activity will be the eligibility criteria for bursary payments

and financial support, to ensure that it supports the attainment of the stated objectives of this plan. Should any of this activity lead to variation to the plan as it is currently stated, any such variation will be submitted to the Office for Students for consideration.

Table 15 – Evaluating progress against delivery of the plan		
Task	Evaluation Activity	Date
Year 1		
Appoint additional registry staff to support data analysis	VP Finance and Registry to confirm appointment to Academic Board (AB)	May 2019
Appoint additional learning support staff	VP Staff and Students to confirm appointment to AB	August 2019
Create enhanced data analysis tool to support understanding of outcomes for students	VP Quality and Standards to confirm to AB that data analysis tool has been created. HEO to confirm to AB that the analytical tool is fit for purpose.	August 2019
Analysis of current actions and strategies	<p>AB to receive termly update reports from the working group. Report to analyse the factors affecting student performance with a specific focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards. <p>Report to draw upon data gathered from evaluation of strategies and actions and identify any barriers to implementation or effectiveness.</p> <p>AB to confirm that any actions recommended will lead to better understanding of factors and support any necessary change.</p> <p>AB to set target dates for review of the strategies adopted to ensure that they are achieving their intended outcome.</p> <p>HEO to monitor outcomes and report back to AB at AP 1- 5 in each year throughout the life of the plan.</p>	<p>Dec 2019</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>July 2020</p>

Analysis of any new strategies identified from wider research	<p>AB to receive a report from the working group. Report should present the findings of the research into alternative strategies used by other institutions to support positive student outcomes. Specific focus should be upon strategies designed to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students. <p>Working group to recommend to AB the adoption of appropriate strategies</p>	January 2020
In year analysis of effectiveness of strategies based on student outcomes	<p>HE Office to review the effectiveness of the strategies with students and academic and support staff to ensure that they are having the desired impact and that continuation rate gaps are being closed. Any strategies deemed to be failing, to be flagged and re-evaluated by the Working Group</p>	AP 1 – 2019
		AP 2 – 2019
		AP 3 – 2020
		AP 4 – 2020
Year-end review	<p>End of year review of efficacy of strategies, including lessons learned and identification of any amendments or additions to existing strategies. Forecast of position to identify the likelihood of meeting stated aim by 2024.</p>	AP 5 – 2020
Year 2		
Analysis of current actions and strategies	<p>AB to receive termly update reports from the working group. Report to analyse the factors affecting student performance with a specific focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards. <p>Report to draw upon data gathered from College and wider data sets.</p> <p>AB to confirm that any actions recommended will lead to better understanding of factors and support any necessary change.</p>	Dec 2020 March 2021 July 2021
In year analysis of effectiveness of strategies based on student outcomes	<p>HE Office to review the effectiveness of the strategies with students and academic and support staff to ensure that they are having the desired impact and that continuation rate gaps are being closed. Any strategies deemed to be failing, to be flagged and re-evaluated by the Working Group</p>	AP 1 – 2020
		AP 2 – 2020
		AP 3 – 2021
		AP 4 – 2021
Year-end review	<p>End of year review of efficacy of strategies, including lessons learned and identification of any amendments or additions to existing strategies. Forecast of position to identify the likelihood of meeting stated aim by 2024.</p>	AP 5 – 2021
Year 3		

<p>Analysis of current actions and strategies</p>	<p>AB to receive termly update reports from the working group. Report to analyse the factors affecting student performance with a specific focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards. <p>Report to draw upon data gathered from College and wider data sets.</p> <p>AB to confirm that any actions recommended will lead to better understanding of factors and support any necessary change.</p>	<p>Dec 2021 March 2022 July 2022</p>
<p>In year analysis of effectiveness of strategies based on student outcomes</p>	<p>HE Office to review the effectiveness of the strategies with students and academic and support staff to ensure that they are having the desired impact and that continuation rate gaps are being closed. Any strategies deemed to be failing, to be flagged and re-evaluated by the Working Group</p>	<p>AP 1 – 2021</p>
		<p>AP 2 – 2021</p>
		<p>AP 3 – 2022</p>
		<p>AP 4 – 2022</p>
<p>Year-end review</p>	<p>End of year review of efficacy of strategies, including lessons learned and identification of any amendments or additions to existing strategies. Forecast of position to identify the likelihood of meeting stated aim by 2024.</p>	<p>AP 5 – 2022</p>
<p>Year 4</p>		
<p>Analysis of current actions and strategies</p>	<p>AB to receive termly update reports from the working group. Report to analyse the factors affecting student performance with a specific focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards. <p>Report to draw upon data gathered from College and wider data sets.</p> <p>AB to confirm that any actions recommended will lead to better understanding of factors and support any necessary change.</p>	<p>Dec 2022 March 2023 July 2023</p>
<p>In year analysis of effectiveness of strategies based on student outcomes</p>	<p>HE Office to review the effectiveness of the strategies with students and academic and support staff to ensure that they are having the desired impact and that continuation rate gaps are being closed. Any strategies deemed to be failing, to be flagged and re-evaluated by the Working Group</p>	<p>AP 1 – 2022</p>
		<p>AP 2 – 2022</p>
		<p>AP 3 – 2023</p>
		<p>AP 4 – 2023</p>
<p>Year-end review</p>	<p>End of year review of efficacy of strategies, including lessons learned and identification of any amendments or additions to existing strategies. Forecast of position to identify the likelihood of meeting stated aim by 2024.</p>	<p>AP 5 – 2023</p>

Year 5		
Analysis of current actions and strategies	<p>AB to receive termly update reports from the working group. Report to analyse the factors affecting student performance with a specific focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students from disadvantaged wards; • students with a disability; • full-time white male students from disadvantaged wards. <p>Report to draw upon data gathered from College and wider data sets.</p> <p>AB to confirm that any actions recommended will lead to better understanding of factors and support any necessary change.</p>	<p>Dec 2023 March 2024 July 2024</p>
In year analysis of effectiveness of strategies based on student outcomes	<p>HE Office to review the effectiveness of the strategies with students and academic and support staff to ensure that they are having the desired impact and that continuation rate gaps are being closed. Any strategies deemed to be failing, to be flagged and re-evaluated by the Working Group</p>	AP 1 – 2023
		AP 2 – 2023
		AP 3 – 2024
		AP 4 – 2024
Year-end review	<p>End of year review of efficacy of strategies, including lessons learned and identification of any amendments or additions to existing strategies. Forecast of position to identify the likelihood of meeting stated aim by 2024.</p>	AP 5 – 2024

4. Provision of information to students

4.1 Financial Support

Bursaries are provided to all students from underrepresented groups, regardless of protected characteristic, who are enrolled on full 3-year degree programmes. This will include;

- Students from areas of lower higher education participation, lower household income and/or lower socioeconomic status groups (POLAR4 Q1 & 2; IMD Q1);
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic students;

- Mature students;
- Disabled students;
- Care leavers;
- Carers;
- People estranged from their families;
- People from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities;
- Refugees;
- Children of military families.

The current bursary is £1000 per student paid in 2 instalments term 1 and term 4. The criteria for eligibility for the bursary is explained on the College web-site for all prospective students. To reduce the burden on the students of application, the bursary is awarded to any student that is a member of the eligible group, the evidence for which is captured at application and confirmed upon enrolment. The purpose of the bursary is to support student transition into higher education and continuation in the first two years, particularly around purchasing any materials or resources to support or enhance their study. All essential materials and equipment are provided free of charge by the College. The provision of the bursary was a direct response to feedback from students on this type of course who are more likely to be living in student accommodation and managing a range of costs, (the College does not currently have any student accommodation of its own). The payment of the bursary is not designed to cover rent but to reduce financial barriers to study. Information on the bursary is provided on the College web-site which is accessible to prospective students.

All students on shorter duration courses, benefit from a lower fee level which reduces student debt. This approach has been supported and welcomed by students as a positive step towards reducing concerns around the level of debt upon graduation, particularly amongst by part-time students who are more sensitive to this issue. All students on these courses are provided with all essential materials and equipment free of charge.

Hardship funds are available to all students and particularly focussed on providing support to those from underrepresented groups. The purpose of the payments, which were agreed with the student body, are to address short-term challenges that may arise at any point during the student life-cycle. They are not designed to meet continuous short-falls in income or regular expenditure. In all cases, the College is committed to supporting students to be financially independent. The students felt that this flexibility was important given the wide range of challenges that they can and do face. Individual requests are assessed on a needs basis through an application process to the Higher Education Office, supported by Student Services. Information on access to hardship funds is provided to all students through Student Services and the Student Union.

The College manages and monitors the information provided to students through the Higher Education Working Group (Marketing). The group ensures that information provided to students, including details of fees and charges, is accurate, timely and consistent. The HE Working Group (Marketing) welcomes student representatives as members.

The HE Working Group (Marketing) reviews the content of all web and print based communications to ensure that they are accurate, fit for purpose and comply with legal requirements. Specifically, this includes all information on:

- total cost of the course, including tuition fees and any additional essential costs;
- information relating to the payment of bursaries or other financial support;

- ensuring that students have access to all relevant policies both prior to application and after enrolment that explaining what they will be charged for;
- arrangements for payment and rights of cancellation;
- complaints handling.

All College staff engaged in discussing courses and offers to prospective students are trained in how to manage the process and comply with Competition and Markets Authority guidance. Students are also advised on their [rights as consumers](#) and what they can expect from the College in terms of information that affects their contract with the College. Staff are aware of the importance of being accurate, clear, timely and complete in the information, advice and guidance that they provide to prospective students.

The College commits to maintaining the level of fee advertised at the time of application/enrolment and does not increase fees on an annual basis in line with inflation. This is explained in the [Fees and Charges policy and guidance](#) documents available on the College web-site. This includes information covering fees payable for the duration of courses.

The process of providing hardship funds is understood across all student facing functions. This ensures that students that wish to access hardship funds are supported through the channel that they choose to take. All applications are managed through the Higher Education Office and Student Services.

The approach to the fees and charges policy is shared and discussed in the Higher Education Working Group (Finance and Registry). This working group welcomes students as members.

The College does not sub-contract any of its provision to other providers.

All of the above information is provided on the College web-site and is available for students to access at all times.

Any specific enquiries regarding fees or financial support that arise in year can be addressed to either Student Services or the HE Office.

5. Appendix

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

We do not intend to raise fees annually

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	N/A	£8,500
Foundation degree	N/A	£6,300
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	N/A	£4,600
CertHE/DipHE	N/A	£6,300
Postgraduate ITT	N/A	£5,000
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	N/A	£6,900
Foundation degree	N/A	£6,300
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	N/A	£2,300
CertHE/DipHE	N/A	£6,300
Postgraduate ITT	N/A	£2,100
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Middlesbrough College

Provider UKPRN: 10004344

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£90,610.00	£87,757.00	£88,235.00	£84,240.00	£81,172.00
Access (pre-16)	£6,249.00	£6,052.00	£6,085.00	£5,810.00	£5,598.00
Access (post-16)	£43,743.00	£42,366.00	£42,596.00	£40,668.00	£39,186.00
Access (adults and the community)	£40,618.00	£39,339.00	£39,554.00	£37,762.00	£36,388.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£46,275.00	£57,901.00	£58,930.00	£64,600.00	£69,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£1,047,985.00	£1,062,475.00	£1,062,745.00	£1,062,745.00	£1,086,795.00
Access investment	8.6%	8.3%	8.3%	7.9%	7.5%
Financial support	4.4%	5.4%	5.5%	6.1%	6.3%
Research and evaluation	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.8%
Total investment (as %HFI)	15.0%	15.6%	15.7%	15.9%	15.7%

Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Middlesbrough College

Provider UKPRN: 10004344

Targets

Table 2a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
	PTA_1												
	PTA_2												
	PTA_3												
	PTA_4												
	PTA_5												
	PTA_6												
	PTA_7												
	PTA_8												

Table 2b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) compared to full-time students from areas with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)	PTS_1	Socio-economic	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference between continuation rates between full-time students from disadvantaged wards compared to full-time students from areas with no disadvantage	No	Other data source	2016-17	3%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	It is planned to close this gap and raise the continuation rate for both groups of students across the life of the plan. Current targets are based on available College data. The target will be monitored annually. In addition, this target will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OFS dataset when that becomes available.
Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) compared to full-time young white male students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5).	PTS_2	White economically disadvantaged males	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference between continuation rates between full-time young white males from disadvantaged wards compared to full-time young white males from wards without a disadvantage.	No	Other data source	2016-17	4.2%	4%	3%	2%	1%	0%	It is anticipated that the initial rate of increase will be informed by the lessons learned in the execution of this plan. The target will be evaluated annually. In addition, this target will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OFS dataset when that becomes available.
Close the gap in continuation rates between full-time students with a disability and full-time students with no disability.	PTS_3	Disabled	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference between continuation rates between full-time students with a disability and full-time students with no disability.	No	Other data source	2016-17	11%	9%	6%	3%	1%	0%	It is anticipated that the initial rate of increase will be informed by the lessons learned in the execution of this plan. The target will be evaluated annually. In addition, this target will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OFS dataset when that becomes available.
Close the gap in continuation between part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) and part-time students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)	PTS_4	Socio-economic	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference between continuation rates between full-time students from disadvantaged wards compared to full-time students from areas with no disadvantage	No	Other data source	2016-17	6%	5%	3%	1%	0%	0%	The current continuation rate gap is 6%. It is planned to close this gap across the life of the plan. The target will be monitored annually. In addition, this target will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OFS dataset when that becomes available. P/t courses at the College are offered over an extended academic year which equates to the equivalent f/t calendar year
Close the gap in attainment between between part-time students from disadvantaged wards (IMD Q1) and part-time students from wards with no disadvantage (IMD Q5)	PTS_5	Socio-economic	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference between attainment rates between full-time students from disadvantaged wards compared to full-time students from areas with no disadvantage	No	Other data source	2016-17	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	It is anticipated that the initial rate of increase will be informed by the lessons learned in the execution of this plan. The target will be monitored annually. In addition, this target will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OFS dataset when that becomes available. P/t courses at the College are offered over an extended academic year which equates to the equivalent f/t calendar year
Close the gap in attainment between full-time students with a disability and full-time students with no disability.	PTS_6	Disabled	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference between attainment rates between full-time students with a disability and full-time students with no disability.	No	Other data source	2016-17	11%	9%	6%	3%	1%	0%	It is anticipated that the initial rate of increase will be informed by the lessons learned in the execution of this plan. The target will be evaluated annually. In addition, this target will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the OFS dataset when that becomes available.
	PTS_7												
	PTS_8												

Table 2c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Close the gap in progression to highly skilled employment or further study between full-time students with a disability and full-time students without a disability.	PTP_1	Disabled	Assessment of achievement of the target will be based on measurement of the difference in the percentage of full-time students with a disability progressing to highly skilled employment or further study compared to full-time students without a disability.	No	Other data source	2016-17	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	5%	The actual closure in the gap may be achieved earlier than anticipated, but the lag in data available for measurement may delay the final outcome beyond the end of this plan.

