



Access and Participation Plan

2019-20

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context and strategy

This document sets out New College Stamford’s assessment, analysis and strategic planning for access and participation at the College. It draws upon national and local data to enable an informed, strategic mid to long term plan intended to sustain and improve access, student success and progression amongst people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

New College Stamford (NCS) is a medium-sized, general further education college located in the south west corner of Lincolnshire. Its positioning and catchment area extends into five neighbouring local authority areas – Peterborough, Leicestershire, Rutland, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. The College has a total number of 3,520 students (1,860 full-time) of which 221 are studying Higher Education predominantly on a full-time basis. Our HE provision is delivered primarily from our main site on Drift Road in Stamford, although we have two subcontractors who deliver HND performing arts programmes, based in Stamford and Leicester. The College works with two validating partners: Bishop Grosseteste University and The University of Bedfordshire who validate Foundation Degrees and we also deliver a number of HN programmes validated by Pearson. The College’s recruitment area has lower levels than average of residents with Higher Education equivalent qualifications. East of the College into the Fens of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire the levels are some of the lowest in the Country. We generally recruit students from a 25-mile radius.

The College’s Higher Education strategic plan identifies six key priorities:

- **Growth:** To increase participation in Higher Education and promote widening participation amongst under-represented groups.
- **Employability:** To embed employability and personal development throughout the student experience.
- **Excellence:** To deliver excellent teaching and learning opportunities supported by relevant scholarly activity.
- **Innovation:** To provide an innovative and dynamic HE experience relevant to the 21st Century.
- **Support:** To strive to provide support to students and to enhance the student experience.
- **Governance:** To develop the management and governance of Higher Education.

These themes all support our strategies to improve access, student success and progression among people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups. The 2015 Higher Education White Paper was considered carefully when developing the strategy. As a college-based HE provider, widening participation is at the core of our service. The College serves many priority group students; however, many others enrol at NCS for other reasons that are more difficult to measure including family commitments, confidence issues and reservations

around debt. These students do not always fall into the predetermined WP priority groups; however, they would not be accessing HE if it was not available at a local, small and cost-effective institution. Consequently, although this plan details how priority groups are measured and analysed, the strategies employed to sustain and improve access, success and progression are relevant to all of our students.

1.2 Fees

We propose to continue to charge £6500 per year for full time students studying Higher Nationals or Foundation Degrees. In 2018/19 we have enrolled 182 students who will pay £6500, 39 students who will pay £5500. In 2019/20 we predict to enrol approximately 225 students paying £6500.

Part-time fees are charged proportionally to full-time costs. Currently all of our part-time students complete 0.5 FTE per year. Those who are studying HN programmes are charged £3250 per year, and those studying post-14 teacher training are charged £2500 per year.

2 Assessment of current performance

2.1 Applications from NCS FE courses to Higher Education

As an FE provider, the College is mindful of our obligations to promote HE participation as a whole and not only to our own HE programmes. The College delivers tutorials which promote the benefits of Higher Education and HE lecturers and students regularly work with Level 3 students to model the benefits of HE. FE students are invited to HE events such as research presentations and exhibitions. We hold a HE information evening for those who intend to apply to HE. The event covers topics such as writing personal statements and student finance. External speakers from other HEIs are invited, ensuring the information is targeted at HE participation as a whole, rather than only our own offer. The College also hosts a HE fair for all of our FE students, attended by 17 local universities and HE providers. Tables 1 and 2 show the progress we are making in promoting HE participation.

Table 1: Breakdown of applications from NCS FE courses to Higher Education

Level 3 Course	2016/17				2017/18			
	No of Students	No of HE Applicants	% of HE Applicants	Average Quintile Scores overall	No of Students	No of HE Applicants	% of HE Applicants	Average Quintile Scores overall
Animal Management	28	9	32	2.9	26	11	42	3.7
Art and Design	12	7	58	3.4	8	6	75	3.4
Business	28	20	72	3.4	25	14	56	3.4
Childcare	21	3	14	3.0	54	16	30	3.6
Creative Media	21	11	52	3.1	17	11	65	3.3
Fashion & Clothing	10	9	90	3.8	14	10	71	3.1
Graphic Design	12	3	25	2.8	10	5	50	3.6
Health and Social Care	18	16	89	3.4	30	21	70	3.7
IT	37	17	46	3.4	46	23	50	3.5
Music Performance	11	5	45	3.0	11	5	45	3.6
Music Technology	11	6	54	3.8	10	7	70	3.6
Performing Arts	10	6	60	3.3	14	7	50	3.1
Performing Arts MC	21	5	24	3.0	13	6	46	2.5
Performing Arts Dance	5	3	60	4.0	5	2	40	2.8
Photography	14	6	43	3.4	14	8	57	4.1
Public Services	18	6	33	3.7	19	2	11	3.6
Sport & Development	9	4	44	3.4	14	4	29	3.9
Sport	23	9	39	3.6	11	6	54	3.4
Travel & Tourism (Dip)	6	1	17	3.7	12	1	8	3.3
A Levels	62	40	65	3.3	59	42	71	3.5

 Increase in HE applications from 2016/17 to 2017/18 – 12 courses

 Decrease in HE applications from 2016/17 to 2017/18 - 8 courses

Table 2: Breakdown of applications from NCS FE courses to Higher Education

Quintile	2016/17			2017/18		
	Total number of students in Level 3 second-year cohort	No. of students applying to HE	% of students applying to HE	Total number of students in Level 3 second-year cohort	No. of students applying to HE	% of students applying to HE
1	53	30	57	30	17	57
2	48	30	62.5	57	28	49
3	91	53	58	94	50	53
4	92	46	50	81	44	54
5	93	52	56	116	60	52

Analysis of table 2 shows that higher percentages of students from Quintile 1 and 2 apply for HE than those from quintile 4 and 5. This is the opposite of the national position and the local position of other providers. Typically, in the College catchment area 21.7% of students from Quintile 1 apply to HE and 26% from Quintile 2 apply. Table 2 supports the significant progress NCS is making in promoting HE to these groups.

Analysis of table 1 indicates good progress is being made by the College in promoting HE to our FE learners. 12 programmes exhibit increased percentages of students applying to HE. Areas that are showing a decline in applicants are from curriculum areas that have a strong apprenticeship provision, which the College also promotes as a valuable progression route. Students from curriculum areas such as business, public services, sport and travel and tourism all have credible progression routes other than HE which many students are favouring to avoid student debt.

Analysis of the average quintile scores for the current Level 3 students shows that the recruitment onto our Level 3 programmes from quintile wards from Polar 3 is relatively stable. The average quintile score has shifted by only 0.5% or less in thirteen of the twenty curriculum areas. Most areas sit in the middle bracket of quintile wards. This is to be expected considering the location of the College which draws students from high quintile wards of Stamford and Rutland and low quintile wards in Peterborough and the Fens.

Seven of the twelve areas that have seen an increase in HE applications are from curriculum areas where the average quintile score has also increased, although the changes are mainly marginal. This indicates more work needs to be done earlier on; tracking and targeting our Level 3 students from stage of enrolment to support those from lower quintiles. A reporting system allows programme leaders to identify and track disadvantaged students including carers, looked after children and students with disabilities. Monitoring of this system is conducted through department performance reviews where the Head of Department analyses gaps in achievement and takes steps to reduce these gaps. Although this system is effective in identifying those who need extra support, more training is now needed with FE lecturers regarding Access and Participation from Polar Wards. The College believe that by

providing this training, Level 3 lecturers will be better attuned to the national priorities of promoting Access and Participation. This training will take place before September 2018.

The College is attentive to students' progression through UCAS and identifies when students do not accept offers or are rejected by their preferred destinations. In these cases, the HE Curriculum Advisor speaks to each student personally to support them in continuing with their application or identifying an alternative option. The College currently has 45 Level 3 students from Quintile 1 or 2 who have applied through UCAS and 9 of these are either rejected or have failed to accept offers. By working with these individuals, the College hopes to increase participation for these students.

The data shown in table 1 and 2 has been compiled by the HE Curriculum Advisor to be presented as part of a paper being delivered at the Widening Participation 2018 FACE conference on the 3-5 July 2018.

2.2 Enrolments to NCS HE programmes

Enrolment to NCS HE programmes is promoted through a number of channels. We produce a HE prospectus, which is distributed to all local schools with 6th forms and promote our HE offer in a dedicated section of the College website. These not only advertise our programmes, but also the advantages of studying at a small, local provider. Student welfare, academic support and low-cost travel are all subjects that disadvantaged groups are often concerned about and are consequently included in our HE publications.

The College makes a significant investment in visiting local schools and colleges to promote HE. Twenty-two feeder schools/colleges have either visited the College or received NCS speakers since September 2017. Often the students involved are year 9 or lower and therefore not suitable for immediate enrolment onto HE. By presenting to younger students we aim to highlight the benefits of HE early on and believe this leads to better informed decisions about Level 3 choices. For example, many students do not realise Level 3 BTEC programmes can lead to HE. By dispelling these misconceptions early on, we support students in making better choices that give them the best opportunities to progress to HE. Impact of this is difficult to measure as it is a long-term awareness activity.

Discussions with school teachers and careers advisors has highlighted they also have misconceptions about college based HE. Many do not fully appreciate the differences between foundation degrees and honours degrees or realise that students can progress from one to the other. We have therefore established an annual event for school careers advisors to explain the benefits of studying HE at a college and how this promotes access to students who may otherwise discount the option of HE. This event is in its 3rd year and has grown each year with 8 schools attending the last event.

Table 3 shows the number of students who enrol onto NCS HE programmes by priority group. These are also broken down by curriculum area as can be seen in appendix 1. The data indicates that there are very marginal changes across all 5 Polar areas from 16/17. Analysis of the Polar 3 data shows that the College has maintained the improvements made in 16-17 in recruiting students from Polar areas 1 and 2. This is significant and bolsters confidence in the

strategies undertaken to target these areas. Analysis of Polar 4 data is more difficult as there is no comparable data to measure against.

The Gender gap has fallen slightly since 16/17, although is still above national average, due to the high female numbers enrolled on early years and dance programmes, although the new HND Construction has gone some way in addressing this disparity. The ethnicity gap has reduced for the 3rd year running which shows a positive trajectory. The gap is still significantly higher than the national average, however considering the geographical position and catchment areas of NCS, this is to be expected.

The College continues to perform well in recruiting mature students. Analysis of appendix 1 highlights that professional studies, animal management and construction all significantly outperform the national average. The college has ambitions to deliver a Level 6 programme in professional studies which will further improve these findings. See section 3.2 for details.

The number of LLDD students continues to be above national average. This affirms the importance the College places on supporting these students, as indicated by support being one of the 6 key themes of the HE strategy. Many students with LLDD report that they choose to study with us due to the small class sizes and personalised support that we offer.

Overall table 3 sustains confidence in the strategic direction of the College in enabling under-represented groups to access HE.

Table 3: Breakdown of enrolments on NCS HE programmes by priority group

Priority Group		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	National (HESA)
Gender	Female	59%	69%	64%	56%
	Male	41%	31%	34%	44%
Age Group Start	Under 19	21%	23%	25%	84%
	19-25	60%	60%	58%	
	25+	19%	17%	17%	16%
Ethnicity	All other ethnic groups	7%	8%	11%	24%
	White British	93%	92%	89%	76%
Learning Difficulty or Disability	LLDD – Yes	17%	16%	17%	14%
	LLDD – No	83%	84%	83%	86%
POLAR 3 Recruitment of young people in the start year from different participation areas)1 = lowest	1	12%	18%	18%	89%
	2	14%	21%	20%	
	3	27%	20%	23%	
	4	19%	22%	21%	
	5	26%	19%	18%	
POLAR 4 (new indicator) Recruitment of young people in the start year from different participation areas)1 = lowest	1			15%	
	2			18%	
	3			27%	
	4			21%	
	5			19%	

2.3 Success

Achievement rates are tracked and measured by comparing number of students who successfully achieve their chosen qualification against the number who enrol. Much has been done to improve achievement rates at NCS. Acute focus on attendance, underpinned by a

new attendance policy has helped drive up achievement rates significantly across the board as evidenced in tables 3 and 4. Individual student support provided by programme leaders and the Academic Support Coach targets students who are vulnerable to withdrawal. Operating as a small provider with small class groups enables us to respond quickly and personally to any causes for concern. The data shown in table 4 indicates these strategies are succeeding with a 20% improvement in achievement rates across all HE programmes.

Table 4: Breakdown of achievement rates on NCS HE programmes by priority group

Priority group		Achievement rate 2015-16	Achievement rate 2016-17
Total – all HE Programmes		68%	88%
Gender	Female	70%	93%
	Male	64%	78%
Ethnicity	All Other Ethnic Groups	70%	88%
	White British	66%	88%
Learning Difficulty or Disability	LLDD – Yes	70%	79%
	LLDD – No	65%	90%

Table 5: Attendance of NCS HE students

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18 (in year)
85%	82%	89.3%	91%

Table 6: Polar 3 breakdown of student withdrawals in 2017-18

Total withdrawals	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
12	3	2	2	4	1

Achievement rates of 64% for male students were particularly concerning in 2015-16. This has now increased to 78% which is significant, however there is still a gender gap of 15% between male and female students. There is also an achievement gap for LLDD which, considering the focus the College places on support, is concerning for us. Achievement rates for different ethnic groups are consistent with White British.

Overall table 4 indicates that substantial steps have been taken in improving achievement rates across the College although further work needs to be done with male and LLDD students. The strategies to address this are set out in section 3.

Table 6 shows no difference between number of withdrawals from quintile 1 and 2 and those from quintile 4 and 5.

2.4 Progression

Destinations are measured nationally by the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE). In 2015, the organisation tasked with the collection of this data moved to I-graduate. Since this change, the response rate has increased from 69.7% to 92%.

The data in table 7 shows an increase in the number of leavers in employment (both part-time and full-time) and a decrease in number of progressing to further Higher Education Programmes. This can be attributed to strategies to increase the employability of our graduates. The services of the National Career Services have been promoted to all

programmes. All students engage in CV, interview and LinkedIn workshops. Full-time programmes include work experience, employer led briefs and industry guest speakers. This is having a positive effect on employability and has resulted in an increase in those choosing to move directly into employment.

The number of students who choose not to progress to level 6 top-up programmes may be attributed to the rising costs of university study. Many students who complete level 5 programmes at NCS report increased costs and distance to travel as barriers to progression. The College recognise this barrier and seek to offer Level 6 programmes to meet their needs.

There is a reduction in overall positive results from 96% to 88.4% due to an increase in respondents reported as unemployed or other. These results need to be interpreted with some caution as the overall response rate has increased significantly. It may be that those who were unemployed or involved in other activities, such as travelling, were less likely to have engaged with the survey in 2015. With a more effective sampling process these leavers are now being measured and are affecting results.

Table 7: Destinations of Higher Education Leavers

	Response rate	Full-time work	Part-time work	Full-time study	Part-time study	Work and Study	Due to start work in next month	Unemployed	Other	Overall Positive
2014/15	69.7%	33%	11%	39%	2%	11%	0	0	4%	96%
2015/16	92%	39.1%	18.8%	23.2%	4.3%		2.9%	2.9%	8.7%	88.4%

3 Ambition and strategy

HE delivery is a strategic priority for the College and strategies to enhance our access and participation performance are closely monitored by senior management. The College Strategic Plan and HE Strategy both define ambitious targets to develop and enhance our HE delivery. The five College strategic aims are:

- High Standards and Aspirations
- Grow and Diversify the College
- Value our People
- Financial Stability and Reinvestment
- Secure our place in Lincolnshire and the wider region

These aims underpin the strategic plan for widening access and participation.

3.1 Enhanced data collection and distribution

Much work has been done in improving the quality of data collected, to enable a more robust assessment of the College's access and participation. As evident from tables 1-7 the College already collects detailed analysis of our student cohort and uses this to inform strategic planning. Further work is now needed to broaden the range of data collected and ensure this is disseminated to lecturing staff so they are fully informed of their student cohort. Prior to August enrolment, the College will redevelop the HE enrolment process and documentation. Information will be captured that will enable more informed analysis of the College's progress for future access and participation plans. The information gathered will include:

- Polar area
- LLDD status
- Disability
- Ethnic background
- Care leaver
- Carer
- Previously in receipt of free school meals
- Level of maintenance provided by Student Loans Company

Although much of this data is already collected, more work can be done in making it accessible to lecturers and support staff who work with these students. The College is mindful of the GDPR legislation and its obligations to ensure that data is only used for relevant and legitimate purposes and only made available to those with legitimate reasons for access. The Head of HE will work with the Director of IT and Resources to ensure that these obligations are fulfilled. By collecting and disseminating enhanced data, the College expects to be able to enhance the level of analysis in future plans and enable a more informed and responsive service to be provided to students from under-represented groups. Lecturers will report on those students who have been identified as under-represented along with actions taken at a programme level to offer additional support. This will be reported on in the AMR and effectiveness will be measured.

3.2 Curriculum offer

The data reported in table 3, shows that the College is making good progress in promoting access to HE from under-represented groups. The gender gap and ethnicity gap have both reduced, and the College recruit high numbers of LLDD students. Continuing work with subcontractors that operate in geographical areas with a more diverse ethnic demographic is expected to reduce the ethnicity gap further. The College is in discussions with a performing arts school that is expected to recruit more ethnically diverse students.

The main strategy to improve access to HE is to offer Level 6 programmes at the College. As reported in table 5 the number of students progressing to Level 6 programmes having completed Level 5 HNDs or FdAs has fallen. The College believe that by offering Level 6 programmes these students would continue with their education. Unfortunately, discussions with our existing validating partners have proved ineffective in securing this offer, so the College is in early discussions with two new validating partners, with the hope of securing validation of Level 6 programmes by 2019/20. We will not be able to report on the effectiveness of this until 2021 when DLHE results will indicate whether there is an increase in students accessing Level 6 programmes.

3.3 Graduate attributes

In 2017 the College financially supported the Head of HE to undertake a research project exploring how the development of graduate attributes can improve completion rates amongst NCS students. Following an extensive review of literature concerning both retention and graduate attributes, clear links were identified between strategies that support students to complete programmes, progression to employment and the development of graduate attributes. This literature formed the basis of the research which sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are the links between graduate attributes and retention?
- What challenges do students face during the transition to HE that impact upon retention?
- What graduate attributes should NCS be seeking to foster in our students?
- How can the learning environment best support students in the development of these attributes?

Thomas¹ asserts that three groups are most vulnerable to non-completion; local students who live at home, mature students and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This research is therefore particularly valuable when developing our Access and Participation strategies.

¹ Thomas, L., 2012. Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: What Works? Student Retention & Success [pdf] London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Available at: <<http://www.phf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-Works-report-final.pdf>> [accessed 20 May 2017]

An action research methodology was used to collect qualitative and quantitative findings from a range of stakeholders including students, employers and staff. The research identified the following findings:

- Defining and developing transferable skills and attributes has a positive effect upon both completion rates and progression.
- Students need clear expectations to become confident and develop a greater sense of purpose. Involving existing students presents opportunities to develop transferable skills. Students mentors develop communication skills, confidence and self-awareness. Mentees are inspired to be more motivated and ambitious.
- Induction programmes should focus upon analysing existing skills to support planning for delivery. Workshops focusing on transferable skills provide foundations for the programme and enhance confidence. Engaging industry speakers or alumni early on develops a sense of purpose and motivation. Educating students about career prospects pre-enrolment enhances engagement and completion.
- Self-reflection and target setting is essential in supporting students to develop resilience to challenging experiences.
- Collaborative projects develop a sense of belonging and develop communication, problem solving and adaptability skills.

Following this research, the College developed a set of graduate attributes and a range of strategies and resources to embed their development into programme delivery. In July 2017 these attributes were launched to staff who are required to use the framework to support delivery. They were also promoted to students through their student handbook.

This delivery is in its infancy and will be reviewed during the 2018 AMRs although initial indicators suggest it has been well received. It is expected that this work will have a positive effect upon both success and progression of all NCS students, although those from under-represented groups are most likely to benefit.

In 2018 the analysis from the AMRs will be reviewed to measure impact and further actions will be identified to drive forward the project. These will be reported in the 2020-21 Access and Participation Plan.

3.4 Student support

Student support sits at the core of our service. As a FE provider, we are acutely aware of the needs of students and the strategies required to support them. Support is provided for welfare, careers, academic skills and learning difficulties.

The College recognises that students from under-represented groups often need more support in academic writing and that when this is provided it has a positive effect upon success and progression. The College therefore continues to invest in an Academic Support Coach who works with HE students to provide support with academic writing and study skills.

The findings from table 4 identify there is still an achievement gap for LLDD students and that the College needs to do more to work with these students. Although some students receive

DSA support, the College believes extra support should be provided for those that do not qualify for DSA. Further work is needed to formalise this process and ensure no students are left without the support they require. The Head of HE and Head of Student Support are working on strategies to achieve this, which will be reported in the 2020-21 Access and Participation Plan.

3.5 Raising attainment in schools

Stamford Welland Academy

The College has formal links with Welland Academy which is situated less than a mile from the college with many of their students progressing to our programmes. The school recruits many learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. There is a joint governance agreement between the institutions, whereby the Deputy Principal for Curriculum and Quality from the College sits on their governing body and the Principal of Stamford Welland Academy sits on our governing body. Additionally, the Deputy Principal for Curriculum and Quality has recently taken on the role of Academy Counsellor for Pupil Premium, enabling a more targeted approach for supporting under-represented students into HE. The College works closely with the Academy offering taster days and careers advice including mock interviews, cv writing and UCAS personal statements.

Casterton College Rutland

In January 2018, the Head of Higher Education at NCS joined the governing body of Casterton College Rutland, a local school with 800 students aged 11-16. With a particular focus on high achieving students, this position offers opportunities to provide mentorship and guidance to the school in promoting the benefits of Higher Education.

The College is committed to growing both these relationships and views them as strategic priorities in raising attainment for local students. The College targets to deliver HE activity days at each school throughout 2018/19, focussing on access to Higher education, critical thinking and academic skills.

3.6 National Collaborative Outreach Programme

The College is a member of the LinHigher consortium of Lincolnshire Colleges and Universities focused on raising the engagement of low participation groups in Higher Education. The Principal and Chief Executive sits on the Governing Body and the Head of HE sits on the Steering Group. Due to the way that NCOP funding is now allocated to predetermined wards, the College has been unable to draw funding from this body as none of the wards are located within the College catchment area. The College has, however, attended collaborative events organised by NCOP and has contributed to publications and videos aimed at promoting College based HE.

3.7 Evaluation

The College will undertake an impact evaluation of access and participation strategies by employing a theory of change model. This will be managed by the Access and Participation working group as detailed in section 3.8. The College is committed to maintaining the positive

results already reported in regards to access of students from lower quintile wards, mature learners and LLDD learners and the achievement rates of male learners and LLDD learners. The College is focussed upon making further improvements to the achievement rates of white males and LLDD learners. Details of funded activity are delineated in section 4 and are focussed upon improving access and success rates for LLDD and white males. During this academic year the College will also conduct further work to analyse the intersections of these groups, explicitly white males who report themselves as LLDD. Findings from this analysis will be reported in the 2020/10 Access and Participation Plan. This group will also be responsible for the setting of targets relating to the progression stages of the lifecycle. As this group is in its infancy it is not possible to publish these targets for 2019/20, however they will be reported on in the 2020/21 access and participation plan.

Short-term target

Reduce non-completion rates of white males and LLDD students by 5%.

Mid-term goals

To reduce the achievement gap by 10% by September 2019.

Long Term impact

Achievement rates for white males and LLDD learners to be equitable with all other groups of learners by 2020.

Activities involved

These will be determined by the Access and Participation working group and will involve a cross college approach, including teaching staff, support staff, MIS management and the Senior Leadership Team. Enhanced data collection mechanisms will inform an evidence-based strategy which will ensure targeted support is provided to these groups. Details of the specific activities to be undertaken will be determined at the first meeting of the Access and Participation group and monitored through the year. Further details of these activities will be reported upon in the 2020-21 Access and Participation Plan.

3.8 Monitoring

Access and Participation is presently discussed at Academic Board and the HE Student Forum. The College recognises however, that responsibility falls principally with the Head of Higher Education under the management of the Deputy Principal for Curriculum and Quality. In order to fully embed the strategy across all levels of the College, a dedicated working group which meets more regularly would be more effective. Consequently, a new Access and Participation Working Group will be established and commence meetings from September 2018 to establish a cross college approach. The group will include senior management from a range of curriculum and service areas and student representation will also be sought. The working group will be responsible for management and dissemination of the Access and Participation plan and will report directly to the Academic Board. The College firmly believes this enhancement will lead to significant progress in our access and participation ambitions.

This group will be responsible for both the planning, evaluation and monitoring of access and participation strategies. This group will meet twice per term and will respond to in year data collection to inform the effectiveness of interventions and will adapt accordingly.

3.9 Financial support

The College does not currently offer any bursaries or fee remissions. The College provides a hardship fund for students from households of lower than £25000 per year to support with programme costs such as books, materials and transport. The College also invests in IT equipment to loan to students of low-income families to support student success.

The evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of this support will be the responsibility of the Access and Participation Working Group. The OFFA toolkit will be used to enable the College to determine whether the support provided is effective and ensure it is determined by statistical evidence.

4 Investment

The College's commitment to investment in access and participation is detailed in table 8.

Table 8: Investment forecasts

		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Access investment forecasts	Total investment on access	9 000	9 500	10 000	10 500
	<i>amount of total which is APP countable</i>	8 000	8 500	9 000	9 500
Success investment forecasts	Total investment on success	11 000	11 500	12 000	12 500
	<i>amount of total which is APP countable</i>	10 000	10 500	11 000	11 500
Progression investment forecasts	Total investment on progression	9 000	9 500	10 000	10 500
	<i>amount of total which is APP countable</i>	8 000	8 500	9 000	9 500
Total activity investment	Total access, success & progression investment	29 000	30 500	32 000	33 500
	<i>amount of total which is APP countable</i>	26 000	27 500	29 000	30 500

The College has elected to change the focus on where funding is targeting based upon analysis of the evidence in section 2. Total investment has been reduced from 91.6% to 58.8% which the College believes is more in line with the sector and is affordable for the College. The College believes that systems already in place to improve Access and Participation will continue to be effective with this reduced investment.

Access of disadvantaged groups of LLDD, mature students and those from low polar groups continue to be above national average and the College believes the systems are in place to continue to target these groups with reduced funding. The College has therefore elected to reduce spend on access from 40.3% to 11.5%.

Achievement rates have improved by 20% across the College with improvements evidenced in LLDD, and white males. There is still a gender gap which this year's funding commitment will seek to address.

The College continues to operate in financially challenging times as do many of our students and investment in financial support is therefore a priority. We have therefore decided to change the focus of our investment in favour of financial support with an increase investment from 11.5% to 21.5%. The College recognises that more work needs to be done in evaluating the impact of this and this will be a priority of the Access and Participation working group.

All funding will be evaluated and monitored throughout the year and reported upon in the 2020-21 Access and Participation plan at which point funding priorities will be revaluated.

5 Student Engagement

We have consulted with student representatives and student governors throughout the writing of this plan and they are fully supportive of the contents. The timing of the OfS registration process resulted in less consultation than we would have desired, however we are confident in their support for this plan.

Going forward the student representation on the Access and Participation working group and Academic Board will ensure greater ongoing student engagement in our strategies. This is underpinned further by the HE student representative focus groups, which will be consulted throughout the year. The College would aspire to creating a student led Access and Participation group with representatives from a range of disadvantage students which would work in allegiance with the Access and Participation working group. We are however realistic of the potential for low level of engagement in this, considering the small size of our HE provision. With only 215 HE student currently studying at the College, gaining sufficient interest in student led deliberative structures is historically challenging. The College will use induction sessions to promote the benefits of this engagement and will strive to establish this group.

6 Provision of Information

The chief mechanisms for providing material information to prospective students are the college website www.stamford.ac.uk, the HE prospectus, open evenings and information provided by student services. When establishing what content should be included in publications, the College has referred to the *UK higher education providers – advice on protection law document (2015)* and the *Information for Students - A guide to providing information to prospective undergraduate students document (2017)* for guidance.

Details regarding financial support are made available to prospective students through the website and to enrolled students through the HE Launchpad and in handbooks. Students are also reminded of support available during Induction sessions. If students wish to apply for the Hardship Fund they will either approach their course leader who will direct them to the Finance Department or progress there directly. Once this plan is approved it will also be made publicly available on the College website.

7 Equality and diversity

The College is fully committed to equality and diversity and successfully meets targets to recruit and retain students from the full range of protected characteristics across both its FE and HE courses. This Access and Participation Plan is deliberately designed to provide fair access to higher education courses for applicants from low participation neighbourhoods and thus from lower socio-economic groups. We will monitor applicant and student demographic information within the general monitoring process of this plan. The Plan pays due regard to the duties described in the Equality Act 2010.

* course type not listed.

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

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The College reserves the right to increase fees for continuing students in line with inflation based on the RPI, however at this stage does not plan to do so.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		£6,500
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£6,500
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
HNC / HND	THE ADDICT DANCE ACADEMY LTD / 10038034	£6,500
HNC / HND	THE EASTERN SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS LIMITED / 10065554	£6,500
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£3,250
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To increase the number of applicants from Polar 3 Quintile 1 areas	No	2012-13	8.3% recruited from Quintile 1	20% from quintile 1	22% from quintile 1	23% from quintile 1			In 17/18 the College recruited 18% of students from Quintile 1 and a further 20% from Quintile 2. This maintains improvements reported in 16/17 and bolsters confidence in strategies undertaken to target these areas
T16a_02	Access	Care-leavers	Other statistic - Care-leavers (please give details in the next column)	To increase the number of care leaver applicants	No	2014-15	1 applicant to HE	1 applicant	1 applicant	1 applicant			The College recognise the importance of working with care-leavers, however believes the target previously set were over ambitious. The College has worked with Care Leavers who study on our FE programmes to support them with the transition to HE. The College has also worked with the Virtual Schools to support external Care Leavers. In 2017/18 1 care leaver was recruited onto our FdA in Graphic Design
T16a_03	Student success	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To improve the success rates of students from low participation neighbourhoods	No	2015-16	90%	90%	90%	90%			Student success has increased to 88% in 2016-17. Success rates for LLDD and ethnicity have both improved. Data is now tracked to measure quintile area of student withdrawals. Current number of withdrawals in 2017-18 rindicate an equal number of withdrwals from quintile 1&2 as quintile 4&5.

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To increase the number of applicants from the Polar 3 areas an attempt will be made to gain more access to young people at local schools within that area	No	2016-17	5 schools currently visited	12 schools	15 schools	16 schools			The College visited 9 schools in 2016 / 17 against a target of 5 and is therefore increasing the targets previously set in the 16/17 access agreement