

Annex A - 2019-20 access and participation plan provider template
South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS)
2019-20 access and participation plan

Assessment of current performance

Identified groups

South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS) has a current Access Agreement in place, approved by OFFA in July 2017, for students entering programmes from 2018/19. This was the first Access Agreement held by the College and therefore this is reflected in some of the available trend data and the measures and indicators we have begun putting in place to analyse the impact of our activities.

SGS College is one of the largest providers of vocational education and BTEC programmes within the South West. Our reputation and standing with the regulators, across many subject sectors, has propagated and supported the development of our innovative and vocationally relevant Higher Education provision. Programmes include; Higher National Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, Honours Degrees and Level 6 Top-Up Degrees.

SGS College was formed in February 2012 through a merger between Stroud College and Filton College. These two successful colleges merged to give students more choice, greater opportunities and a wider range of facilities. Our mission statement is that: "We positively change people's lives and add value to the social and economic wellbeing of our communities. We do this by providing high quality, innovative, accessible education and training in a friendly culture of mutual respect and support." Our vision - 'To be outstanding by standing out' is supported by the core College Strategic Priorities:-

1. To be recognised as an 'outstanding college'.
2. To be visionary and innovative in providing education opportunities by anticipating and meeting demand.
3. To enhance the quality of the experience we provide for our students and our staff.
4. To develop responsive partnerships with all our students, employers, public services, the local community and with other education providers.
5. To ensure we have the necessary resources to support our plan.
6. To provide a College environment equipped for the delivery of high quality learning

SGS College has four main campuses: Stroud; Filton; the West of England Institute of Specialist Education (WISE) and Berkeley Green. Educational opportunities are also made available at many local community venues, including at the Royal West of England Academy (in central Bristol) and at Bristol Zoo Gardens. SGS College

welcomes over 10,000 full-time and part-time students and apprentices of all ages every year. We currently have 332 students on regulated HE programmes and 450+ on non-regulated professional and higher apprenticeships.

Our experienced and passionate staff work hard to help students achieve their personal aspirations and career goals. We are currently committed to achieving 'outstanding' status after been classified as 'good' with in our recent Ofsted inspection in 2017.

SGS College also enjoys a strong formal Strategic Alliance with the University of Gloucestershire (UoG). This Alliance has created many opportunities to enhance student and community awareness of progression opportunities. As Alliance partners we work together towards a set of core objectives. These are:

1. To provide better opportunities for everyone in Gloucestershire, and the surrounding areas, to benefit from Higher Education and to gain access to provision which is accessible, appropriate and affordable for them – the aim is to eliminate higher education cold spots;
2. To secure better and more integrated Higher Education within Gloucestershire and the surrounding areas;
3. To offer a variety of different forms of accessible Higher Education in different locations within Gloucestershire and surrounding areas; and provide greater flexibility for students to progress from college to university at different points including through higher apprenticeships; and part-time routes;
4. To provide an effective Advice and Guidance Service to enable students to make informed choices about their further and higher study.

Higher Education at SGS College has increased over the past two years in response to our locally responsive academic offer, which has been made possible through our collaborative partnerships. Our growth, across six sites, has undoubtedly enabled students to participate in Higher Education; many of whom may not otherwise have had the same access opportunities.

The College is committed to supporting those students who might not otherwise access Higher Education to succeed and progress by providing smaller class sizes, structured on-programme support and through the maintenance of a robust tutorial process (the effectiveness of which was highlighted as a feature of good practice during the 2013 review of College Higher Education by the Quality Assurance Agency). The College also offers a 'two plus one' delivery model in some subject areas (Foundation Degree and 'top-up' Level 6 provision) which enables the local community to access the full breadth of higher study whilst also offering alternative progression and 'top-up' routes at other institutions.

We have identified the following groups of students as under-represented in the

College. It is to be noted that, nationally, lower-tariff providers such as ourselves have seen a temporary decline in participation from WP groups as higher-tariff providers increasingly broaden their entry requirements.¹ Our current numbers of regulated HE students (332 in total) are relatively small and capturing the intersections of personal characteristics to identify gaps is largely a blunt and inconclusive exercise leading to the identification of tiny subgroups (e.g. care leavers). As our numbers grow we will begin to capture these groups and sub-groups more effectively. In academic year 2017-18 the College has begun working with a new data capture system (PowerBi) which will more effectively capture the life cycle of our groups and sub-groups of students. It is further worth noting that we have added new courses to our HE portfolio every academic year (since 2014) and that some of our courses have not currently gone through an entire cycle of delivery.

Mature Students

Our milestone in the Access Agreement was to increase mature student participation to 48% from a baseline figure of 40% (2016-17). This has been revised to 45% by 2022-23. Over the 4 year period between 2014-15 and 2017-18 the College has seen an increase in the participation of mature students (those over 21 years old) rising from 65 students in 2014/15 to 126 students (i.e. starters at Level 4 and Level 6) in 2017-18. Mature students remain well-represented amongst our cohort, with 38% of the student intake falling into this category. This measures favourably against national benchmarks of 26% for 2016-17 (NB. numbers for 2017-18 are not currently available).² Several of our courses have a significantly high proportion of mature students (e.g. 98% of our FdA Education and Learning cohort and all students on our Level 6 provision). Levels of retention and success are largely high on most of these courses (for example 100% retention and success rates on our Level 6 Specialist Make-up Design and Level 6 Fine Art). The '2 plus 1' model of study is proving popular amongst mature students and is enabling them to succeed and progress onto Level 6 study in several subject areas. Generally speaking our Higher National courses do not have such high retention and thus success rates. We have been addressing these gaps by replacing some of the current QCF Higher National qualifications with validated Foundation Degree provision which offer greater opportunities for contemporary curriculum development.

Male Students

In 2017-18 39% of the College's Higher Education students identified as male. We are currently below the national benchmark for male participation which was recorded as 44% in 2016-17.³ The milestone from the Access Agreement was to increase

¹ UCAS 'End of Cycle Report 2017: patterns by applicant characteristics.' Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/ucas-undergraduate-releases/ucas-undergraduate-analysis-reports/2017-end-cycle-report> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

² HESA, 'HE Student enrolments by personal characteristics.' Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-4> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

³ 'HE Student enrolments by personal characteristics', HESA. Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-4> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

participation of male students to 45% by 2021-22, which has been retained for our 2022-23 milestone. The College is continuing to develop initiatives with a view to encourage greater participation from male students and specifically so from geographic, demographic and subject areas of traditionally low participation; 29% are currently from POLAR3 Q1. This underrepresented group is reflective of the UCAS MEM 1 group – the group that, nationally, is most disadvantaged when accessing higher education.⁴ Male students are currently in the majority in stereotypical subjects including Mechanical Engineering, Computer Games Design (both groups are entirely made up of male students), the Sports provision (93%), and Digital Media Production (100% Y1 and 50% Y2). Current outliers amongst our creative range of courses include Drama and Performance (71% of our Y2 students are male). The College is committed to increasing male participation in ‘non-traditional’ subject areas (and female participation in those areas traditionally associated with male students). In terms of progression to Level 6, 31% of our students are male which indicates that fewer of our male students access this higher level of study compared to their female counterparts. The College is currently working with a new data capture system (PowerBi) which will begin to effectively capture the overall retention and thus success of male students vs their counterparts of other genders. We also anticipate that our new system will be able to identify the life cycle of White Male students from POLAR3 Q1 which will allow us to engage fully with the national benchmarking regarding this subgroup.⁵

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

The milestone in the Access Agreement was to maintain the participation of BAME students at 10% (2014-15 baseline). Participation of students identifying as BAME is currently 8% in 2017/18. Our revised milestone is 14% by 2022-23. This is low against national benchmarks of 26% (2016-17)⁶ but is more comparable to the College’s BAME participation at FE level of 12% (2017-18). At Level 6, 7.8% of students identify as BAME which indicates an insignificant difference in the access and participation rates at this higher level of study, though this will also require monitoring. The BAME retention gap has been closed this academic year (100% of students have been retained), yet will also require careful ongoing monitoring.

Internal Progression from Level 3/ POLAR3 Quintile 1

Currently 33% of our Level 3 students progress onto Level 4 study within the College. We would like to increase this number. The majority of our students are from vocational backgrounds. Overall College data indicates that 23.98% of our Level 3 students progress onto higher education as a whole. The College has maintained the level of

⁴ UCAS ‘End of Cycle Report 2017: patterns by applicant characteristics.’ Available at: <https://www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/ucas-undergraduate-releases/ucas-undergraduate-analysis-reports/2017-end-cycle-report> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

⁵ HESA, ‘HE Student enrolments by personal characteristics.’ Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-4> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

⁶ HE Student enrolments by personal characteristics’, HESA. Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-4> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

engagement from students from traditionally low participation neighbourhoods. Data measured by POLAR3 Q1 has identified an increase of 4%, over the last 4 years, from 25% to 29% in 2017-18. An area for focus continues to be how we can maintain the participation of our internally progressing Level 3 students drawn from POLAR3 Q1. We have an ongoing ambition to increase progression of these students from 29% (baseline 2017-18) to 30% (18-19); 31% (19-20); 32% (20-21); 33% (22-23). Our improved data recording system will help to monitor this subgroup.

Disabled Students

We are currently supporting a large number of students who have either declared a disability at enrolment, a disability has become apparent during the year or they have accessed support during the year due to mental health issues (however temporary); currently 22% for 2017-18. Currently 15% of our students have either made DSA applications, or are eligible to do so (against a national benchmark of 12% in 2016-17).⁷ 100% of these students have been retained and 96% are predicted to successfully complete their current academic year of study. Our overall student numbers have increased from 174 to 332 in a 4 year period; this demonstrates the increased demands on the College to support students to succeed. Interestingly 69% of our students who have declared a disability have progressed internally from within the College which indicates that we have offered appropriate support for them. Moving forward, our improved data recording system will help to monitor this group of students more closely and provide detail with regard to their retention, success and also their progression on from higher education. Our milestone from the Access Agreement remains: that 100% of students in receipt of DSA will have a one to one IAG meeting to ensure that an appropriate support plan is in place.

Care Leavers

This cohort is currently very small, with below 1% of our students identifying as care leavers in 2017-18. 100% of these students have been retained and will succeed. Measures are in place to improve the participation of these students.

Conclusion

As our numbers grow, alongside our ability to capture increased detail in terms of student groups and subgroups, we will be able to more rigorously monitor the access, success and progression of the groups we have identified above.

⁷ 'HE Student enrolments by personal characteristics', HESA. Available at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sfr247/figure-4> [Accessed: 03/05/18].

Ambition and strategy

Overall strategic approach to Widening Participation (WP)

As a General Further Education College that offers higher education courses, we cater for a broad demographic of students across a wide geographic region. The College is committed to invest in all of our students and recognises the need to particularly focus and develop our activities on the under-represented groups identified above. We will focus on student support, particularly responding to the increasing volume of students who self- declare a disability. We will prioritise further investment in financial hardship support, responding to the increasing number of students from under-represented neighbourhoods whilst being mindful of the changes in maintenance grants. Our Bursary and Hardship Fund Policy and Procedure (2018-20) will be updated on a regular basis to help support the broad demographic of students we teach, including our underrepresented groups (full details of the targeted support we offer is discussed in the Access, Success and Participation section of this Plan). In addition we have a College Hardship Fund to support students. The Hardship Fund is carefully administered to ensure transparency and clarity for eligible students who apply. To date this fund has supported many students who may have otherwise left Higher Education and not continued with their studies.

The College is committed to student engagement through a range of widening participation activities. These activities are broadly aimed at schools and they give us valuable opportunities to encourage participation in HE from all potential future students in the under-represented groups that we have identified. The collaborative work, undertaken by SGS College and as part of the Strategic Alliance with the University of Gloucestershire, is a significant part of our WP activity. Through our collaborations we are also able to support our students to progress to higher level study, to participate in a range of activities and to access opportunities to support their progression into employment. These opportunities might not be possible without the collaborative approach of the organisations involved.

SGS College currently participates in collaboration as part of two regional HEFCE National Networks for Collaborative Outreach Projects (NCOP) focusing on students from targeted wards. Our regional NCOP collaboration ('GAP') between the University of Gloucestershire, the Royal Agricultural University, Hartpury College, Gloucestershire College and Cirencester College, has enabled us to deliver long-term outreach. This has helped us to reach a larger number of students (particularly those in pre-16 education and from under-represented groups) in Gloucestershire. It is hoped that this collaboration, initially developed with HEFCE funding, will continue as we bid for continued funding. We are part of a College Careers service network of 19 schools aims to:

- Promote Higher Education at 1:1 interviews and school based events via GROWS/GAP and HE resources;
- Provide pre-University taster visits orientation and guidance, 'A' level reform and

subject choice support.

- Facilitate deep-learning days focused on: CV writing, interview practice and using Higher Education related careers software such as SPARTAN;
- Prioritise interviews, aspiration and guidance, for pupil premium students in year 9 and 10;
- Disseminate information regarding: Higher Apprenticeship, School Leaver's programmes and Internships; and,
- Enable access to Employer-led 'routes into employment' sessions.

SGS College is also in partnership with UWE, the University of Bristol, City of Bristol College, St Brendan's Sixth Form College and South Bristol Youth on the Bristol National Collaborative Outreach Programme 'Future Quest'. This involves joint collaboration to provide a range of activities, including team and confidence-building activities, communication building activities, cultural activities, university visits and subject/career tasters, to engage young people (aged 11-18). Our onsite dedicated Future Quest Co-ordinator works with our Level 3 students from POLAR3 Q1 (a key under-represented group identified in this plan) and also with 27 schools throughout Bristol, hosting events such as Speakers Trust and psychometric profiling. The College has also taken the lead on the Future Quest Sports programme. The project has funded the appointment of a Future Quest Sports Co-ordinator based at our WISE Campus. This programme aims to enlighten students into the different career possibilities in sport and the educational routes available to succeed into their career choice.

The success of the previously NCOP-funded GROWS project has been continued through a mutual collaboration with the University of Gloucestershire, the Royal Agricultural University, Hartpury College, Gloucestershire College and Cirencester College. The College firmly believes that outreach activity at earlier educational stages is of great importance to promoting future participation in higher education. Currently we are represented at 74 school events across Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol and North East Somerset, providing:

- Higher Education focused initial advice and guidance sessions.
- Regular talks on Higher and Degree apprenticeships aimed at parents (currently 6 locations have benefited from this opportunity). Access funds will be used to continue to support the expansion of this activity.
- Monthly 1:1 advice sessions are also provided to year 11 pupils on their subject choices including at 1 target school.
- College campuses also welcome 'whole cohort' year 10 groups to enable pupils to access interactive classroom and workshop-based sessions to inform KS5 choices and subsequently Higher Education choices (10 schools currently regularly benefit from this initiative).

- An independent careers service to 22 local schools recognising the challenges that these institutions can face with internal budgets and the fundamental importance of providing this vital advice for students.

The College also offers a range of assistance to students during the UCAS application process. Students can access 1:1 support; schools can access group support and we also provide support for parents and carers.

As a College we have long recognised the importance of facilitating our Higher Education students to connect with and inspire younger students and those from low participation areas and non-traditional entry points.

From academic year 2018-19, the College SGS will establish a range of Student Mentor posts drawn from a variety of subject areas, including sport and the creative/performing arts sectors. It is hoped that applications for the Mentor positions will be representative of the wide spectrum of our student body. The Mentors will work alongside students in local Schools and Further Education Colleges, providing study support and a 'line of sight' into studying at higher levels. The mentors will work towards raising the aspirations, confidence levels, core skills and knowledge of younger students. Mentors will also provide signposted information regarding different routes into Higher Education. We will offer 3-4, individual or small group, subject-focussed, mentoring sessions per annum; we hope to continuously expand on this over time. Our already established HE Ambassadors scheme sees the positive representation of our student cohort and courses at a variety of internal and external events.

We have recently developed a Bridging Strategy (for full implementation 2018-19) which although aimed at our wider student demographic (by supporting all students transitioning from Level 3-4; 4-5; 5-6), has been devised (where appropriate) with some of our under-represented groups in mind (e.g. Mature students).

Monitoring and evaluation of WP activities

We are committed to ensuring that our WP activities show evidence of continuous improvement. This will continue to be evaluated and monitored via various HE Quality processes.

The monitoring and reporting responsibility for Widening Participation is the responsibility of the College's Widening Participation and Retention Group (WPRG). The group, chaired by the Head of Higher Education Recruitment and Student Experience, reviews data, initiatives and progress as outlined as part of the College's Widening Participation and Retention Policy. Members of the College Senior Management Team participate fully and have delegated responsibilities. The targets as set out in this APP will be reviewed in these biannual meetings as a formal agenda point and our ambitions and goals assessed as a result. The WPRG reports to the

College's Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity and Wellbeing Group and the Curriculum Director for Higher Education and 19+ will oversee all progress and produce reports to feedback to the College's Further Education Corporation both on impact measures and progress made against our milestones.

Collaborative work with the Strategic Alliance and schools will be reported back via the same group structure. Alliance work is also monitored and reported through structured meetings with the University of Gloucestershire and Annual Partnership reporting.

The College's Annual Review (Self Evaluation Document, SED) is a critical document that reports outcomes and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data (from SGS College student surveys and NSS data) against key performance indicators. This is captured through a range of activity including individual Course Enhancement Reviews (CERs). The CERs highlight areas for continuous enhancement and improvement and generate an action plan that is itself reviewed and reported upon throughout the year. The Annual Review is reviewed by our Higher Education Steering Group and approved by the College's Governing Body. The Widening Participation and Retention Group (WPRG), HE Steering Group and termly Course Boards (renamed Course Reviews for 2017-18) all have student representatives or the Lead Student Representative present.

Student consultation

This Plan was developed through consultation with our current higher education students. Meetings were sought with our Lead Course Representative and Class Representatives were asked to feedback on student-friendly versions of the Plan. In addition we surveyed 100 of our current students asking targeted questions relating to their motives for pursuing higher level studies (and for mature students, returning to studies), the support they have received and how they think their student journey could have been improved. Moving forward the APP will be reviewed alongside the SPP and College policies and procedures according to the strategy and mechanisms set out in our Students as Partners Strategy. The effectiveness of these feedback strategies will be reviewed

Mature Students

We acknowledge that mature students often face two general barriers in terms of accessing and succeeding at higher education level: finance and confidence. We recognise the complexities of managing family, work and life pressures and offer part-time study routes to those who are unable to engage with full-time study. Changes have been recently made to our Bursary and Hardship Fund Policy and Procedure (2018-20) to encourage participation from this group of students. Specific activities are in development (based on student feedback gathered from specialist subject areas) for 'soft' roll out in 2018-19. We are piloting this type of activity by establishing an annual Part-time Degree Event at our Bristol School of Art which is specifically

targeted at mature students who are already studying one of our many FE part-time courses. This event is also published to the wider public via a targeted social media campaign. Our Bridging Strategy and annual Employability Conference will further support this targeted demographic.

Our ambition is to increase our numbers of mature students from its current baseline (40% over the last two year cycle) to 45% in 2022-23. Incremental gains have been projected of steady 1% increases until this figure is reached.

Male Students

We anticipate that our extensive outreach activity in schools (as detailed above), in combination with our HE Ambassadors scheme and Inspiring Futures (Student Mentors) scheme will continue to positively support a gradual, but continuous growth in the number of male students (including those from POLAR3 Q1) recruited at HE level (including Level 6, where there is an identified recruitment gap) from an average of 40% (2016-18 figures) to 45% (2022-23). Via these mechanisms and the positive use of marketing materials we predict that we will see a gradual increase in male participation in 'non-traditional' subject areas (and female participation in those areas traditionally associated with male students).

Evaluation of our progress towards these targets will be quantitative, through counting increased enrolments particularly in those identified 'cold spots' within our curriculum. Ongoing qualitative evaluation, after "Scrutinising curriculum options" (2018-19 Access Agreement), will focus our attention for further activity in marketing to appropriate groups internally (Level 3 to HE and Progression within HE to Level 6) and externally.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

It is also to be hoped that our outreach activities, HE Ambassadors scheme, Inspiring Futures scheme and use of positive marketing materials will encourage the participation of students identifying as BAME. Our ambition is to increase participation rates of BAME students in HE courses to reflect participation rates at FE, from 8% (2017-18) to 14% by 2022-23. Another ambition is to diminish to zero any retention target gap we may identify through monitoring of student retention data (this has been identified in the past).

Evaluation of our progress towards these targets will be quantitative, through counting increased enrolments particularly in those identified 'cold spots' within our curriculum. Ongoing qualitative evaluation, after "Scrutinising curriculum options" (2018-19 Access Agreement), will focus our attention for further activity in marketing to appropriate groups internally (Level 3 to HE and Progression within HE to Level 6) and externally. Qualitative information will be gathered via student surveys (internal SGS College surveys – First Impressions and End of Year, national surveys – NSS), and

through the various opportunities to canvass applicants' and students' views in our collaborative, outreach and marketing activities.

Internal Progression from Level 3/ POLAR3 Quintile 1

SGS College has identified that internally progressing students are comparatively under-represented on our HE courses. Currently 33% of our HE students have progressed from Level 3 courses at SGS College, and it is our intention to increase this figure. Encouraging access to HE through internal progression will address the numbers of students (from POLAR 3 Q1 postcodes). Overall 30% of our HE students (Levels 4, 5 and 6) are from POLAR3 Q1 postcodes, comparing well with the UK overall HE student figure of 11% (HESA 2016-17). Analysis shows that 27% of FE students at Level 3 at SGS College are from POLAR3 Q1 postcodes (2017-18), so our ambition must be to ensure that our HE figure remains at least representative of the College FE figure, and that these students are retained and succeed at their qualification.

Our Future Quest Co-ordinator works directly with our Level 3 students from POLAR3 Q1 to encourage participation in higher level study and provide support for those who wish to discuss their educational choices and make UCAS applications. HE courses at SGS College are promoted to these students.

Disabled Students

For students declaring a disability or learning need, and those claiming DSA support, we “...forecast an increase in mental health issues amongst our student cohort; this will necessitate further investment to sustain and improve the services we can offer to encourage the retention of and support for this student group”. (2018-19 Access Agreement). Our ambition is to sustain our current position of no gap between success rates of students declaring a disability or learning need and those not doing so. We intend to improve the initial advice and guidance that students can access ensuring that a clear and evolving support plan can be in place for each individual.

Extra support is automatically made available to all our Level 3 students with a pre-identified disability who will attend our Level 3 Progression Day. We are committed to providing all students in receipt of DSA with an initial 1.1 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) meeting to ensure an appropriate support plan is in place. Further support is available for internally and externally progressing students with making a DSA application via our Learner Services. The College are also committed to subsidising the overall cost of the assessment, to reduce the financial burden on the student (as set out in our Bursary and Hardship Fund Policy and Procedure).

Evaluation of this ambition will be measured through monitoring take-up of these services and the DSA grant and canvassing students' views about their ongoing experience via student surveys (internal SGS College surveys – First Impressions and End of Year, national surveys – NSS), and through the various opportunities to

canvass applicants' and students' views in our collaborative, outreach and marketing activities.

Care Leavers

We offer a Care Leaver's Bursary (of £1000 per study year) awarded annually to students aged 18-21 (or beyond if being helped with education or training) who, immediately before turning 18, were under the care of a local authority or a health and social care trust and have evidence to support this status. In addition, young adult carers aged up to 25 with caring responsibilities and who can supply evidence of caring or looking after someone at home, may be entitled to an annual payment of £500 over the duration of a 2 or 3 year degree programme.

Though our current cohort of care leavers is very small our ambition is to improve the participation of these students. Publicising the above bursary will contribute to this aim and the development of student support for HE students within SGS College will help retain these students.

Conclusion

We have identified our goals through looking at quantitative evidence and qualitative evidence from surveying students as well as feedback from our Students as Partners Policy and the quality process. We have evaluated the information and will act in response to it to provide activities and support for Access, Student Success and Progression for all our students, including our identified under-represented groups. We will measure the success and impact of these activities on our ambitions and goals through quantitative and qualitative means, and evaluate how we can continue to improve on our targets and enhance our students' experiences of HE study at SGS College.

Access, student success and progression measures

To achieve our goals in 2019-20 for Access, Student success and Progression, SGS College will implement activities and support as outlined below. General Widening Participation activities for all students also includes those students from our identified under-represented groups.

The collaborative work undertaken by SGS College and as part of the Strategic Alliance will continue to enable us to support our students to progress to higher study, to participate in a range of activities and to access opportunities to support their progression into employment.

We hope to continue SGS College's current collaborations as part of the two regional HEFCE National Networks for Collaborative Outreach Projects (NCOP) focused on students from targeted wards in Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and Bristol – GAP and Future Quest. These collaborations will continue to help us reach a larger number of learners (particularly those in pre-16 education and from under-represented groups). The College continues to support funding for the collaborative GROWS project.

SGS College will continue to offer a range of assistance to students during the UCAS application process. Students will be able to access 1.1 support; schools can access group support and we also provide support for parents and carers.

Open events are an important part of the process to ensure students are fully informed and select the most appropriate course for them to continue their studies. A minimum of six events will be scheduled across the campuses during 2019-20. At all open events facilities are accessible and academic staff and student reps are available to speak about the courses.

All prospective students who have enquired about or applied to the College are invited to student events such as our end-of-year art shows, theatre performances and sporting fixtures, where the insight into the professional activities of our students may be inspiring and aspirational.

Our Bridging Strategy (for first implementation 2018-19) which although aimed at our wider student demographic (by supporting all students transitioning from Level 3-4; 4-5; 5-6), has been devised (where appropriate) with some of our under-represented groups in mind (e.g. Mature students). For the year 2019-20 we intend this strategy to be fully embedded within HE teaching and courses, supporting retention and progression for all students including those from our identified under-represented groups.

For the under-represented groups we identified in Sections 1 and 2 the following activities and support will be particularly relevant.

Access activities and support for 2019-20:

From 2018-19 SGS Level 3 students will attend a mandatory annual HE Progression Day. The purpose of this day is to encourage students to generally understand the benefits of Higher Education and to promote our degree provision. Participants will have experience of a degree-level classroom activity and will gain an in-depth insight into our HE courses. We are committed to the progression of our Level 3 students onto our degrees and offer a £1000 cash Bursary to help with funding a progressing student's first year of study. We also offer a Partnership Progression Bursary of £500 (as a one-off payment) to students who have completed a full-time level 3 course at any local school involved in the SGS Inspiring Futures Mentoring Scheme.

The reasons for lower participation in higher education by mature students are complex, but we have recognised that finance and confidence are two of the major barriers faced by this demographic. In recognition of the financial barriers, we have realigned our Bursary and Hardship Fund Policy and Procedure (2018-20) to encourage participation from this group of students. We will offer a £500 cash Bursary to students who are aged 24+ at the point of enrolment and re-entering education. Some mature students re-accessing education via our part-time FE courses will be eligible for an Alumni Bursary of £500 if they have completed a part-time course at the College, to put towards the cost of an SGS Level 4 course. We will be trialling activities within different subject areas to encourage the participation of students into higher education study. We have recently established an annual Part-time Degree Event at our Bristol School of Art which is specifically targeted at mature students who are already studying one of our many FE part-time courses. This event is also published to the wider public via a targeted social media campaign. We will be evaluating the effects of these activities, in order to build on events such as this next year, for 2019-20.

Although our Bridging Strategy is aimed at our wider student demographic, specific workshops and activities including extra Study Skills sessions and 'Refresher' workshops on using Microsoft applications, e-resources and databases have been created partly with the mature, returning student in mind. These are being devised, in collaboration with our Library Staff, HE Academic Support Specialist, Study Skills Co-ordinator and HE Quality and curriculum teams, following feedback and experience of working with these students who often lack confidence in and the experience of using such systems.

Our Bridging Strategy recognises the challenges faced by students transitioning from Level 3-4 and aims to support all students whether they are progressing internally, or externally. Introductory work is to be set for completion over the summer period and Bridging Days are to be established prior to the start of the courses during Induction Week to allow students to attend study skills workshops and activities which promote a HE ethos. This is especially important for internally progressing Level 3 students,

who are often moving into higher level study in the same department and sometimes with the same staff who have taught them previously. Bridging activities will promote the concept of HE and aim to begin delivering the confidence and establishment of the sound practices associated with the guided study related to Level 4. A bank of study and academic skills resources is currently being developed as part of this Strategy which will be freely available via our Library Resources website from summer 2018 to help students prepare for Level 4 study.

Student success activities and support for 2019-20:

Student success is promoted through activities focused on course quality and retention. Courses monitor academic achievement regularly at module and course level through termly Programme Reviews. These feed into the course Action Plan and the annual Course Enhancement Review. There is student representation at every stage of this quality process.

Support to retain students will be through activities to build an inclusive and energetic student body. It is our intention to develop a process of peer mentoring within departments or courses to establish a culture of mutual support and cooperation across year-groups, within communities of practice. The value of this to our students has already been recognised in responses to our questionnaire, run to support the development of this Action and Participation Plan. In reply to the question “Do you think a Peer Mentoring scheme would be beneficial for students?” we received positive responses such as *“Yes, a lot of students go through similar issues educationally and personally”*, *“The help we had from the year above was really resourceful”* and *“Yes as we can gain knowledge and skills from a wider source of people”*.

Our already established HE Ambassadors scheme sees the positive representation of our student cohort and courses at a variety of internal and external events, which promotes engagement within the community of the College. We are currently in the process of extending this scheme by creating some internal part-time roles to support our students’ employability skills. Our ambition is to create a community of students supporting students.

Our Bridging Strategy recognises the challenges faced by students transitioning from Level 4-5 and 5-6. It aims to support all students whether they are progressing internally or externally, by providing support for the deeper understanding of the academic research skills required, and the organisation required to sustain this study. Students report that such study skills support is invaluable to them. It is embedded within the course, through provision in the libraries (LRC) and through individually targeted work with the HE Academic Support Specialist. The HE Academic Support Specialist works with those students in receipt of DSA and those with a declared disability in the process of applying for DSA. Other support is available through Learning Mentors at each campus. SGS College has a Total Support Guarantee for all students.

Because all our HE courses have routes for part-time study students will have the potential for opting for this given their particular circumstances. This may support retention, and therefore success, for all students but mature students in particular.

Progression activities and support for 2019-20:

Progression to further study or employment is promoted in all our HE courses with modules giving opportunities for work experience, developing professional work skills and self-promotion and marketing (creative courses such as FdA Fashion & Textiles and FdA Graphic Design). Course activities are, of course, addressed to all students, however there is particular support available from the SGS College work placement team and the HE careers advisor which could be tailored for students with disabilities, BAME students, male students and mature students.

The intentions expressed in the Access Agreement for 2018-19 still stand: “We will continue with our focus on the progression and success of students after their studies with us are complete. New projects will be established, including careers events, peer mentoring schemes, access to the college online job shop and improved placement processes. These initiatives will support various milestones within this agreement” (2018-19 Access Agreement). The SGS College Careers service network of 19 schools will be focusing on progression into HE and from HE into employment by: promoting Higher Education at 1:1 interviews and school based events; providing pre-University taster visits, orientation and guidance and subject choice support; facilitating CV writing, interview practice and using HE-related careers software; prioritising interviews, aspiration and guidance (pupil premium year 9 and 10 students); disseminating information regarding: Higher Apprenticeships and enabling access to Employer-led ‘routes into employment’ sessions.

The SGS College Inspiring Futures scheme enables students to act as Mentors working with school students in the outreach schools to model an aspirational approach including towards higher education study. The SGS College HE Ambassadors promote the College at internal and external events. Both these roles would be opportunities for students from our under-represented groups to gain valuable experience in preparation for progression so applications for the posts will be encouraged from such students.

Our annual Employability Conference in November 2019 will programme a variety of speakers from different disciplines and backgrounds and will be designed, in part, taking into account the particular needs and experiences of mature students. Students will be able to access advice and guidance from specialists to further their progression potential for further study or employment. Further study may be at SGS College (Level 6 BSc and BA courses) or at other institutions (Level 6 courses or Masters level qualifications). Students will also be able to access advice and guidance for preparing their CV and interview skills with the careers service.

Evaluation of these progression focused activities and support will be quantitatively evidenced through the annual DLHE survey. Qualitative evidence will be collected via the internal student survey (End of Course Survey) for all HE students and NSS for completing students. At course level progression information will be collected directly from students to inform their course Action Plans and CER for quality improvement.

Investment

Financial Support for Students 2018-19

SGS College acknowledges and responds to research that indicates that bursary incentives do not directly impact upon a student's decision to enter Higher Education nor do they influence a student's choice of institution. However, the College has found that bursaries are a very welcome, and often much needed, support for specific student groups and thus positively impacts upon their retention. In addition to the lower-than-market average fees offered by the College, we will seek to continue to support Higher Education applicants and students with various targeted bursary packages ranging from £500 to £1000. SGS College offers;

- A Progression Bursary for all continuing SGS Level 3 learners, who predominantly come from non-traditional entry routes including Access and BTEC;
- The Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) Bursary;
- Carers Bursary;
- Partner Schools Bursary;
- A Mature Student bursary;
- Care Leavers bursary;
- Sport Bursary; and
- SGS Alumni Bursary.

The College will continue to provide bursaries for eligible students who do not meet Office for Fair Access criteria. The College's Hardship Fund is supported by a policy to ensure transparency and clarity for eligible students who apply. To date this fund has supported many students who may have otherwise left Higher Education.

SGS College recognises that in order to improve key targets of underrepresented groups there is a general need to invest widely in activities that support student success. Therefore, the College is proposing to allocate a large proportion of the fee on such activities with a view to supporting the considerable numbers of disadvantaged students to fulfil their aspirations. The College proposes to spend approximately 29% of its additional fee income, realised through this APP, in accountable expenditure as follows:

- Access outreach activity – 21%
- Financial support – 44%
- Student retention and success activity – 21%
- Progression – 14%

The College is committed to reallocating any underspend of the Access and Participation plan to activities linked to the targets and milestones in the following year.

Provision of information to students

Financial Support: communication to students

All students are informed and signposted to our Hardship and Bursary Policy at the point of application, enrolment, via social media campaigns and via the Student Handbook.

Existing Level 3 students studying at SGS College will be made aware of the Level 3 Progression Bursary during the Progression week. Students are also made aware of the SGS Progression Bursary via posters distributed throughout campuses.

Students who identify a disability on their UCAS application form, will at this point be advised that they might be eligible for a Disabled Student Allowance and advised of the process.

SGS College is introducing a Mature Student Bursary for the next academic year, aimed primarily at those students returning to education after a length of time. Students are informed of this Bursary at the first point of contact when applying for their course of choice.

SGS College is introducing a Care Leavers Bursary in the next academic year. This Bursary will be awarded annually for the duration of the course, subject to continuous study. This Bursary is highlighted in all joining instructions, which are distributed in July prior to the commencement of courses.

The Level 3 Bursary is paid each term over the first full time academic year of study on a pro-rotta basis. Payment of this Bursary is subject to a student's attendance being at 90% or above. Students are made aware that if their attendance falls below this, that their payments could be withheld (subject to personal circumstances). This Bursary has seen a positive result in our retention rates during the first academic year of study and is well received by students. The participation of these students will be recorded annually and next year we will be able to fully track their lifecycle.

We will be able to evaluate the impact of bursaries at the end of each academic year, through the introduction of a HE Bursary Survey and Student Representative Feedback.

Fees: communication to students

Students are informed about the tuition fee element of their course at the point of advertisement. This could be via our HE Prospectus or Course Leaflets, SGS website, or the UCAS website. Students are also informed of any additional costs prior to accepting their places on their chosen degree.

It is not SGS College's intention to increase tuition fees mid-course. The student will pay the same annual amount for the duration of their course, subject to their continuous study.

Our marketing materials and published information will all contain the aggregate amount of fees that the provider will charge for the completion of that course (for both full-time and part-time routes).

For those HE students who are paying their own fees, they will be informed of the instalments procedure and signposted to the SGS Fees and Charges Policy for guidance. Payment options will be included on our new website. A link to the Fee and Charges Policy, will be provided in our joining instructions and Terms and Conditions.

Access and Participation Plan: communication to students

We will include a link on our College website clearly signposting current and prospective students to our published APP. We have already begun developing 'student-friendly' versions of both the APP and the SPP which will be published on our website, via social media campaigns, as posters (to be displayed around campuses) and discussed (along with relevant milestones and targets) as an agenda point in various forums according to the strategy and mechanisms set out in our Students as Partners Strategy.

* 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.

2019/20 fees will not increase with inflation

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Higher fee rate for new entrants only	£8,250
Foundation degree	Higher fee rate for new entrants only	£7,500
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£6,000
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£4,125
Foundation degree		£3,750
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£3,000
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	Mature	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Maintain or increase recruitment of proportion of mature students, study mode PT or FT.	No	2016-17	40%	44%	45%	47%	48%	48%	
T16a_02	Access	Gender	Other statistic - Gender (please give details in the next column)	Increase recruitment of male students into Higher Education, through additional widening participation activities and enhanced bursary scheme.	No	2017-18	40%	43%	44%	45%	45%	45%	
T16a_03	Access	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Maintain above 10% BAME participation on Higher Education programmes.	No	2014-15	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	
T16a_04	Access	Attainment raising	Other statistic - Applications (please give details in the next column)	Facilitate progression from level 3 to undergraduate levelled programmes. Priority target groups could include low participation neighbourhoods and from non-traditional entry routes.	Yes	2016-17	23.98%	24.5%	25%	26%	27%	28%	This data is reflective of the progression of all Level 3 students to HE study at any HE institution. This is a College-wide target. Alongside this, we have a refined target based on our ongoing ambition to increase internal progression of the under-represented POLAR3 Q1 group. We would like to increase these numbers from 29% (baseline 2017-18) to 30% (18-19); 31%(19-20); 32% (20-21); 33% (22-23).
T16a_05	Student success	Disabled	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Continue to support students with disabilities to complete their studies and achieve success and qualification aims equal to those students without learning difficulties and disabilities, through additional HE Specialist Support.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N/A	Maintaining a variance of no more than 3% retention and success between student groups.
T16a_06	Multiple	Multiple	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Introduction of a annual careers employability initiative, linking students to progression routes through mentoring scemes and long term personal career development.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N/A	After each event there will be an evaluation to determine success in improving student employability skills. Student participation will be evaluated to measure impact on retention and student success will be evaluated through interrogation of the DLHE survey.
T16a_07	Student success	Disabled	HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	All students in receipt of DSA will have an initial one to one IAG meeting to ensure appropriate support plan in in place.	No	2016-17	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

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	State school	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Continue to provide 4 large employment and progression careers events attracting from a wide range of state schools with attendance from many collaborative partners and supported by existing Higher Education students. Maintain the capacity of reaching 4000+ students years 9, 10, 11 and 12.	No	2016-17	4000	4000	4000	4000	4000		
T16b_02	Student success	Multiple	Mission targets	Launch the SGS Inspiring Futures Scheme to support existing Higher Education Students participating in peer mentoring. To improve retention and student success through confidence building, developing employability skills and students feeling of belonging to the college. This will also improve the aspirations of young potential entrants into Higher Education.	No	2016-17	0	6	8	10	10		
T16b_03	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Currently engaged with 74 schools across the region, regular talks provided at 6 of the locations on Higher Education and Higher Apprenticeships. Aspirations to increase this service and awareness of progression opportunities.	No	2016-17	6	8	9	10	10		
T16b_04	Progression	Attainment raising	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Further development of collaborative links with the strategic Alliance partners.	Yes	Other (please give details in Description column)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		Continuing to work with the University to increase progression opportunities through development of accessible and affordable programmes in cold spots, outreach initiatives and delivering effective IAG.