



## 2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

### Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by South Essex College of Further and Higher Education against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

#### 1. Ambition and strategy

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

In our 2019-20 Access and Participation plan, our ambition was to continuously improve our engagement with all students, particularly those that are underrepresented and face multiple barriers to accessing and succeeding in Higher Education ("HE") and employment. Our commitment was to adopt a three-stage process in order to achieve our Higher Education Strategy 2017-20.

##### Stage one

- To adopt a data-led approach to identifying and using intersections across the entirety of the student life-cycle by 2018-19.
- Develop a feedback loop that informs sustainable and timely continuous improvement of widening participation strategies and activities by 2018-19.
- Measure the impact of bursaries by capturing data on the personal characteristics and circumstances of students accessing bursaries and tracking their performance and progress to the second year of their studies and relative to students not in receipt of bursaries, but with similar personal characteristics and/or circumstances.

##### Stage 2

To inform strategies, based on the gaps identified by Stage 1 above, to narrow or close statistically relevant gaps across intersections and the student life cycle from 2018-19. Also, to apply the following approach across the student life cycle:

- Effective and timely information to applicants, using a range of sources to reach all prospective students in line with CMA and OfS conditions of regulation.
- Use widening participation to inform aspects of the HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy to support sustained participation and retention.

### Stage 3

Live tracking HE students by personal characteristic and intersections across the student life cycle with a view to early targeted intervention from 2019-20.

To achieve our ambition as described above the underrepresented target groups were:

- Students from households that have low income;
- Students with disclosed disabilities;
- Specific Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups;
- Young white males from LPN or from households with low income;
- Low Participation Neighbourhoods (focusing on POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2);
- Mature students; and
- Looked-after children, care leavers and estranged students.

The College investment commitment was to adopt a flexible, yet progressive approach to investing the HE fee income it receives. This included the following:

- Identifying gaps in the student academic experience across the student life cycle and using this data to inform some of the allocation of resources and effort accordingly.
- Introducing a data-led approach to allocating funds, while remaining sufficiently flexible to respond to changes in funding criteria and priorities set by HE regulators funding streams as well as student expectations.
- Remaining committed to spending 25% of additional undergraduate fee income on access, success, progression and financial support.

In order to meet the strategy outlined above we intended to recruit a HE widening participation officer and a HE data analyst.

### Access

Our overall strategy was to partner with local outreach organisations to continue to build on our activities and extend our outreach and marketing activity into the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to ensure increased engagement with potential BAME applicants. For example, we are an active partner of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (now UniConnect).

An example of the activities to be carried out were: outreach work with schools, young people, disabled students, communities and adults; support for progression to HE into employment and raising attainment; and taking our good practice around study skills and resources out to our Further Education cohorts including our Access to Higher Education Diploma cohort.

### Success

Our overall strategy was to raise aspirations for achievement, promote awareness of the world of work and the skills needed in employment and improve retention. Particular focus for these support activities would be students from underrepresented groups who will be identified using POLAR4 data on entry.

Typical activities would include: Peer Mentoring; and The Well-Being Centre/Service.

Disability Support – We committed to continuing to work hard to ensure that there was a seamless conversion from DSA to internal support. Support staff and students are supported to implement new approaches to disability support with sustainable outcomes which provide a lasting legacy. Typical activities included: support to the Skills Unit for specialist disability support; investment and training on learning technologies; and mentoring and student listener support.

### Progression

Our strategy was to further enhance opportunities for students to prepare for employment or subsequent study. Particular focus for these support activities would be students from underrepresented groups. Typical activities were to include: support for students undertaking work placement through funding for travel; development of an Alumni database; employability lectures wherein visiting speakers provide insight into industry practice and how to apply for employment; employability events in which students have an opportunity to engage with careers advice, practical job application, providers of higher awards and potential employers; and support for students undertaking end of year shows through funding of venues, increasing exposure to industry related sectors and prospective employers.

## 2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by South Essex College of Further and Higher Education of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of South Essex College of Further and Higher Education's 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

### Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	Increase percentage of eligible South Essex FE level 3 completers who progress to our Higher Education courses	2011-12	16%	24%	25%	Percentage	2019-20	47	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Other/Multiple stages)	Maintain the proportion of HE students who are disabled at 15% or greater	2011-12	10%	15%	16%	Percentage	2019-20	31	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Student success)	Improve Higher level grades (1st or 2:1)	2011-12	51%	56%	57%	Percentage	2019-20	70	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Student success)	Improve Year One undergraduate success rates	2017-18	84%	88%	88%	Percentage	2018-19	87	Limited progress
T16a_05 (Progression)	Increase percentage progression to graduate jobs within 6 months of graduation	2011-12	54%	59%	60%	Percentage	2016-17	39	Limited progress
T16a_06 (Progression)	Increase the employment or further study indicator to 93%	2014-15	92.5%	94.1%	94.2%	Percentage	2019-20	30	Limited progress
T16a_07 (Access)	Increase the number of students progressing internally to the colleges undergraduate programmes in absolute terms as student recruitment increases	2017-18	130	135	140	Headcount	2019-20	105	Limited progress
T16a_08 (Success)	The baseline is the non continuation benchmark for the college published in the HEFCE TEF 3 data set October 2017	2017-18	12.3%	12%	11.5%	Percentage	2018-19	13	Limited progress

T16a_09 (Success)	Reduce the percentage of WP students withdrawing from the course who have accessed financial support in the form bursaries and hard ship fund	2017-18	7%	6%	5.5%	Percentage	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16a_10 (Access)	Raising the attainment level in local primary schools ages 6-7 with respect to baseline reading assessment	2018-19	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Limited progress

**Other milestones and targets**

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	Sustain and develop our outreach activity by engaging with a growing number of students from local schools and Colleges in areas of low participation	2012-13	4000	5400	5600	Headcount	2019-20	1925	Limited progress
T16b_02 (Other/Multiple stages)	Sustain and seek to reduce the percentage of students withdrawing that have accessed financial support in the form of bursaries, scholarship or hardship funding at <10%.	2015-16	7%	6%	6%	Percentage	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16b_03 (Access)	Sustain and develop our outreach activity by engaging with a growing number of students from local schools and Colleges in areas of low participation	2012-13	4000	5400	5600	Headcount	2019-20	1925	Limited progress

### 3. Investment commitments

#### 3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£64,727.50	£273,699.35	323%
Financial Support	£62,138.40	£83,353.00	34%

### 4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected South Essex College of Further and Higher Education has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_04	This target has been superseded by our APP 2020-25 and recently submitted 2021-26 APP focusing on closing the GAP for our identified target groups. Internal data for 2020-21 for continuation is currently standing at 10.3%.
T16a_05	This target has been superseded by our recently submitted APP for 2021-26 for closing the gap for targeted groups. We have committed to implementing our HE Employability strategy 2021-25. Purchase and implment the HEAR report element of Gradintelligence by the end of 2020/21. Increase the careers roles from 1.4 to 2. Hold a steering group seeking engagment and input from employers and an increased focus on employability related projects.
T16a_06	This target has been superseded by our recently submitted APP for 2021-26 for closing the gap for targeted groups.
T16a_07	This target has been superseded by our APP 2020-25. The Widening Participation Officer will review internal policies and procedures in light of the limited progress.
T16a_08	This target has been superseded by our APP 2020-25 and recently submitted 2021-26 APP focusing on closing the GAP for our identified target groups. Internal data for 2020-21 for continuation is currently standing at 10.3%.

T16a_10	<p>The programme is continuing in 2020-21 with face-to-face sessions. Schools did close again during this academic year and we continued to support schools and students virtually. Face-to-face session will resume after the Easter holidays and the Reading Mentors will continue to build a close relationship with schools who take part and adapt the programme to their needs, such as providing additional hours on request to support teaching staff with getting children back on track with their learning. However, this target and associated commitments in this plan have been superseded by our 2020-25 Access and Participation Plan (APP) and our submitted 2021-26 APP.</p>
T16b_01	<p>Whilst we will continue our work to develop our outreach with schools, sixth forms and colleges, this target and associated commitments in this plan have been superseded by our 2020-25 Access and Participation Plan (APP) and our submitted 2021-26 APP.</p>
T16b_03	<p>Whilst we will continue our work to develop our outreach with schools, sixth forms and colleges, this target and associated commitments in this plan have been superseded by our 2020-25 Access and Participation Plan (APP) and our submitted 2021-26 APP.</p>



## 5. Confirmation

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
South Essex College of Further and Higher Education has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Angela O'Donoghue
Position	Principal and Chief Executive

## Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

<b>Target reference number: T16a_04</b>
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Partially met the commitments. Our internal data systems have been upgraded and we have moved to a more data-led approach and the use of a much wider data set, including intersection of student characteristics. We are measuring the impact of hardship funding in relation to the student lifecycle. We have not been able to successfully recruit a Data Analyst and this work is currently being carried out within the existing team. Students are actively engaged as partners in their learning experience and student representation at Boards and Committees have been increased. The peer mentoring scheme has been introduced.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
As of 1st August 2018, we moved from HE being embedded within departments offering FE and HE to the Faculty of Higher Education being created, together with HE specific systems, policies, procedures and processes. The pandemic has impacted on student Year 1 success. We have a dedicated member of staff supporting students with study skills. An attendance policy to support students has been introduced whereby if attendance falls below 85%, support meetings are arranged to discuss any support needs of students.

<b>Target reference number: T16a_05</b>
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Partially met the commitments. An alumni (Unit E Launch Pad) platform had been purchased in 2019 that feeds into our main Unit E student database. However, due to the pandemic, staff training and the technical implementation was hindered which prevented the 2019-20 graduates in completing the planned HE University Centre South Essex Exit Survey 2020. An internal destination and graduate level replacement employment survey was conducted although this had a poor response rate of 48%.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have purchased and implemented a new online careers platform, Career Studio - Abintegro to support current and alumni students. Employability activities for APP targeted students have been embedded into the courses. A member of staff from within the faculty of HE works on employability activities with staff and students.

<b>Target reference number: T16a_06</b>
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Partially met the commitments. An alumni (Unit E Launch Pad) platform had been purchased in 2019 that feeds into our main Unit E student database. However, due to the pandemic, staff

training and the technical implementation was hindered which prevented the 2019-20 graduates in completing the planned HE University Centre South Essex Exit Survey 2020. An internal destination and graduate level replacement employment survey was conducted although this had a poor response rate of 48%.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

We have purchased and implemented a new online careers platform, Career Studio - Abintegro to support current and alumni students. Employability activities for APP targeted students have been embedded into the courses.

#### Target reference number: T16a\_07

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

47% of our total undergraduate student intake for 2019-20 was from internal progressing students. We have partially met the commitments. A Widening Participation Officer has been recruited to explore and report on widening participation activities and related gaps.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

A range of activities were carried out in 2018-19 e.g. experience days for current FE students, Level 3 transition programme, Question and Answer sessions and Student support assisting disabled students through the transition process.

#### Target reference number: T16a\_08

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Partially met the commitments. Our internal data systems have been upgraded and we have moved to a more data-led approach and the use of a much wider data set, including intersections of student characteristics. We are measuring the impact of hardship funding in relation to the student lifecycle. We have not been able to successfully recruit a Data Analyst and this work is currently being carried out within the existing team. Students are actively engaged as partners in their learning experience and student representation at Boards and Committees have been increased. The peer mentoring scheme has been introduced.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

As of 1st August 2018, we moved from HE being embedded within departments offering FE and HE to the Faculty of Higher Education being created, together with HE specific systems, policies, procedures and processes. The pandemic has impacted on student Year 1 success. We have a dedicated member of staff supporting students with study skills. An attendance policy to support students and whereby if attendance falls below 85% support meetings are arranged to discuss any support needs of students.

#### Target reference number: T16a\_10

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>The Reading Mentor programme made good progress in 2019-20 with HE students working with 150 primary school aged students to support their reading attainment. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and school closures, placement learning for students stopped. However, the students and Programme Leader for Early Years were still able to support the schools and students with reading resources such as books, so the Primary school students could continue reading at home. 4 schools received packs of 5-10 books for the children who were part of the scheme; a pack of story books was also presented to the each class teacher and reading mentor. The schools and students involved in the programme gave very positive feedback, including that it supported the students' reading attainment who took part. However, we have been unable to gain sufficient written evidence and evaluation from the schools who took part due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic and associated school closures and additional pressures on school staff. The programme is continuing in 2020-21 academic year and some of same schools have signed up which shows the positive impact of the project. One of the reading mentors mentioned the scheme to her daughter's school teacher and they are now taking part, requesting a second reading mentor when possible.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>Due to school closures as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, we were able to support primary schools with resources such as books to support students continuing to read at home. A workshop was delivered to all early years students by an experienced early years teacher on how stories and books are used in school to support children's learning. This has given the students more confidence in reading with children and will support them when they are welcomed back into schools after the Easter Holidays.</p>

<b>Target reference number: T16b_01</b>
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>New projects were developed to achieve our access targets and whilst we aimed to develop our outreach activities with schools, these were impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic with school, sixth form and college closures. Whilst we did offer virtual alternatives to schools for talks, assemblies, workshops and taster events we found that the uptake for this was low and so this has affected our anticipated engagement figures. Schools, sixth forms and colleges would respond that they did not have the facilities to stream these events when schools were back but external visitors were not permitted, or dates would be put in the calendar and then due to further restrictions or changed mock exam dates, they were cancelled. We have engaged collaboratively with the UniConnect Programme and AccessHE where possible to engage more learners but they also struggled with learner engagement during the Coronavirus Pandemic.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>We developed alternative virtual activities for example the HE Virtual tour, online information event aimed at Adults to reach the milestones but due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, engagement figures were lower than anticipated.</p>

<b>Target reference number: T16b_03</b>
<b>How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?</b>
New projects were developed to achieve our access targets and whilst we aimed to develop our outreach activities with schools, these were impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic with school, sixth form and college closures. Whilst we did offer virtual alternatives to schools for talks, assemblies, workshops and taster events we found that the uptake for this was low and so this has affected our anticipated engagement figures. Schools, sixth forms and colleges would respond that they did not have the facilities to stream these events when schools were back but external visitors were not permitted, or dates would be put in the calendar and then due to further restrictions or changed mock exam dates, they were cancelled. We have engaged collaboratively with the UniConnect Programme and AccessHE where possible to engage more learners but they also struggled with learner engagement during the Coronavirus Pandemic.
<b>Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?</b>
We developed alternative virtual activities for example the HE Virtual tour, online information event aimed at Adults to reach the milestones but due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, engagement figures were lower than anticipated.

## Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	Internal data used for actual performance. 47% is the percentage of internal progression students against the total intake for year 1 students for 2019-20
T16a_02	OfS dashboard used for actual performance - Target has been superseded by a targeted approach on our APP 2020-25 for a specific underrepresented group.
T16a_03	OfS dashboard used for actual performance - Target has been superseded by our APP 2020-25 and recently submitted APP 2021-26
T16a_04	OfS dashboard used for actual performance as we no longer submit a HESA return and submit an ILR return.
T16a_05	OfS dashboard used for actual performance
T16a_06	Internal data used for actual performance
T16a_07	Internal data used for actual performance
T16a_08	Reverse of target T16a_04. Target has been superseded by our 2020-25 APP and recently submitted APP for 2021-26
T16a_09	internal data used for actual performance - target has been superseded by our APP 2020-25 and recently submitted 2021-26 APP focusing on closing the GAP for our identified target groups.
T16a_10	Internal data used for actual performance. The primary school have informed us no formal reading assessment took place due to the pandemic as they focused on the pupils wellbeing
T16b_01	internal data used for actual performance
T16b_02	Internal data used for actual performance - this target has been superseded by our APP 2020-25
T16b_03	internal data used for actual performance