

The Bedford College Group Access & Participation Plan for 2019/20

Introduction

The Bedford College Group is a large general Further Education (FE) college group located in Bedfordshire and North Northamptonshire with four main campuses: Bedford College, Shuttleworth College, Tresham College and The Bedford Sixth Form. The College's Higher Education (HE) provision is located within the main Bedford Campus, Kettering Campus, Corby Campus and its land based provision at Shuttleworth Campus, approximately 8 miles from the main campus.

The College offers a broad curriculum from Entry Level to Level 6 across a range of vocational and academic disciplines including classroom based learning, traineeships, apprenticeships, workplace learning, adult and community learning and Higher Education. We offer full or part time Higher Education courses including Higher National Certificates or Diplomas, Foundation Degrees or top-up Degree programmes. These are delivered through partnership arrangements with Pearson, the University of Bedfordshire and the University of Northampton.

Assessment of Current Performance

Access

Bedford College has high rates of participation from non-traditional groups.

Bedford College has higher male participation rates than nationally. The national gap between male and female participation is 14% whereas at Bedford College it is 3%, see Table 1. This partly reflects the diverse Higher Education curriculum offer at Bedford College with large numbers of enrolments in Engineering, Construction and the Arts. At Tresham College male students are under-represented with a 22% participation gap.

Table 1: Enrolments by gender, Bedford College & Tresham College 2016/17

Gender	Bedford College	Tresham College	National
Female	51.68%	61.11%	57%
Male	48.32%	38.88%	43%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: National data HESA, Higher Education Student Statistics, UK, 2016/17

The Bedford Campus has a more ethnically diverse Higher Education student population than Bedfordshire Borough (see Table 2). The proportion of Black and Mixed race students in particular is higher than the local population. The Higher Education student population at Tresham campus is less diverse but this reflects the local ethnic profile.

Table 2: Enrolments by ethnicity, Bedford & Tresham 2016/17

Ethnicity	Bedford College	Bedford Borough Ethnic Profile 2011	Tresham College	Corby Ethnic Profile 2011	Kettering Ethnic Profile 2011
Asian	7.60%	7.7%	2.08%	1.4%	3.2%
Black	11.34%	3.4%	4.86%	1.7%	1.1%
Mixed	3.87%	2.2%	0.69%	1.4%	1.4%
White British	67.27%	79.8%	90.2%	85.0%	89.3%
White Other	8.25%	5.9%	2.08%	10.5%	4.6%
Other/Unknown	1.68%	1%	0%	0.1%	0.4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Ethnic profile information: Source: 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2012

Table 3: Enrolments by declared disability, Bedford & Tresham 2016/17

Disability	Bedford College	Tresham College	National
N	88.02%	83.33%	88%
Y	11.98%	16.66%	12%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: National data HESA, Higher Education Student Statistics, UK, 2016/17

12% of our HE students at Bedford College have a declared disability; this is in line with enrolments nationally. In 2016-17 the proportion of students with a declared disability at Tresham College was above the national average at 17%.

Table 4: Enrolments by age, Bedford & Tresham 2016/17

Age	Bedford College	Tresham College	Nationally
18-24	59.41%	59.02%	68%
24+	40.59%	40.98%	32%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: National data HESA, Higher Education Student Statistics, UK, 2016/17

Bedford College and Tresham College have much higher levels of adult participation than nationally with 41% of enrolments of students over 18 at both Bedford College and Tresham College compared with 32% nationally. This is partly due to part time study modes which are available in sixteen curriculum areas. The VLE has also been developed to provide students with access to all course materials and this has been particularly welcomed by mature part time students, who frequently experience barriers to attendance. Pre-arrival Study Skills packages and access to learning resource specialists during their course of study supports individual development and confidence. The majority of mature students on part time courses are in related employment with many financially supported by their employer. Collaboration with employers and students ensures that study periods and curriculum content are accessible and relevant to support successful outcomes for all.

Those living in areas of low Higher Education participation, household income or socioeconomic status

In 2018/19, 20.36% of our HE students across The Bedford College Group will come from postcodes identified as deprived on the ILR.

The College's Campuses at Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough are located in areas where there is lower participation in Higher Education than the national rate.

Table 5: % of local residents with Level 4 qualifications or above

Area (Local Authority)	% of residents with Level 4 qualifications or above	England %
Corby	14.9%	27.4%
Kettering	23.3%	27.4%
Wellingborough	20.4%	27.4%
East Northamptonshire	24.2%	27.4%
Bedford	28.1%	27.4%
Central Bedfordshire	27.2%	27.4%

Source: Office for National Statistics (last updated 30 January 2013)

In addition, Corby and Wellingborough have 3 wards in the POLAR 4 Quartile 1 indicating the lowest participation rates in Higher Education, whilst Bedford has no wards in Quartile 1.

The Bedford College Group students progressing into HE

In 2016/17 the proportion of The Bedford College Group FE students progressing onto HE courses is at the national average at Bedford College but well below the national average at Tresham College.

Table 6: Proportion of Bedford College students progressing onto HE

Destination	2016/17	2013/14 County	2013/14 National
Bedford	36.9%	Bedfordshire 39%	37%
Tresham	22%	Northamptonshire 35%	37%

*Source: Bedford College Group Destination Report
Source: Widening participating in HE, England, DFE*

Across The Bedford College Group progression onto our own HE courses is approximately 10%. Our Strategic Plan includes targets to increase the percentage of students progressing from our Level 3 programmes to the internal Higher Education provision.

The College has identified that students in the Carers and Care Leavers groups are less likely to apply for Higher Education or are at risk from non-completion. The Student Services Department is working with Carers and Care Groups to support the identification of young and adult carers and to encourage them into Higher Education. Personal Tutors are notified of these students so that they can be prioritised for 1:1s and contact can be made to ensure students are supported at a multi-agency level.

Areas for development identified

1. Increase the participation of male HE students at Tresham College
2. Increase the local HE offer (and therefore participation) at Tresham College
3. Increase the rate of internal progression onto the Higher Education courses at Tresham College

Success

Good progress has been made in reducing the achievement gap for Asian students at Bedford College. Achievement for this group has seen a 3 year improvement trend with the gap reducing from 17.4% in 2014/15 to a 3% positive gap in 2016/17. In 2016/17 the achievement gap for mixed race students at Bedford College widened, with a gap of 8%. This gap was predominantly the students aged over 24 in the Care and Childcare Department (with a 48.5% achievement gap for students over 24 compared to 18-23 year olds). This was due to both a fall in retention and also achievement. This is an area of improvement to focus on over the next year.

Table 7: Differences in ethnicity and achievement 2016/17 (Bedford College)

	2016/17	2016/17
Ethnicity	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
Asian	37	2.9%
Black	44	0.0%
Mixed	17	-8.0%
White British	285	-1.9%
White Other	32	17.9%
Other/Unknown	7	-1.3%

In 2016/17 there was an achievement gap for a small cohort of Black students at Tresham College. This is an area of development.

Table 8: Differences in ethnicity and achievement 2016/17 (Tresham College)

	2016/17	2016/17
Ethnicity	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
Asian	3	38.9%
Black	7	-46.8%
Mixed	1	38.9%
White British	130	2.0%
White Other	3	-27.8%
Other/Unknown	0	

There is not a significant achievement gap between female and male student achievement rates at Bedford and Tresham Colleges.

Table 9: Differences in gender and achievement 2016/17 (Bedford College)

	2016/17	2016/17
Gender	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
F	195	0.6%
M	227	-0.5%

Table 10: Differences in gender and achievement 2016/17 (Tresham College)

	2016/17	2016/17
Gender	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
F	88	-1.7%
M	56	2.7%

Whilst adult students perform better than 18-24 year olds at both Bedford and Tresham Colleges good progress has been made at Bedford College on reducing the achievement gap between the 18-24 year olds and 24+ students. Between 2015/16 and 2016/17 the achievement gap between 18-24 year olds and 24+ year olds has reduced from 7.7% in 2015/16 to 0.3% in 2016/17. At Bedford more mature male students are less successful than female students aged 24 or over with a 21.6% gap.

Table 11: Differences in age and achievement 2016/17 (Bedford College)

	2016/17	2016/17
	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
18-24	226	-0.1%
24+	81	0.2%

Table 12: Differences in age and achievement 2016/17 (Tresham College)

	2016/17	2016/17
	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
18-24	85	-2.2%
24+	59	3.1%

The achievement of students with a declared learning difficulty fell in 2016/17 at Bedford College leading to an achievement gap of 6.9%. This was mainly due to a fall in retention for these students. At Bedford there is no significant difference in the performance of 19-23 year old students and students aged 24 or over. A positive achievement gap of 7.5% exists at Tresham College. The College has a number of processes including additional tutorials, IT and Study Skills support to students with a declared disability, but who have not accessed DSA support.

Table 13: Differences in achievement for students with declared disabilities 2016/17 (Bedford College)

	2016/17	2016/17
Disability	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
Has learning difficulty/disability/health problem	35	-6.1%
No learning difficulty/disability/health problem	302	0.9%
No information provided by the learner	3	-6.1%

Table 14: Differences in achievement for students with declared disabilities 2016/17 (Tresham College)

	2016/17	2016/17
Disability	Cohort size	Achievement gap %
Has learning difficulty/disability/health problem	24	6.3%
No learning difficulty/disability/health problem	0	
No information provided by the learner	120	-1.3%

A key action for quality improvement is to raise retention to 90% across the Group and improve achievement rates at Tresham College.

We do not have access to the historical data at Tresham to allow us to undertake further analysis of the intersection of different student characteristics. This will be possible for future plans. At Bedford further analysis of achievement rates by intersecting characteristics has identified an additional gap in achievement for White British male students over the age of 24.

**Table 15
Achievement gaps- gender, age and ethnicity 2016/17 (Bedford College)**

Ethnicity	Female		Female		Male		Male	
	18-24 Leavers	18-24 achievement gap	24+ Leavers	24+ achievement gap	18-24 Leavers	18-24 achievement gap	24+ Leavers	24+ achievement gap
Asian	15	14.0%	1	27.3%	16	-4.0%	5	-12.7%
Black	13	-18.9%	13	19.6%	8	-10.2%	10	7.3%
Mixed	5	7.3%	3	-39.4%	6	10.6%	3	-39.4%
White British	94	-6.7%	35	7.3%	133	1.7%	23	-16.2%
White Other	9	16.2%	5	27.3%	10	27.3%	8	2.3%
Other/Unknown			2	27.3%	2	27.3%	3	-39.4%
Grand Total	136	-3.6%	59	10.4%	175	2.7%	52	-11.2%

Areas for development identified

1. Reduce the achievement gap at Bedford College for Mixed race students
2. Reduce the achievement gap at Tresham College for Black students
3. Reduce the achievement gap at Bedford College for White British male students over the age of 24
4. Improve in-year retention to maximise achievement and progress of students
5. Improve pass rates at Tresham College

Progression

Destination/progression data included within the Teaching Excellence Framework metrics indicate that the College is above benchmark on all destination/progression indicators and in the top 10% of HE providers for destinations of our part time HE students. There are no significant progression gaps in progression to employment or further study between different target groups. This data has already been combined and reflects the newly merged organisation.

There is, however, a progression gap of 8.5% for students from neighbourhoods with the lowest participation rates to higher education to highly skilled employment or further study.

Table 15: Teaching Excellence Framework Metrics (Year 3)

	Core metrics						Flag
	Denominator	Indicator (a) %	Benchmark (b) %	Difference (a)-(b)	Z-score		
Full-time 455 (48%)							
Employment or further study	443	95.9	94.3	1.6	1.6		
Highly skilled employment or further study	443	75.6	72.9	2.7	1.4		
Part-time 485 (52%)							
Employment or further study	384	99.5	97.2	2.3	3.3	++	
Highly skilled employment or further study	384	78.4	77.7	0.7	0.3		
Key							
++	The indicator is above benchmark at the 3 standard deviation and 3 percentage point level						
*	The core metric has an indicator value in the top 10% of absolute performance						

Source: Bedford College. Teaching Excellence framework Year 3 Metrics

Table 16: Teaching Excellence Framework Year 3 Metrics. Progression gaps split by target groups at Bedford College

Target group	Progression to employment or further study Gap compared to national benchmark		Progression to highly skilled employment or further study Gap compared to national benchmark	
	Part time	Full time	Part time	Full time
Young students	+2.4%	+2.5%	-2.2%	-2.3%
Mature students	+1.8%	+0.6%	+5.9%	+3%
Polar Q1+Q2	+2.8%	+1%	-10.2%	-8.5%
Polar Q3-Q5	+2.8%	+3.2%	-1.2%	+0.9%
White students	+2.5%	+2%	-0.6%	-2.1%
BME students	+0.6%	0	+2%	+8.3%
Disabled students	+2.8%	+0.4%	-3.4%	+4.4%
Not disabled students	+2.2%	+1.9%	+0.3%	+0.9%
Male students	+2.4%	+2.4%	-1.7%	+0.6%
Female students	+2%	+1.4%	+3.5%	-0.5%

Source: Bedford College. Teaching Excellence Year 3 Metrics

Our Higher Education courses are designed with employers and informed by student engagement to ensure they prepare students well for employment. Of 199 Bedford College students who graduated at Level 5 in 2015/16, 78.9% stated that their programme of study had prepared them well for employment. 87.2% stated that their programme of study had prepared them well for the next level of study in preparation for employment. Of those (178) who were seeking self-employment/run their own business 52.3% considered that their programme of study had prepared them well for this.

The January 2016 QAA HER team stated their findings on the theme of 'employability':

"The College has a strategic focus on employability which is highlighted in the College Strategy for Working with Employers. The College has developed strong links with local employers which have

contributed to embedding employability skills and opportunities in much of the College's Higher Education provision. Opportunities for students include work experience, work placements and live briefs and there are higher apprenticeship schemes available to College students with local employers. The College recently commissioned a research report which touched on how employability informs student decision making when it comes to choosing courses."

Areas for development identified

1. Improve onward progression to highly skilled employment/further study for full time learners from low participation neighbourhoods

Ambition and Strategy

Strategic Commitment to Access to Higher Education

The College's mission is to support the local and national economy through the promotion, development and delivery of excellent skills training and education, and, as such, promotes itself as a genuine alternative to university through its Higher Education programmes and seeks to promote social inclusion and personal advancement in the local communities. To achieve this mission the College needs to attract under-represented groups, particularly those who are mature students, carers, students with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people from non-traditional Higher Education backgrounds.

The College has a higher than usual proportion of students from non-traditional backgrounds and is committed through its mission and values to continue to build on Access to Higher Education programmes for these students including development of new courses and delivery modes which meet the needs of the broad range of students the College attracts.

The QAA HER team (Jan 2016) provided clear evidence of the College's commitment for fair access within B2 of the Quality Code:

"The College adheres to the principles of fair admissions and has appropriate systems in place to ensure an effective admission experience for students from application to offer. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and provide additional support if required. Students are clear about the admissions process both with the support received from staff and the information available to them throughout the process. Students did not present any complaints or issues with the admissions process or procedures, and there are no complaints recorded against admissions decisions."

The Bedford College Group's Strategic Plan 2021

This Agreement supports the College's Vision and Strategic Plan for Higher Education, period 2016-2021, which outlines our clear commitment to widening participation and increasing access to our Higher Education programmes and is aligned to the College Strategic Plan 2021. The Higher Education Strategic Plan builds on the findings of the Higher Education Research commissioned in 2015/16. In addition, the Strategic Plan responds to the Higher Education Review January 2016 outcomes, the Higher Education Student Annual Conference recommendations and recent Government White Paper - *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice*.

Our Strategic Aims

The Bedford College Group aims to be one of the best Higher Education providers within Further Education providers in the country, offering a wide range of courses at Level 4 and above to enable students to progress to higher level skills and knowledge in their chosen vocational and academic subject.

Our Strategic Objectives to 2021

The Corporation has identified and agreed four key objectives for the new plan:

1. Educational Leadership
2. Educational Sustainability
3. Financial Sustainability
4. High Quality provision

Key Strategic Plan Performance Measure

Increase Higher Education recruitment by 30%.

Key areas for development identified in self-assessment:

1. Increase the participation of male HE students at Tresham College
2. Increase the local HE offer (and therefore participation) at Tresham College
3. Increase the rate of internal progression onto the Higher Education courses at Tresham College
4. Reduce the achievement gap at Bedford College for Mixed race students
5. Reduce the achievement gap at Tresham College for Black students
6. Reduce the achievement gap at Bedford College for White British male mature students
7. Improve in-year retention to maximise achievement and progress of students
8. Improve pass rates at Tresham College
9. Improve onward progression to highly skilled employment/further study for full time learners from low participation neighbourhoods

Strategy to close the gaps

The Plan to close the gaps has the following key themes:

- Curriculum Design (improve and extend the HE curriculum offer, particularly at Tresham Colleges, to improve participation)
- Learner progression (improve internal progression within the organisation)
- Quality improvement (improve quality monitoring and intervention to improve outcomes at Tresham College)
- Study Skills (improve study skills support to improve student retention)
- Employer engagement (improve engagement with employers with the aim of improving student employability)

Cross College commitment to Equality and Diversity

The College is committed to the advancement and promotion of equality and diversity. We aim to provide learning and working environments which value individuals equally. As an organisation, we are aware that discrimination exists in many forms. We encourage all our staff and students to ensure that their behaviour is not discriminatory and does not make any person feel uncomfortable. The College will not tolerate harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination, and has procedures in place to deal with, and provide support for, individuals involved in such incidents.

The College's Strategic Plan 2021 highlights our commitment to promote social inclusion and personal advancement within the local communities we serve, and that we seek to achieve a high quality learning experience for every student.

The Bedford College Group has a Single Equality Scheme that sets out its equality priorities to 2018 and the manner in which it assesses its performance in this area. The four priorities are as follows:

Priority 1:

To develop an effective and diverse workforce that is representative of the communities we serve

Priority 2:

To integrate the promotion of equality and diversity, and the elimination of discrimination and harassment in our working practices, so that we meet our legal obligations as required under the Equality Act 2010

Priority 3:

To embed fully equality and diversity in teaching, learning, assessment, tutorials and enrichment activities, and maintain high achievement of all students (full-time, part-time, HE, FE and work-based learning)

Priority 4:

To incorporate fully equality and diversity in our apprenticeship, traineeship and work placement provision

Each of the priorities is underpinned by specific and timely actions outlined in our Single Equality Scheme Action Plan which is reviewed every half term. The impact of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan is

monitored by the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which is chaired by a Vice Principal and has cross-college representation.

The Equality and Diversity Annual Report, which demonstrates how the College is meeting the public sector equality duties and the progress on the objectives in the Single Equality Scheme, is scrutinised by the College's Board of Governors at a full Board meeting when recommendations are made for further development.

This Access and Participation Plan directly links with priorities 2 and 3 from the College's Single Equality Scheme.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are fully embedded in the policy development and review. Recent support measures that have been implemented as a result of EIAs are to monitor students' complaints in relation to protected characteristics, to incorporate inclusion and diversity questions in student focus groups, to make reasonable adjustments in disciplinary meetings for students with learning difficulties/disabilities, to ensure that individual circumstances including disability in any student refused progression from FE to HE are considered by a panel of a Director and a Vice Principal and to develop explicit guidelines for supporting a Trans student or a student who is transitioning. The EIA of the existing multi-faith facilities has led to planned improvements of the reflection rooms to facilitate the access of all students (of faith and no faith) and standardising their usage across the college group to minimise potential adverse effects on users.

Collaboration, Strategic relationships and work with schools to raise attainment

Over the last decade the College has gained a reputation as a leading provider of education to those under the age of 16, including two successive Ofsted Outstanding grades for that work. The College has also project managed the setting up of the Bedford Free School. The College's approach to raising attainment pre-16 is through the work of the Bedford College Academies Trust (BCAT). The BCAT mission is to support students to achieve their absolute best whatever their ability or background. BCAT aims to:

1. Work collaboratively to deliver an inclusive and outstanding education to all students, thereby driving up local standards.
2. Maximise social mobility and life chances, through the highest expectations of and aspirations for all students.
3. Encourage and support a range of high performing and distinctive educational establishments for local communities.

Bedford College will work closely to develop an outreach programme with academies within BACT including Wixams Academy.

The College already undertakes a large proportion of access and participation work including:

- Attendance at secondary school/upper school events, UCAS events and university events
- Attendance at local community events
- Holding Higher Education information events
- The use of media stories and case studies published through the full range of communication channels
- Sharing of information with local organisations who provide services to schools and young people
- One-to-one independent advice and guidance through the College's careers team

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of this plan is fully embedded in the College's quality processes and is part of the College's commitment to continuous quality improvement. This is important so that we can:

- Understand what works well for our students and what we could improve
- Judge whether and how planned activities are effective
- Inform future plans
- To ensure that our plans have the biggest impact and are value for money

- To provide us with information which we can share with others across the sector

The College's Higher Education Steering Group Committee monitors the progress against targets and milestones set out in the Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan and Higher Education Marketing Plan. The Higher Education Quality Procedures incorporate the close monitoring of applications, recruitment, progression, access, retention, success and curriculum development. We continue to appoint and develop staff who have responsibility for the monitoring and support of students from low participation backgrounds, particularly POLAR 3 to remove barriers to participation and progression.

In addition the Executive monitor and review progress against wider college targets and milestones including Higher Education through a monthly performance monitoring activity.

The Governing Body monitor and review progress through the Quality & Standards Committee which meets termly. The Higher Education Steering Group will have responsibility for the monitoring of the Access Agreement through inclusion within the College's HE Quality Process structure and reports its findings to the Executive and Governing Body through the Quality & Standards Committee.

To ensure robust evaluation of the measures set out in our plan we will undertake a detailed annual review of the impact of our access, success and progression activities and financial support. This will focus on impact and will look at continuation, attainment, access and destinations. This will be added as an annex to our HE SED. This will be reviewed, discussed and agreed by the HE steering group (which includes our lead HE student rep). The review will also be scrutinised by a panel including members of our Corporation during the self-assessment process. The first review of this type will take place in September 2018. In following years the review will build on outcomes from the previous year. This annual review will be informed by our regular evaluation of our progress towards our HE Quality Improvement Plan (which is discussed at the HE Steering group). This annual review will be used to inform subsequent plans and Quality Improvement Plans and the overall HE strategy and approach.

We offer a small amount of financial support as a hardship bursary. Due to the small numbers of students who receive this we will undertake detailed interviews with these students to assess the impact of this financial support.

The College has a collaborative approach and is committed to working collaboratively across the sector and attend a number of AOC and Collab group networks. The outcomes of our monitoring and review will inform our discussions.

Consultation

The actions included within this Access Agreement are informed by externally commissioned research. This research included focus groups with both students and employers.

We provide students with the opportunity to express their views on our plan during our student rep Conferences. Information/feedback was also obtained from our Student Rep Conference in April 2017 and 2018. Areas of the plan which have been introduced following feedback from our learners includes:

- Changes to the induction process for students
- Development of pre-course and in-course study skills support
- Development of full BA(Hons) programmes

The College's approach to Student Reps from every course allows students from a range of backgrounds to engage in learner voice activities and be involved in our consultation and delivery of the plan. Our Lead HE student representative sits on the HE steering group where the Access and Participation Plan is implemented, monitored and evaluated. Two student Governors sit on the Corporation, which approves this plan, and also on the Quality and Standards Committee.

Access, student success and progression measures

We have adopted a range of measures that we believe will have the biggest impact on access, student success and progression and that also fit within the framework of our overall College Strategic Plan and our ambitions to increase our Higher Education recruitment by 30% between 2016 and 2021.

The measures focus on improving the number of HE courses and the achievement rates at Tresham College, where the highest proportion of low participation neighbourhoods exist and improving internal progression and learner retention across the group. Where our assessment has identified gaps in access, success or progression specific measures have also been identified to reduce these gaps.

How these measures have been informed by evidence

The Bedford College Group is committed to evidence based decision making. The strategy identified to close the gaps (shown above) is informed by a piece of externally commissioned research reviewing the HE provision at Bedford College. The outcomes this identified included extended the HE curriculum offer, improving learner progression and employer engagement.

The College has a Student Engagement Strategy which identifies student focus groups as the preferred approach to engage with our HE learners. This plan is also informed by evidence which emerges from these student focus groups. For example, students have requested additional study skills support and programmes.

Quality improvement measures have been informed by the College's extensive quality improvement experience, based on previous actions which have demonstrated an immediate and sustained impact on performance.

The monitoring and evaluation of this Access and Participation Plan will also inform future strategies adopted.

Access measures identified from the Assessment of progress:

1. Increase the participation of male HE students at Tresham College
2. Increase the local Higher Education offer (and therefore participation) at Tresham College
3. Increase the rate of internal progression onto our own Higher Education courses at Tresham

Linked resources plan targets:

T16a_04

Increase progression opportunities for students completing Level 3 programmes, HNDs and Foundation Degrees so that each programme (both full time and part time) has a clear progression route.

T16a_02

Develop additional Access to Higher Education programmes (and pre-Access programmes) at the College, increasing the number of enrolled students on Access to Higher Education programmes at the College increasing the number of adult learners who wish to access Higher Education provision by 30%.

T16a_02

Increase internal progression of the College's vocational Further Education students to our own Higher Education provision to 30% by 2022.

T16a-06

Increase progression from The Bedford Sixth Form to the College's Higher Education provision.

Actions:

This will be achieved through:

- Developing our HE Curriculum Offer, particularly at Tresham College, to ensure that courses are provided which employers need and students want to do (Measures 1 & 2)
- Ensuring we have flexible and multiple modes of study (Measures 1 & 2)
- Aligning our Higher Education provision with our existing Level 3 courses to provide progression opportunities (Measures 2 & 3)
- Developing our Level 2 and Level 3 Access to Higher Education provision to provide an alternative route to HE for mature students (Measures 2 & 3)
- Extending our Progression Guarantee policy for students successfully completing a full-time programme of study at Level 3 and increasing engagement between the HE delivery teams and Level 3 learners (Measure 3)
- Increasing progression from The Bedford Sixth Form (Measure 3)
- Working with school pupils at Key Stage 4 to promote progression into Higher Education. This activity includes attendance at secondary school/upper school events, UCAS events and university events, Higher Education information events, targeted marketing campaigns, the use of media stories and case studies published through the full range of communication channels, one-to-one independent advice and guidance through the College's IAG team and campus visits (Measure 2)

Student Success Measures identified from the Assessment of progress:

1. Reduce the achievement gap at Bedford College for Mixed race students
2. Reduce the achievement gap at Tresham College for Black students
3. Reduce the achievement gap at Bedford College for White British male mature students
4. Improve in-year retention to maximise achievement and progress of students
5. Improve pass rates at Tresham College

Linked resources plan targets:

T16a_03

Improve retention of mixed race students on our Higher Education courses where there is a retention gap

T16a_07

Increase achievement rates at Tresham College

T16a_08

Reduce achievement gap for Black students at Tresham College

T16a-05

Higher Education programmes to meet retention targets

T16a-07

Increase achievement rates at Tresham College

Actions:

This will be achieved through:

- Developing the Student Body and Students as Partners initiatives to enhance learner engagement
- Ensuring high quality assessment allows for meaningful and excellent progress made by all students (Measures 4 & 5)
- In-year monitoring of the retention and predicted success via Performance Management Meetings with individual programme areas and quality Information Packs for the senior management team (Measures 4 & 5)
- In-year monitoring of the retention of 'at risk' students (Measures 1-5)
- In-year quality interventions in individual programme areas when the attendance, retention and predicted success rates are below target or there are significant achievement gaps for one of the target groups identified in the measures (Measures 1- 5)
- Pre-course and in-course study skills support. This has been devised to provide face-to-face workshops on key Study Skills Themes and is an opportunity to apply new knowledge and obtain feedback and guidance in areas which will enhance their level of confidence in progressing to higher level study. The Fresh Start programme will continue throughout the first year of study with a framework of workshops and one-to-one Study Skills support. (Measures 1-5)
- An induction period including a structured and welcoming pre-registration Welcome Day where students have a tour, meet the course team and their fellow students in a relaxed and friendly environment with introductions to personal tutors and all support service team members (Measures 1-5)
- Tutorial strategy to ensure all students have early and timely tutorials (Measures 1-5)

Progression Measures identified from the Assessment of progress:

1. Improve onward progression to highly skilled employment/further study for full time learners from low participation neighbourhoods

Linked resources plan target:

T16a_04

Increase progression opportunities for students completing Level 3 programmes, HNDs and Foundation Degrees so that each programme (both full time and part time) has a clear progression route.

Actions:

This will be achieved through:

- Increasing the range of full Degrees offered locally at the College so that students have a local progression route
- Responding to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) priorities, LMI and employer feedback to inform curriculum planning for both full and part time study options
- Engaging employers in the development of all new courses to maximise employability of our graduates and ensure our HE provision is sustainable
- Embedding employability in our higher level programmes to support the ambitions of graduates and access to Higher Education for those already in employment

Investment

In 2019/20 The Bedford College Group intends to invest £180,114 on access, £129,231 on success and £70,845 on progression. Table 16 shows how the higher level fee income will be invested.

Table 17: APP accountable investment we intend to make in 2019/20

Planned investment in 2019-20	£
Access investment	4,933
Success investment	5,701
Progression investment	8,771
Investment in financial support	10,000
Total investment	29,405
Total investment as a proportion of high fee income	33%

Provision of Information to Students

Fees

The Bedford College Group proposes the following tuition fees for full time students who are receiving tuition and support for more than 12 hours a week starting in September 2019/20:

HNC/HND	£5750 per annum
HNC/HND Performing Arts (Stella Mann)	£6000 per annum
Foundation Degree	£6250 per annum

Part time fees vary from £5750 to £6250 full-time equivalent

Our proposed full time and part time HNC/HND fees remain below the fee cap.

We do not expect any rise for 2019/20 entrants in subsequent years.

Financial Hardship

In case of exceptional financial hardship, additional funds are available for existing students through the Student Services Department. This is allocated on a case-by-case basis to students who are at risk of withdrawal or non-completion due to financial issues. A maximum of £10,000 is available across the organisation. The effectiveness of this financial support is monitored and a full evaluation is prepared annually.

Following the merger of Bedford College and Tresham College, all continuing students will receive bursary support as advertised at the time they accepted their offer of a place.

Publication of Information

The College publishes all information regarding its Higher Education provision, support and fees on its website and in the Higher Education prospectus. The fees are transparent and informed by consultation with students and employers to minimise barriers to participation and progression. Detailed information is included in offer letters. The Higher Education offer process is managed by specialist teams who have direct links with UCAS and the SLC and it is the responsibility of these teams to ensure that information within the Access Agreement and fee information is regularly checked for accuracy and updated accordingly.

This Action and Participation Plan will be published on the College's website.

Table 3 - Summary of full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants

Institution name: Bedford College

Institution UKPRN: 10000610

Validation checks:

1. Please enter statement on increasing your fees by inflation for 2019-20 entrants in subsequent years of study in cell B13.

* 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.

We do not expect any inflationary rise in fees for entrants in 2019-20 in subsequent years.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		£6,165
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£5,750
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£6,250
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other	First degree (one year Foundation Degree top up)	£6,165
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
HNC / HND	Stella Mann college of Performing Arts 10047049	£6,000
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		£4,125
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		£5,040
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£3,125
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other	- Part time First Degree (top up)	£4,125

T16a_04	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Increase progression opportunities for students completing Level 3 programmes, HNDs and Foundation Degrees so that each programme (both full time and part time) has a clear progression route. This target is part of action plans with each of our validating HEIs.	Yes	2016-17	75%	78%	80%	82%	85%		Baseline data refers to the number of Level 3 programmes with clear and agreed progression routes and progression guarantees already in place
T16a_05	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Higher education programmes to meet retention targets	No	2015-16	88%	90%	90%	90%	90%		
T16a_06	Access	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Applications (please give details in the next column)	Increase progression from The Bedford Sixth Form to the College's Higher Education provision	No	2015-16	0%	4%	6%	8%	10%		Baseline data- Proportion of those progressing to Higher Education progressing to Bedford College programmes
T16a_07	Success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Increase achievement rates at Tresham College	No	2015-16	56.3%	65%	72%	75%	75%	75%	
T16a_08	Success	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Reduce achievement gap for Black students at Tresham College	No	2016-17	46.8%	20%	10%	10%	10%	10%	Baseline data is from a very small cohort (7 learners)
T16a_09	Student success	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Improve retention of Mixed race students on our Higher Education courses where there is a retention gap	No	2016-17	8%	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%	

