

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2020/21 – 2022/23

Institutions are required to submit information under each of the headings below. Please see the guidance notes for help in completing this return.

1.1 Please provide a high level outline of your institution's Widening Participation policy in Higher Education and how this fits in with the institution's strategic direction.

Lifelong learning and addressing social inclusion by providing progression for the whole community is central to the vision of government policy in the Further Education Means Success strategy, Higher Education Graduation to Success and the widening participation in higher education strategy Access to Success. It is also central to the draft Programme for Government with population outcomes aspiring to a more equal society and giving our children and young people the best start in life. SERC's commitment to addressing these strategies and widening access and participation is embedded within the College Development Plan (CDP) 2019-20 with a detailed analysis of the needs of our community by quintile and prioritises:

Addressing social inclusion by providing opportunities for those not in work, to obtain a professional or technical qualification allowing them to gain employment and escape the benefit cycle. SERC CDP 2019-20

The quintile analysis shows that there are pockets of significant deprivation within the catchment area. SERC Social Engagement Strategy to link with these areas in partnership with the Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) forms the basis of the 2020/21 Widening Access and Participation Plan. The greater engagement with 'hard to reach' learners and shaping the curriculum to provide well supported programmes that give opportunities for those from deprived backgrounds to re-enter education, undertake meaningful qualifications which lead to employment or progression to higher level courses. This is supported through widening participation activities to encourage fair access, retention and performance.

The ongoing development of the strategy has led to a greater concentration on 'hard to reach' areas and developing a partnership approach to engagement to link with partners in Local Government, Primary Schools, Housing Associations, NIHE, Sure Start, Citizens Advice etc with a refocus of engagement activities and projects to meet a more clearly defined need.

This development is reflected in the 2020/21 Curriculum Plan with a focus on returners to education a key theme. The Curriculum Plan inevitably works within the current economic climate and the challenges that this brings but STEM and priority skills are prioritised and demonstrates a continued commitment to upskill, develop and provide progression for under-represented groups and particularly those in areas designated as deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 within the SERC catchment area. SERC also seeks to expand STEAM areas (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) so as to extend the employability and academic opportunities available. Significant investment has been made in extending flexibility particularly with the use of technology enhanced learning.

As part of the 2017 to 2021 CDP SERC is working with local community groups to develop access strategies to education through use of technology and providing tailored social support. There is a focus on pre-access and access to provide a clear and sustainable route for those who wish to re-enter education.

1.2 What is your view of the success record of your institution in relation to recruitment, retention and progression for Widening Participation students?

For the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 SERC aimed to:

- Provide appropriate support for those within the SERC catchment area who fall within the Access to Success target groups to progress in the long-term towards higher education;
- Respond to the changing needs of the target groups through review and evaluation of strategies and data; and
- Continue to promote suitable progression routes towards higher education.

Between 2017/18 -2019/20 SERC aimed to:

9% or 135 enrolments from MDM Quintile 1
17% or 260 enrolments from MDM Quintile 2
40% or 605 enrolments from adult returners
10% or 145 enrolments from students with a disability
10 enrolments from students who have a Care Experience
22 young male students in MDM Quintile 1

The position for the year 2017/18 is:

9% or 130 enrolments from MDM Quintile 1
17% or 242 enrolments from MDM Quintile 2
43% or 607 enrolments from adult returners
7% or 100 enrolments from students with a disability
10 enrolments from students who have a Care Experience
27 young male students in MDM Quintile 1

Target groups

The position for 2017/18 reflects SERC's catchment for the target groups as measured within the most recent census and is expressed as a percentage. The commitment to widening access is reflected in the College three-year average from 2015-18 where higher education recruitment from deprivation areas Q1 and Q2 remains at 27% of the total number of higher education enrolments. This reflects the expected enrolments levels for the SERC catchment area. It demonstrates the continued contribution by SERC to the widening access agenda. In year 2017/18 the percentage of enrolments from deprivations areas Q1 and Q2 remained the same as 2016/17. There was a spike in recruitment for Q2 at 18.5% in 2015/16 but returned as expected in 2016/17 and 2017/18 to current levels. SERC sees these overall levels as reflective of the catchment area but will continue to focus on the pockets of deprivation as identified as part of the College Development Plan.

The College continues to acknowledge the particular need within Northern Ireland to provide strong, relevant routes to higher education and initiatives within the Restart and Access programmes seek to address the needs of this group. The engagement and support initiatives within catchment areas will continue in Tollymore, Donard, (Newcastle), Ballymote, Cathedral (Downpatrick), Conlig and Colin Glenn (Belfast) through 2018-2021 alongside Ballynahinch East which was commenced late last year. Areas of Redburn (Holywood) will be added as part of this community focus. Analysis of the postal codes of enrolments from Q1 and Q2 demonstrated that targeting outreach had resulted in the slow

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but gradual increase in enrolments from these areas particularly for female adult returners. Within curriculum provision STEM opportunities have increased with 69% of full time HE in Priority Skills areas and 65% of part time HE in Priority Skills areas.

Higher education retention and achievement for 2017/18 remained high but the environment is challenging with the traditional FT market in decline thus reducing additional fee income. Considerable effort was made to reduce wastage and provide timely support and intervention. Six weekly student case conferences remain a feature for targeting support and these were supplemented with enhanced case conferences to further review performance and tackle stubborn areas of social concern.

The uptake in Downpatrick continues to be challenging and has led to a refreshed approach to communication with target groups including enhanced marketing events, parents' evenings and refocus on school partnerships. Initiatives within 'Education Restart' and development of alliances with local community groups including SureStart, Homestart, Apex Housing Association, YMCA and Men's Shed in the Newcastle/Downpatrick area were introduced in 2015/16. This approach proved positive in recruiting and shaping the programmes and will continue to be developed in 2020/21.

Opportunities for returning adults remains a priority and the introduction of the pre-access course has been of notable success addressing an identified gap. Within the Access provision WAPP students entering onto the one-year programme have strong retention, achievement and progression rates ranging from very good to outstanding. An analysis of the retention and achievement data and student evaluations for the two-year programme shows that many require additional preparation.

The Restart programme addresses this need for a longer run-in and was introduced in 2014/15. Enrolments has more than doubled since the introduction of the programme and achievement is high at 90%. Students from pre-entry Access (Restart) programme are now progressing to higher education and are holding offers for places at QUB, Ulster University and SERC in degree programmes including Social Work, Nursing (adult mental health and learning disability), HND Health and Care, English and Sociology. Over 50% of this cohort came with no qualifications.

The overall achievement rate (2017/18) of this programme remains high at 90% despite the very challenging issues which this group bring. The drop-out rate remains high (19% for 2017/18) with the main reason due to mental health issues, family concerns and the financial implications to benefits through return to study. The programme was refocused for 2016/17 by front loading to ensure that the majority of the students have the opportunity to achieve an Award early if it becomes necessary. This was successful in that all students who remained on the programme gained qualifications. The issues around benefit and attendance remain key in further improving retention, achievement and success. SERC has been consistent in working with community groups to lobby the relevant governmental departments but progress is slow. To ensure that prospective students are aware of the demands of the programme Restart light, a taster of the Access provision will be introduced in 2018/19 to help with retention. The figures for retention, success and achievement figures for 2018/19 are not available at time of writing. The progress on developing social inclusion through engagement has been greatly increased during 2018/19 and a summary of the activities are attached. [Evidence 1].

The appetite among learners remains strong and recruitment in Access has increased by a third since 2015/16. The controlled expansion of this programme during 2018-2021 will continue to target identified 'hard to reach' areas in Q1 and Q2 by continuing to build a wider community network including housing associations, In 2017/18 enrolment across SERC have increased by 100% since 2014, through engagement with and demand from local groups including employers, health groups, schools and social network support groups. New programmes have been introduced in Holywood, Newtownards and Newcastle.

The target for engaging young males from MDM Q1 was narrowly exceeded but remains challenging and enrolling from D1 is difficult. The initiatives with a range of local

community groups to engage males remains problematic. The College acknowledges that Restart and Access attract greater interest from females rather than males. Part of the current work with male local community leaders will seek to address this imbalance. SERC continues to introduce new methods to support and communicate with this group. Social media has provided a valuable route to build dialogue supplemented by the role of the Community Development staff. Part of the strategy is to 'change attitudes' towards higher education through developing male adult returner role models in the 'Restart' groups. SERC remains cognisant that 37% of the population within the catchment area has less than a level 2 qualification and in continues addressing this pull through to higher levels grows. During 2018/19 a further initiative of Open Days and taster sessions were introduced in association with Ards Peninsula Healthy Living Centre, NIACRO, Lisburn City Church Community Trust, Poleglass Community Association and Lisburn SureStart. The impact of this outreach work will be measured during 2019/2020 recruitment but the aim has been to address those areas where recruitment of males has been disappointing. A surprising change in Higher Education PT enrolments for 2017/18 was the 50% male female split and the buoyant adult returner market. This may be due to the progression of Access and Restart but also due to the increase in demand for Health and Social care programmes. The FT enrolments remained at 38% female and 62% male. SERC's curriculum focuses on STEM and male enrolments tend to be significantly higher than female.

The College addressed the internal data issues in relation to recording the numbers of those who are Care Experienced. There were eight Care Experienced in 2015/16 who enrolled on HE programmes. This rose to ten in 2017/18 with 85% retained and achieving. There have been significant improvements in the tracking of achievement and this approach will continue as part of future plans. Through the development of community links and closer tracking of the group SERC has begun to develop a greater understanding of progression needs. Deeper links have been developed with local agencies resulting in closer links between students, social workers, tutors and learning support staff. The College will continue to manage the group according to demand. The number of students enrolling with a self-declared disability was 7% or 100 students. This was lower than the target and the College has reviewed its approach as part of the self-evaluation process where it was found that student dislike self-declaration and felt stigmatised. As a result, in 2018-19 the process and language for self-declaration was simplified. This will continue to be proactively monitored to further understand any possible issues.

Bursaries

Students receive the Access Bursary where they are in receipt of a full maintenance grant or student support grant through the Student Loan Company. The percentage of students receiving a bursary in 2017/18 remained at 28% (150 students). SERC continues to work with students and the Student Loan Company to ensure that all students who are eligible are contacted and a bursary awarded. Encouraging students to share data from the SLC and enhanced communication routes continue to be implemented.

Additional areas of focus

SERC is very successful at developing learners from levels 1-3 to progress to employment and further training/education. Through pull of SERC level 3 students to HE provision within the College is low. SERC developed a Restart + programme during 2017/18 to support those with a more vocational focus who may wish to obtain a level 4-5 qualification at SERC rather than pursuing the Access route. This will be introduced

in Newcastle and Ballynahinch to further support particularly vocational students with progression to higher education. Restart lite was also introduced to allow prospective students complete 'taster' sessions before committing to the longer programme.

1.3 Please outline the Widening Participation aims, objectives and targets for the next 3 years for your institution.

You will need to provide details on key target groups within Access to Success, anticipated expenditure and the measures of success – your response should include a description of your approach to targeting, as well as the areas targeted for improvement over the next 3 years. You may wish to add to the projection tables below to report on your own institution's specified target groups if not already included in Access to Success.

For the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 SERC aims to:

- Provide appropriate support for those within the SERC catchment area who fall within the Access to Success target groups to progress in the long-term towards higher education;
- Respond to the changing needs of the target groups through review and evaluation of strategies and data; and
- Continue to promote suitable progression routes towards higher education.

Approach to Targeting

Targets are based on the sector information pre-populated on this plan by DfE showing the four-year trend. They form the basis of the targets going forward.

The overall numbers of Higher Education enrolments both part and full-time is continuing to decline and the MaSn allocation for 2019/20 has been reduced but the College will continue to meet the four year trend data.

SERC does not have reliable figures for students in receipt of DSA for 2017/18 but data is available in this area for 2018/19.

Targets

Between 2020/21 and 2022/23 SERC will aim to enrol in higher education:

9% or 129 enrolments from MDM Quintile 1
40% or 594 enrolments from adult returners
9% or 108 enrolments from students with a disability
12 enrolments from students who have a Care Experience
27 young male students in MDM Quintile 1
21 students in receipt of Disability Support Allowance

1.3 (a) TARGETS

You will note that the tables numbered (i) to (vi) below have been pre populated with your institution's average enrolment for the last 3 years. You are now required to insert numerical

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targets for each of the groups identified across the 3 years 2020/21 – 2022/23. These groups are regarded as being under represented in Access to Success.

(i) Group: **MDM Quintile 1**

Outcome: **To increase participation of those from NI MDM Q1**

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2014- 2018) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| 129 | | | 129 | 129 |

(ii) Group: **Students with a Disability**

Outcome: **To increase the number of students who declare a disability**

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2014- 2018) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| 108 | | | 108 | 108 |

(iii) Group: **Students with a Disability**

Outcome: **To increase the number of students in receipt of DSA**

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2014- 2018) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| | | | 21 | 21 |

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(iv) Group: **Young Males from Quintile 1**

Outcome: **To increase participation of young males from NI MDM Quintile 1**

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2014-2018) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| 26 | | 27 | 27 | 27 |

(v) Group: **Adult Learners**

Outcome: **To increase the number of adult learners participating in HE**

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2014-2018) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| 594 | | 594 | 594 | 594 |

As HESA data is largely incomplete for the following area, the figure that you provided in a previous WAPP for 2016/17 has been inserted as a base line.

(vi) Group: **Number of Care Experienced enrolments**

Outcome: **To increase the number of enrolments for those from a care background**

| | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| BASE YEAR | Targets/Outcome | | | |
| 2016/17 | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| 5 | | 12 | 12 | 12 |

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1.3(b) The following tables have been provided for you to now insert any other **'specific'** institutional targets. These may be different to those groups identified in 1.3(a) or may relate to targets other than enrolments. In all cases you will need to identify the group and highlight what the target outcome will be e.g. outreach, retention etc.

(i)

| |
|----------|
| Group: |
| Outcome: |

| Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|---|
| 2016/17 | | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | Number | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| | Percentage | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |

(ii)

| |
|----------|
| Group: |
| Outcome: |

| Baseline (statistical or % | Targets/Outcome |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
|-------------------------------|-----------------|

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| participation last year monitored) | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|---|
| 2016/17 | | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | Number | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| | Percentage | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |

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(iii)

| | |
|----------|--|
| Group: | |
| Outcome: | |

| Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|---|
| 2016/17 | | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | Number | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |
| | Percentage | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> | <input style="width: 100%; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |

Please now outline the estimated 'direct' expenditure required to meet the identified objectives in the table below. You may wish to refer to Part 2 of the guidance notes in "How to Complete your Widening Access and Participation Plan" for a definition of direct spend. Whilst we appreciate that figures for later years are only indicative we do require estimations inserted in each of the categories.

| Activity | Estimated Spend 2020/21 (£) | Estimated Spend 2021/22 (£) | Estimated Spend 2022/23 (£) |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bursaries | 37500 | 37500 | 37500 |
| Scholarships | - | - | - |
| Other financial Support | - | - | - |

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| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Outreach | 67320 | 67320 | 67320 |
| Retention | 3000 | 3000 | 3000 |
| Research Activity | | | |
| Staffing/ Administration | 5500 | 5500 | 5500 |
| TOTAL | 113320 | 113320 | 113320 |

- 1.4** List below the key programmes/projects financed from additional student fees that will contribute towards your institution's performance.
(Please refer to the appropriate section of the guidance notes before completing.)

Outreach activity

1 Returning Adults - pre-entry Access and Restart plus

The University Access provision has been very successful with 90% of returners achieving either full or partial award. The RAS figures and student feedback is strong and the provision is delivered in hard to reach areas such as Newcastle and Ballynahinch. The programme was rewritten and rebranded in 2015 with the aim of providing the key skills in literacy, numeracy, science, social science and study skills necessary for progression. It was particularly useful in attracting women returners who have proven difficult to enrol on a STEM heavy HE curriculum. The success has helped to increase the number of returning adults into HE.

It has been more challenging to attract males into the programmes. The aim is to continue to extend and embed the provision to increase the level of male participants especially in Q1 and Q2 and provide further support for progression. An enhanced engagement strategy began in 2018/19 through the Community Planning Partnerships in the SERC area and a wide range of local community groups including Langley Road Interagency, County Down Rural Community Network, The Edge Youth Centre, Ballynahinch. A programme of joint engagement activities will continue to be developed aimed at increasing the level of male participants especially in D1. The Restart Plus programme will continue to be developed to meet the needs of this group.

The additional fee money will be used to support and enhance the learning experience of these groups with relevant activities including visits and guest speakers.

2 Steps to Education

Analysis of the participation of adult returners, those with Q1 and Q2 postcodes and young males from Q1 has indicated lower enrolments than would be expected within Ards, Lisburn and Down District catchment.

SERC introduced an initiative in 2014/15 to raise awareness and maintain enrolments within higher education. The building of awareness through enrolment on entry to Access and Access has developed greater involvement from hard to reach communities.

SERC will hold or participate in a range community-based activities along with continuous community contact throughout the year. A number of these activities will be led by Community Planning Partners such as the Councils, Health Trusts and Community Voluntary Sector organisations. These will target adult returners and young men in the catchment areas. They will highlight the range of educational opportunities and financial support available to the target groups. It will include information on the comprehensive range of support services that SERC can offer and provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and obtain further information and for those who decide to progress to prepare individual development plans. It will be supported by targeted marketing to Q1 and Q2 postcodes within the SERC

catchment area including the enhanced use of social media.

Continuity will be provided through the support of Community Development Officers.

Research

The well-established self-evaluation review, student survey, market intelligence and GIS systems will continue to provide the information which can be used to populate the Kirkpatrick Model.

Retention

1 Getting the Edge – development of employability and enterprise skills

The project aims to introduce students to and develop competence in soft skills necessary to gain employment. Employers regularly report that graduates do not have the employability skills necessary within the workplace. Students within the WAPP groups tend to be at the greatest disadvantage. Research through the Curriculum Directorate has shown that many of the skills displayed by our students are entrepreneurial. The employability skill opportunities have been added to this retention initiative.

As part of induction all full-time students undertake a competence-based employability award. Students complete either a City and Guilds Level 2 Employability or ILM Level 3 Leadership and Management award. The awards are delivered using a competence framework and activities are both practical and academic. Skills are developed through team building including presentations using media technology and by individual preparation which focuses on skills valuable in interviews and support preparing employment applications.

The entrepreneurial stream provides opportunities to develop business ideas and skills using project-based learning as the catalyst. Mentoring is provided through dedicated enterprise staff and industry mentors.

The project is reviewed annually and in addition to a dedicated two weeks to assist in embedding skills, a calendar of events is scheduled throughout the year to share best practice and provide skill reinforcement. This pedagogical strategy of project-based learning targets wider-skills highlighted in the NI Skills Barometer as lacking in graduates. The additional fees help to support the practical nature of the initiative and the development of learning materials and providing extra-curricular opportunities to implement newly acquired skills in a safe environment e.g. competitions and students cross-college sharing at such events as CAST, an interdisciplinary sharing of student project research and mentoring by industry.

2 Support of those with a Care Experience

Students with Care Experience have been identified as having multiple barriers to entering and continuing in education. The College identified that over 70 FT and 125 PT students in FE are from a care background but very few progress to higher education. The College aims to engage and support students to progress to higher education and those who are engaged in level 4-7 study.

In addition to the support already in place for children from a care background or former Looked After Children, the College has developed a pilot project with the South

Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. This projects has several elements which introduce both Care Experienced, their carers, social work team and other supporters to the educational pathways available in the College and the wider pastoral care and support available. The project commenced in 2018 with the 14-15 age group with a view to encouraging them continue with their education. It may take some time for this project to fully develop and begin to impact on the number of those with care experience progressing to HE courses. There has been a significant increase in 2017/18 of care experienced enrolments (increase to 12 FT and 3 PT HE students) but it is too early to identify a trend and the project will continue at the current level.

1.5 Please provide a short summary of how your activities link to the key actions within Access to Success.

The activities listed target those groups which may be under-represented within the SERC catchment area and assist learners to progress ultimately to higher education. The support and guidance provided by the College are long-term measures to reduce barriers and raise aspiration and success across the target groups as defined by *Access to Success*. The projects have evolved over a number of years and provide greater development opportunities for progression to higher education but it may take many years for the target groups to reach this goal especially as the strategy is currently focusing on the hardest to reach. There has been a modest improvement particularly in recruitment for MDM Q1 and number of adult learners. SERC believes that it is too early to view this improvement as embedded. The activities aim to keep learners within the education process and support them as they progress through the system in a way that meets individual learner needs

1.6 How do you plan to communicate information on the availability of financial and other assistance to students?

Student Finance Officers are on every campus and are the nominated source of information and advice for students on higher education fees and support mechanisms.

At application stage all students are informed as part of a finance briefing about bursaries and support. This is reinforced through subsequent parents' evenings in the year prior to the student commencing their course.

At enrolment Student Finance Officers support students and encourage sharing of information through the SLC portal.

Academic tutors are briefed on support mechanisms and encourage students to share information.

The College website and student handbook includes information about financial support and this is highlighted during induction and at key points in the year.

Information on bursaries and support is updated regularly and current and prospective students are reminded about financial support through regular finance clinics and at pastoral tutorials.

The Students' Union are briefed on fees and bursaries as they are set.

All students who share financial information and meet the set criteria automatically receive a bursary.

1.7 How do you plan to monitor progress against the targets and the achievement of outcomes?

The Governing Body through the Education Committee review quality and performance targets twice a year. The Annual Report for the Department for the Economy provides further oversight. The Engagement Update Reports and the College development Plan progress reports provide further detail. They are available at Evidence 1.

1.8 Please provide an additional evaluation on how you think your institution is performing or provide us with relevant documents in line with section 1.8 of the guidance document.

(Full details on how to complete this section are in the guidance notes)

In order to ensure consistency across institutions we would ask that you use the Kirkpatrick Model for this exercise. The concept is that individual institutions will learn from this self-evaluation and obtain evidence to influence future widening participation activity and plans. You may evaluate the institution's widening participation activity as a whole, or evaluate individual projects.

The following sub headings should help focus your response. The Department expects that most institutions will be able to evaluate widening participation activity to at least Level 3 (as below).

Level 1 Evaluation – Reactions

What participants thought and felt about the programme

The feedback from those students who have been involved in Restart, pre-Access and Access is overwhelmingly positive. There was a satisfaction level in excess of 90% for each cohort. This has been consistent for two years since the introduction of the measurement. The reasons for this remain the support provided by staff, the flexibility of the programme and the achievement felt by participants.

The early support provided for adult returners and care experienced students is highly valued by these groups which brings achievement early in the programmes.

The student's firmly believe that they are treated equally and this increases confidence and self-esteem.

Tracking the change in perceptions during the programme remains significant particularly in terms of feeling of belonging to the student body. The small group teaching and ease of access to the individual allocated personal tutor is valued throughout the programme but soon it is belonging to the larger student body that is valued. For 2016/17 and 2017/18 the Student Governor came from the WAPP target groups and acknowledges the support provided which gave them the confidence to stand for the role.

Level 2 Evaluation - Learning

The resulting increase in knowledge or capability

96% of Access and restart students believe that they are learning skills that are of value in real life and 98% feel confidence in progressing to next steps. A significant proportion of students feel that they have currently reached their limit and want to take some time to absorb the skills. Others feel that they have achieved the skills they need for employment. Women with children still find the benefit system challenging in terms of progression especially to higher education. Appreciating the qualification as 'stand alone' and economically relevant was strongest for those completing Foundation Degrees and they had the clearest route to employment. 2018-19 student survey attached.

The tracking of the Q1 and Q2 student attitudes are more challenging but the overall trends within the college show a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment across the programmes at 93% and 92% respectively. 2018-19 student survey attached.

Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer

Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application

Confidence was the word most used by participants when they evaluated their experience. The focus on gaining tangible skills as well as putting to rest fears over old academic areas such as Maths and English was valued. Gaining Maths and English was perceived as opening doors to employment as well as new programme routes. Resilience and time management were by-products of the programmes. More central was the development of digital skills and the support given was appreciated by students. The flexible support provided by tutors who were available through a range of mediums and times was felt to be key by students. The issue of age in transfer and progression to use skills was an issue for students at the beginning of study. There was concern that they were 'just too old' to learn and that no-one would take them seriously. The role of the tutors in providing guidance for progression overcame these concerns and by the end of the programme they ceased to be an issue.