WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2022/23 – 2024/25

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.

Within Northern Regional College, Higher Education provision accounts for approximately 10 % of annual enrolments, across full-time, part-time and Higher-Level Apprenticeship provision. The College remains fully committed to widening access and participation at all levels of its provision and continues to make a significant contribution to the local economy by offering a wide range of curriculum opportunities with increasingly flexible methods of study and support. The College is in the process of developing a curriculum strategy to set direction through to 2025, which will align closely with its External Engagement Strategy 2020-2025, aiming to maximise and support income generation through diversification with a clear commitment to contributing to the priorities outlined in the NI Programme for Government, as well as responding to the impact of Covid 19 and resultant economic impact. In assessing opportunities for new and extended course provision, Departmental Curriculum Management teams give consideration to the key priorities as outlined in the DfE Curriculum Development Plan 2021-22 commissioning memo, in support of the Skills Strategy Action Plan for 2021-2023. These are grouped around three main themes:

- Investing in our Digital Skills across all sectors
- Creating a culture of learning for all ages to include upskilling and reskilling in addition to innovation and
- Reducing the skills imbalances in the workforce with a particular focus on those with low or no skills

In relation to Widening Participation, the College strategic direction is directly aligned to these key policy objectives in the development of curriculum which will address skills imbalances, drive economic growth and create a culture of lifelong learning through upskilling and reskilling opportunities. This is evidenced through delivery of a Skills Intervention programme during 2020-21 to over 1000 individuals over 63 courses who had been impacted by Covid, and a further planned response for 2021-22 under the Flexible Skills Fund with an increased emphasis on provision at Level 4 and above, particularly in the areas of Digital Skills, Leadership & Management Skills and Logistics and Supply Chain management.

Over the period of this proposal, 2022-23 to 2024-25, the college aims to :
- Refresh its FT HE offer to secure a sustainable curriculum and consistently deliver on its MaSN allocation
- Grow its PTHE and Access provision
- Grow its Higher Level Apprenticeship provision, building on current areas of strength and differentiation, eg Logistics and Supply Chain Management (launched in June 2021 with planned first intake in September 2021)

Each of the above objectives will contribute to the Widening Access and Participation agenda through attracting students who may not otherwise have been able to, or felt able to engage with Higher Education, and have therefore had limited access to career progression opportunities.

As part of the FE/HE sectoral response to Covid-19, and in particular the impact of disruption on foundation skills development pre-entry to Higher Education, the College is currently working in collaboration with other FE colleges and with our local universities to provide a short HE pre entry course to help science applicants with theory and laboratory skills that may have been affected by lost learning over the Covid – 19 period. This pilot will provide a model for potential further rollout going forward, eg an Easter or summer provision targeting Year 12s pre-transition to Year 13.

With growing reliance on technology, students increasingly require software applications to complete tasks. This is often expensive and not available to all student households. Students have been given access to free or inexpensive software for use at home with many applications now being made available via cloud based applications that work across a number of platforms allowing flexibility and not requiring expensive hardware. In particular, the College has invested in the provision of Office 365 to all students giving them online access to a range of industry standard software that can be used in the Cloud or can be downloaded. The students are also given access to Cloud based storage for their work. The College's update of its VLE to Canvas significantly improved web accessibility, in line with equality legislation, for all students and improved the quality of blended material, resources and online content.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the College had to move quickly to an online delivery model which it successfully did. During this period it was identified that there were significant IT challenge for many students and the College worked quickly to initially assist students with a scheme to loan IT equipment and then to secure money provided by DfE to expand the scheme. In total the College received over 800 application and issued 620 computers to students in need. During this period the College has went through significant change in terms of delivery and its capacity to deliver online and will be taking the lessons from this forward to, where appropriate, deliver a more flexible learning environment for HE learners. For example we will be delivering many of our professional courses including bookkeeping and leadership programmes with a more blended approach allowing students to study online for up to 50% of the courses. This will allow greater flexibility for many adult learners with work and family commitments.

The College also provides dedicated learning spaces for HE students to study and relax in which may not be available to them outside College. The current capital projects for new campuses in Coleraine and Ballymena will improve access for students with disabilities and allow for more flexible open learning spaces for students to work outside class time.

Student Services within the College is seen as a key function and an important element in widening access and participation. The Student Services Team works alongside curriculum to support students and prospective students in all aspects of the student experience. This includes supporting additional learning needs, pastoral care, and providing access to funding for whom personal or family finances present a barrier to meeting their potential. Careers advisors offer advice to current and prospective students on education and career pathways, and assist local stakeholders by providing an outreach service in support of external events.

The College has a dedicated Equality Officer whose remit covers both staff and students and is actively engaged in promoting equality and diversity within the College. All policies within the College pass through the Equality Officer for input and equality screening.

In summary, the College's WAP activities may be broken down as follows:

Pre-entry

The College has a strong Access to University provision that provides and promotes an attractive and successful route to HE for those adult returners who, for a variety of reasons, do not currently meet the entry requirements for HE programmes. The College aims to continue to grow this important provision that facilitates those who did not previously have the opportunity to enter HE programmes. The College is currently looking at widening the breadth of the subjects on its Access curriculum provision to provide more choice for returning adults and has plans to introduce a new Science Access programme. We have also identified a need for the development of a pre-Access programme for adult returners who are not able to or do not feel they have the academic skills to immediately enter an Access course at Level 3. The College is therefore introducing a pre-access course in September 2021 which will help prepare students for entry to an Access to HE course the following year. It is anticipated that this will improve both retention and achievement on College Access programmes ensuring an increase in success and progress to Higher Education programmes for adult learners.

The College also has as strong community-facing focus and seeks to provide education and training opportunities for those groups who might not normally engage with the College. The College will continue to engage enthusiastically with local groups and communities including those local schools that do not have a history of engaging with HE. The College collaborates closely with the four councils within our catchment area on a number of strategic priorities. This includes targeting and providing provision for identified disadvantaged groups and areas within council geographical catchments. This engagement is led by members of the senior leadership team with a VP taking the lead in each Council area.

The College is also committed to providing a modern, relevant curriculum. The College's curriculum strategy sets out the rationale for expanding part-time HE including Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLA). The College continues to expand its HLA provision setting ambitious targets for growth as the economy emerges from Covid-19. Areas of focus include the HLA in Computing launched in the 2019/20 academic year and the introduction of a new HLA in Supply Chain and Logistics for September 2021. The creation of this HLA has been
a highly collaborative process in direct response to an identified skills shortage, which has been amplified through Brexit. These programmes prove attractive to a wide cross section of students, including those from a disadvantaged background who see the opportunity to earn while they learn as advantageous.
Part-time Higher Education provision is aligned to policy objectives through the launch of a L4 in Cyber Security and Data Analysis in September 21, as well as an HND in Computing as a top up to current HNC provision.

Internal Student Support

The College's Education Support Team works to ensure that all students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties receive the necessary support and help them integrate fully into College life

and succeed with their chosen course. These students, who have additional needs due to their disability, specific learning difficulty, or medical condition are assisted sensitively and discretely to enable them to complete their courses. The College has dedicated student support spaces where students can meet with student support staff.

The Education Support Team offers advice and assistance with the application for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), and will often provide support for the applicant even before the DSA process is completed.

The Team currently supports students with a wide range of additional study needs providing support and advice including the following:

- Educational Support Workers e.g. Note-takers, readers
- Support for sensory needs e.g. specialist software, sign language interpreters, alternative document formats
- Alternative exam arrangements
- Group learning support sessions
- Specialist equipment
- Risk Assessments
- Advice and support regarding access to College facilities and services
- DSA application process
- College counselling support

The Student Support Team also introduced a new pilot initiative during the 2020/21 academic year called Northern Plus. This support service has been designed to help students who are displaying difficulties with attendance or succeeding in their chosen course, particularly against the context of Covid-19. Through a variety of intervention strategies, and linking support services both internally and externally, it empowers students to reach their potential. A further pilot will introduce a system of assessing student attitudes to college and their studies to highlight at an early stage those who may struggle to achieve.

The College is aware that a proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities do not come forward for support in the FE sector. Engagement with course teams has identified previously unreported or unidentified problems which are then signposted to student services for assessment of need and support as required.

All students within the College are automatically members of the Students' Union. The College has a Student Union structure that facilitates and supports Student Representatives through training. There is an elected Higher Education Officer role on each campus to represent the views of HE students across all campuses.

The College Careers service works closely with local employers, schools and our students to encourage progression into Higher Education programmes (both full and part time). The careers and economic engagement teams have been involved in working with community groups, employers and employees in upskilling and assistance with education and career development.

In seeking to progress existing students to HE the College provides careers advice to all of its Level 2 and 3 students. This ensures that potential progression routes are identified and clearly signposted. The College's tutorial system also supports students with their choices and

applications to courses at the next level. In particular final year students on full time FE and HE courses, during these tutorials, receive support in the completion of standalone HE and UCAS applications.

The College reviews its fee structure annually to ensure that the cost of HE is fair and competitive and does not act as a barrier to entry. The College has introduced bursaries to support students from low income backgrounds, the level of which will be reviewed to ensure widest participation. The Student Finance Co-Ordinator and member of the College Finance Department provide advice to students and assists them with their student finance issues. Students can also avail of one to one meetings with a member of the Finance Team.

The College has a strong commitment to its tutorial system and provides tutorial time for all FT HE programmes and a number of significant PT programmes. The tutorial system helps the lecturing staff identify early any student issues. This is a pivotal role and is often the starting point for referral to Student Services were the relevant help can be given. The tutorial system allows for one to one interaction with students which allows them to talk through issues that they might not otherwise raise in a group environment.

External

Within the College catchment area around one third of school leavers achieve less than 5 GCSEs A*-C grades including English and Maths. In some Council areas this figure is as high as 38.7%, well above the Northern Ireland average of 34%. This level of educational under-achievement impacts generally, though not exclusively, on communities of greatest social deprivation. The College seeks to support these leavers through its FE provision, through Essential Skills and through expansion in Work Based Learning provision.

Community engagement is also high on the College's agenda and this will continue to be actively pursued. The College supports a calendar of external events providing support or interactive stands to encourage young people and adults to think about education. Examples include attendance of both local and national careers fairs/events.

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

The College examines data on access to HE under the following criteria: - age, community background, socio economic class, gender, ethnic origin, marital status, mode of attendance, disability and course type. Through the College Development Planning process, the College sets KPIs for performance, including retention and achievement at all levels and progress is reported to the Education Committee of the GB.
The College continues to offer support (above the threshold level of support) to care leavers required by the now discontinued Buttle UK Quality Mark. The College works closely with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, to not only identify care leavers, but to also provide them

with appropriate support. The College has also recently been awarded accreditation by the Carers Federation, showing that we meet a high level of support for those students who are Carers. Again, links with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust ensure a cohesive system for continuing support for students.

WAP activity within the College falls under the Teaching & Learning Directorate, with the VP for Teaching & Learning holding responsibility for review of the WAPP on an annual basis

Enrolments

Table 1 Shows enrolments of Higher Education students at the College by Quintile:

MDM Quintile	2020/21			3 Year Average (17/18 to 19/20)		
	FT	PT	Total	FT	PT	Overall
1	27	73	100	33	70	103
2	36	136	172	47	145	192
3	46	161	207	67	221	288
4	64	286	350	78	225	303
5	36	148	184	68	145	213
Unknown		6	6	1	25	26
Grand Total	209	810	1019	294	831	1125
TABLE 1 HE ENROLMENTS - Students by Quintile (2019/20 against a 3-year average (2017/18 – 2019/20)						

TABLE 1 illustrates that HE enrolments for the College were down overall by 9% over the previous 3-year average. This is reflected in all quintiles being down for FT provision, in terms of absolute numbers, for the 2020/21 academic year against the previous 3-year average.

FT HE enrolments have decreased 21% from the 2019/20 to 2020/21 academic year. Quintile 5 has seen a significant reduction of 40% between the 2 intakes with Quintiles 1, 2 and 3 reflecting a similar trend to the percentage overall reduction in FT enrolments. Quintile 4 having the least reduction at 7% down on the 2019/20 academic year.

PT enrolments overall remained stable between 2019/20 and 2020/21 with a modest 1% increase in enrolments over the two years but remain down compared to the previous 3-year average. There have been MDM Quintile 1 has an increase of 4% from 2019/20 to 2020/21 while Quintile 2 has a decrease of just under 5% in the same period. The biggest changes have been the decrease in numbers from Quintile 3 enrolments and an increase in Quintile 4 enrolments.

PT enrolments continues to be made up from a large proportion of adult learners and these PT enrolments continue to allow adults the opportunity to return to HE, a route which otherwise may not be accessible to them.

Performance

TABLE 2 illustrates retention, achievement, and success rates within full-time and part-time final year provision for quintiles 1 and 2 and allows for comparison with overall rates within HE in the College.

	19/20	3 Year Average	19/20 Difference Against Average

MDM Quintile	Group	% Retention	% Achievement	% Success	% Retention	% Achievement	% Success	Difference	Difference	Difference
1	FT	93	100	93	95	97	93	-2	3	0
	PT	95	81	76	92	86	79	3	-5	-3
1 Total		94	86	81	93	89	83	1	-3	-2
2	FT	95	95	90	98	98	97	-3	-4	-7
	PT	96	82	79	93	88	82	3	-5	-3
2 Total		96	85	81	94	90	85	2	-5	-3
All Quintiles		95	88	84	95	90	86	0	-2	-2
Table 2		**Final year HE RETENTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS Students by Quintiles 1 and 2 (2019/20 against a 3-year average (2017/18 – 2019/20))**								

TABLE 3 illustrates retention, achievement, and success rates within full-time and part-time non final year provision for quintiles 1 and 2 and allows for comparison with overall rates within HE in the College.

		19/20			3 Year Average			19/20 Difference Against Average		
MDM Quintile	Group	% Retention	% Achievement	% Success	% Retention	% Achievement	% Success	Difference Retention	Difference Achievement	Difference Success
1	FT	88	N/A	N/A	94	N/A	N/A	-6	N/A	N/A
	PT	93	N/A	N/A	85	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	N/A
1 Total		91	N/A	N/A	88	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A
2	FT	83	N/A	N/A	84	N/A	N/A	-1	N/A	N/A
	PT	90	N/A	N/A	87	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A
2 Total		88	N/A	N/A	86	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A
All Quintiles		91	N/A	1	90	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A
Table 3		**Non final year HE RETENTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS Students by Quintiles 1 and 2 (2019/20 against a 3-year average (2017/18 – 2019/20))**								

For the 2019/20 academic year Quintiles 1 and 2, overall, have similar retention, achievement and success rates as the College as a whole. Full-time Quintile 1 final year Success has been of particular note being 9% above the whole College HE success rate. Although there are negative differences across quintiles 1 and 2 against the three-year averages for both part-time and full-time provision these reflect a similar trend when compared to the whole College figures. We must also remain cognisant of the small absolute numbers within quintile 1 full-time students and that small difference can be magnified when transposed into percentages.

During 19/20 the College continued to perform well against targets set for learners with Self Declared Disability, Young Males from Quintile 1 and Care Experienced learners. For other target groups the College had set itself challenging targets and with the decrease in overall enrolments

these proved difficult to meet. We have adjusted future targets to take into account a period of time to rebuild enrolments up to previous levels.

a. 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.

Key Priorities for the next 3 years '

Over the next 3 years the college will review and refresh its HE provision in order to ensure a sustainable, fit for purpose curriculum, particularly in relation to Full-time provision. The review will take cognisance of WAP with a focus on accessibility and flexibility in delivery models, and will be informed by analysis of trends in HE student pathways into HE courses, both internal and external. Future HE curriculum will also be informed by recommendations emerging from the DfE review of HE in FE.

The College is continuing to expand its HLA provision and we see this as an excellent pathway for students who may not traditionally enter a HE programme. It will allow students to work and be able to support themselves while they are studying. This is seen as particularly important to students who may be put off by the financial implications and potential debt of studying on full time programmes.

The College has now its WAP Coordinator role in place and this role will continue to be a key element in WAP within the College over the next three years. It will be key for the WAP coordinator to examine ways that the new LMS system can be used to track key metrics to ensure the monitoring of students throughout the year. A pilot for EBS Mark Book has now been carried out during the 2020/21 academic year and this will be rolled out further in the 2021/22 academic year and subsequent academic years this and other tools are seen as critical for the better tracking of students who may be at risk and allow for early intervention for improving retention and achievement. The WAP coordinator will take responsibility for monitoring and reporting through to the college Curriculum Management Team and Education Committee.

The HE recruiting environment has been challenging for the College over the last few years and in particular the 2020/21 academic year has been extremely challenging due to issues associated with the Covid-19 environment including increase in Level 3 grades and increased intake numbers into Universities. It is expected that this challenge will continue into the 2021/22 academic year with increased grade profiles and competition from the University sector.

The reduction in total HE enrolments (a reduction of 14% over the period 18/19 to end of May 20/21) has had a direct impact on the numbers targeted within the WAPP. In the immediate aftermath of Covid-19, the objective will be to rebuild enrolments back up to pre-Covid levels,

before targeting further growth and strengthening of overall HE enrolment numbers, which will bring a positive increase in WAP targeted groups.

It has become clear that successful WAPP delivery is dependent on strong links with stakeholders and the College continue to develop external stakeholder engagement and networks. The College will continue to work with key stakeholders such as schools and delivery partners.

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 targets for each of the groups identified across the **3 years 2022/23 – 2024/25**. 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 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome		
4 Year Average		**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**
129	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	115	125	133

   (ii)   Group: **Students with a Disability**
           Outcome: **To increase the number of students who declare a disability**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome

4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
117		90	92	94

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

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

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome		
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
XX		25	28	32

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

Outcome: **To increase participation of young males from NI MDM Quintile 15**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome		
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
21		15	17	19

(v)   Group: **Adult Learners**

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

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017-2020)	Targets/Outcome		
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
601		600	650	675

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			
		2022/23	**2023/24**	**2024/25**
Not available	**Number**	9	10	11

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			
		2022/23	**2023/24**	**2024/25**
	Number			
	Percentage			

(ii)

Group:

Outcome:

Baseline (statistical or %	Targets/Outcome

participation last year monitored)				
		2022/23	**2023/24**	**2024/25**
				13
	Number			
	Percentage			

(iii)

Group:

Outcome:

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	**2023/24**	**2024/25**
	Number			
	Percentage			

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 2022/23 (£)	Estimated Spend 2023/24 (£)	Estimated Spend 2024/25 (£)
Bursaries	**£23,750**	**£25,000**	**£27,000**
Scholarships			
Other financial Support			
Outreach	£9,645	£9,645	£9,645
Retention			
Research Activity			
Staffing/ Administration			
TOTAL	**£33,395**	**£34,645**	**£36,645**

b. 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.)

The College will continue to provide Bursaries to students administered through the student loan company. This will be paid at 10% of the total fee.

PROJECT 1 WAP Coordinator(s)

The role will continue in the 22/23 academic year and is seen as a key to delivery of WAPP projects and as a focus of WAP activity within the College. The post(s) will assist with the management, monitoring and operational delivery of WAP related activity within the College and provide a focus for all WAP activity. The role will be responsible for Pre-Entry promotion, Induction and Ongoing Support. It will ensure that pre-entry information is accessible to students and promoted with appropriate outside stakeholders including schools and community organisations. Using College reports and MIS resources monitor progress and provide intervention in order to retain and promote success of students from MDM quintiles 1 and 2. With the aspects of the LMS system still to come online the role will continue to look at how new systems such as Mark Book, planned for wider rollout for September 2021 after 2020/21 pilot, can be used to track and support students.

PROJECT 2 OUTREACH – Parents Homework Programme

This project was introduced in the 2019/20 academic year however it has been badly affected by the Covid-19 lockdown that year and the various lockdowns and restrictions in the 2020/21 academic year. Initial meetings had taken place with a primary school Principal to plan a delivery model but this was put on hold as lockdown started. It will therefore continue and develop into 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years in order to allow time for the project to properly embed and be evaluated. The aim of the Project remains unchanged from the 2019/20 academic year. The Causeway Coast and Glens Borough has been identified as having poor literacy and numeracy levels in adults compared to the rest of Northern Ireland. This has had a knock-on effect as, without these skills parents do not have the ability to assist their children with homework through primary schools where the foundation of these skills are laid down. This issues will have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 lockdowns and the requirement for home schooling over the period. Children from these families are already then at a disadvantage. This project seeks to set up classes in primary schools and community centres, in areas of deprivation, for parents to help them with skills that will assist with supporting their children's homework. The school with the highest percentage of free school meals in the College's catchment area has been identified and the Principal is keen to have an input into the project.

PROJECT 3 OUTREACH – 'Think HE' for Schools

This project will continue to target local schools particularly secondary and comprehensive schools with catchment areas from MDM quintiles 1 and 2. The project will deliver sessions which combine practical workshops, in curriculum areas particularly identified by the Northern Ireland Skills Barometer requiring qualifications at level 5 and above, as well as providing careers advice. The aim of the sessions will be to encourage young people, who may

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not usually progress to HE to think about the possibilities and opportunities open to them. Through HE College staff will present attractive careers, specific to their subject area in industries that require HE qualifications. These engaging practical workshops have been designed to inspire the young people attending to think about the possibilities open to them through higher education.

PROJECT 4 ATTAINMENT RAISING – Easter GCSE Science Camp

This project will be new for the 2022/23 academic year. The project will be targeted at year 12 students from secondary schools with the aim of providing GCSE Science revision to assist attendees secure a successful result at GCSE and transition into science at Level 3 and beyond. The camp will also give the attendees the opportunity to look at career opportunities within the sciences and the Higher Education requirements for successful entry into these jobs. The project will therefore assist students to progress in science, consider science as a career and lastly better understand the academic pathway required for a career in science or a related field

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

The College WAPP activity contributes to:

- Theme 2 'Raising Aspiration and Attainment' Key Action 5;
- Theme 3 'Enhancing recruitment and selection' Key Actions 6 and 7;
- Theme 4 'Improving the quality and relevance of support for retention and progression' Key Actions 8 and 9.

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

Financial and other assistance will be communicated to students, prior to applying to the College via the website, within printed promotional materials and during school talks and careers events. Initial automated emails to applicants also provide an online link to College financial information.

All applicants for both full time and part time courses are either formally interviewed or are invited to attend information sessions and, where appropriate, will be directed to a financial support expert. Where appropriate, students may be provided with a Finance Leaflet detailing financial support opportunities. Once enrolled with the College, students will have access to information on financial assistance through the College's intranet, the College Tutorial system etc. Confidential meetings can also be arranged with the College's Student Finance Team. The College has also developed media clips which cover student finance on social media.

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

The main source of data collection in the College is through its MIS systems which can be interrogated by the College's MI team via common or bespoke reports. The College has also developed a number of PowerBI report that will provide a more user friendly and visual method for interrogating data by both management and support staff. Students will be encouraged to fully populate their details on the College's online enrolment system to ensure that the College has collected all the necessary details to allow suitable interventions to take place. An increased ability to track student metrics will allow earlier detection of trends in attendance or assessment by individual course tutors and allow for more timely intervention. More global trends will be monitored by the WAP Coordinator who will manage intervention in conjunction with student services.

It is envisioned that the new LMS introduction will improve the quantity of data held and ability to interrogate this data. This will improve the College's ability to analyse and make decisions on data connected to WAP. There has been some slippage centrally on the implementation of LMS but it will be invaluable as the breadth of its functionality is realised for use by the sector.

Targets and achievements will be monitored by the College's WAP Officer and reported back to the College's WAP Working Group who will be responsible for overall strategy. Progress on targets and achievement will be reported to the VP T&L.

f. 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 College has continued to pay bursaries to students with household incomes under £19,203. During 19/20 academic year 92 bursaries were awarded to full time HE students. Anecdotally students have indicated that the bursary has been useful for helping with their subsistence and not be as reliant at key times for part time work. Outreach programmes were planned but were significantly affected by the Covid-19 environment. These outreach programmes and however been successful in previous years with 100s of school pupils being involved in workshops and events.

Level 2 Evaluation - Learning
The resulting increase in knowledge or capability

The College views consistency of projects as an important factor in allowing for them to develop and embed them over time. This consistency allows for stakeholder partnerships to mature and help both work together and allow for the evolution for projects to improve over time and better meet their goals. The College however still continue to examine new ways to engage and promote the widening of participation.

WAP also has representation on the College's HE Forum were progress is reported.

Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer
Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application

Uptake on bursaries has been reduced but there remains a significant number applying for and receiving a bursary from the College in comparison to the initial year of the award within the College. This is positive and may be due to applicants' attitudes towards claiming or awareness of availability of the bursary. The number of bursaries awarded has also been affected by the decrease in overall enrolments for HE within the College which reflects the impact of the current and challenging environment that we find ourselves in. Changes in overall enrolments can prove difficult when predicting the number of bursaries to be awarded. Historical data now provides a range which can be used to estimate spend based on total predicted HE numbers.

Other key measures do not see constant increase but do remain consistent. However, those that can be compared to overall College numbers, such as retention and achievement, continue to be favourable as a sub population of HE provision.

Level 4 Evaluation- Results

Results- the effects resulting from performance

The new LMS has not yet had its total potential impact within the sector and many of the systems are still not fully implemented. However, when this happens it should allow the sector and the College to provide more effective analysis and evaluation of a wide range of interventions within FE and HE. This will include greater evaluation of WAP. Systems such as the implementation of Mark Book in the 2021/22 academic year should show an improvement in the monitoring and identification of risk down to individual student level allowing better planned intervention and assessment.