

University Centre Colchester at Colchester Institute

Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025

Introduction

The present document identifies the targeted changes required to maximise on the opportunity for institutional development arising from the Access and Participation Plan. At its centre is the requirement for a five-year, strategic planning process, built on OfS dashboard data, academic aspiration and the characteristics of University Centre Colchester's student community.

Its content has been reviewed by Colchester Institute's executive team, and members of its governing body. The APP has been written in consultation with students past and present, and includes contributions from academic and administrative staff involved in working with students from underrepresented groups, as set out in the Office for Students' (OfS') *Regulatory Advice 6* document (p.7, paragraphs 15 and 17).

Provider portrait

University Centre Colchester (UCC) was established in 2016 under the auspices of BIS, to group together the higher education provision at Colchester Institute, in order to provide a more academically and administratively bespoke environment for L4 to L7 programmes. Having delivered higher education courses for over half a century, it now offers a range of degree courses in three overarching areas: the Arts, Social Sciences and Applied Sciences. The following figures contextualise some aspects of the student experience at UCC:

- In 2018/19, 187 students enrolled in Yr.1 of whom c. 20% progressed to UCC, having previously gained L3 qualifications at Colchester Institute.
- Over 70% of all students are commuter students who live in a radius up to 25 miles around Colchester.
- Over 60% of students are over the age of 21 when commencing their studies at UCC.
- An average class size at UCC is around 8-12 students. The largest cohorts have c. 26 students.

Colchester Institute describes itself as a Widening Participation institution. Its geographical location is relatively close to some of the UK's most socio-economically disadvantaged communities.¹ Colchester is also amongst the ten fastest growing urban communities in Britain.²

Guiding principles of the Access and participation plan

The content of University Centre Colchester's *Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025* is informed by a number of guiding principles, the application of which underpins its aims.

The *Access and Participation Plan 2020-2025*:

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464430/English_Index_of_Multiple_Deprivation_2015_-_Guidance.pdf

² <https://www.lsh.co.uk/explore/research-and-views/research/2019/january/2019-vitality-index?listing=true>

- Is a strategic document with clearly identified measuring and reporting points;
- Proposes a theory of change which is evidence-based by using OfS dashboard data;
- Is linked to wider UCC strategic planning documents, national policies and/or research documentation;
- Impacts on UCC's curriculum planning and delivery;
- Requires a re-positioning of the available breadth of student support;
- Has an impact on the student experience at UCC that benefits all students in underrepresented groups;
- Is measured against OfS criteria for improving opportunities for underrepresented groups in accessing, and succeeding in, Higher Education;
- Identifies current institutional performance and offers a national context based on a comparison between UCC data and All English Higher Education Providers;
- Proposes targets based on our institutional performance and context.

1. Assessment of performance

The assessment of performance of University Centre Colchester is based on OfS' dashboard data.

1.1 Higher education participation

Access

Full-time student enrolment by mature students rose from 22% in 2016-17 to 61% in 2017-18. At the same time, full-time numbers for students up to the age of 21 fell from 78% to 39%. This determines a key element of our student population. A comparison with All English Higher Education Providers' (AEHEP) recruitment in 2017-18 illustrates that UCC's student cohort represents almost the national picture in reverse: across England, there were 27.8% mature and 72.2% young full-time students. However, our part-time student community is more indicative of the national picture. In 2017-18, UCC had 12% young (AEHEP: 12.8%) and 88% mature (AEHEP: 87.4%) students.

An intersectional analysis of full-time students with deprivation quintile 1 shows a strong performance at UCC. In 2017-18, it stood at 30% as compared to AEHEP at 21%. Further analysis by ethnicity is also positive when compared to national recruitment statistics. UCC recorded 21% Asian (AEHEP: 10.5%) and 19% Black (AEHEP: 10.7%) student recruitment.

A comparison of quintile 1 and 2 students at UCC between 2014-15 and 2018-18 evidences the institution's profile as an organisation that promotes educational opportunity: quintile 2 remained relatively constant at 24% and 25% respectively, whereas the percentage of quintile 1 students rose from 20% to 30%. During this period, the gap between quintile 5 and quintile 1 rose from -11% to -17%.

Success

In 2015-16, continuation amongst young and mature full-time students stood at 84% at UCC. By 2017-18, this had dropped to 79% for young students and 70% for mature students. A wider

comparison to AEHEP shows that UCC needs to address this situation, as across the sector continuation rose from 92.1 to 92.2% in the same period. Amongst mature students, the declining continuation rate at UCC was more pronounced than the 0.5% drop across all AEHEP.

The decline at UCC was particularly noticeable amongst quintile 1 students: comparing UCC's institutional data from 2015-16 to 2017-18 revealed a 10% reduction to 75%.

Interim observation: We note the drop in non-continuation with particular reference to deprivation quintiles, as well as the institutional gap of 9% between young and mature students (2017-18).

Attainment

From 2015-16 to 2018-19, attainment amongst young and mature full-time students at University Centre Colchester rose by 11% and 12% respectively to 75% for young and 77% for mature students, thereby moving the institution closer to the sector average of 90.2% for AEHEP.

In particular, we note the progress made in the deprivation (IMD2015) category from 2017-18 to 2018-19, which recorded quintiles 1 and 2 up by 5% and 10% respectively to 75%.

Interim observation: Promoting higher attainment amongst full-time students requires institutional actions. Intersectional attainment data for UCC students is limited and will need to be recorded by UCC as part of this APP.

Progression to employment or further study

The OfS dashboard indicates that progression to employment or further study amongst young full-time UCC students fell from 45% in 2015-16 to 41% in 2016-17, but rose from 40% to 55% for mature students in the same period. A comparison with the overall results achieved by AEHEP, 72.3%, illustrates the need for UCC to improve its performance in this section. Furthermore, the gap of 14% in progression between young and mature students at UCC is an indicator for where targeted interventions need to take place

Interim observation: According to the dataset available, UCC's performance requires institutional interventions to ensure that more students at UCC are able to progress to highly skilled employment or study at higher level. Data for intersectional analysis is also limited, and will need to be generated as part of the APP.

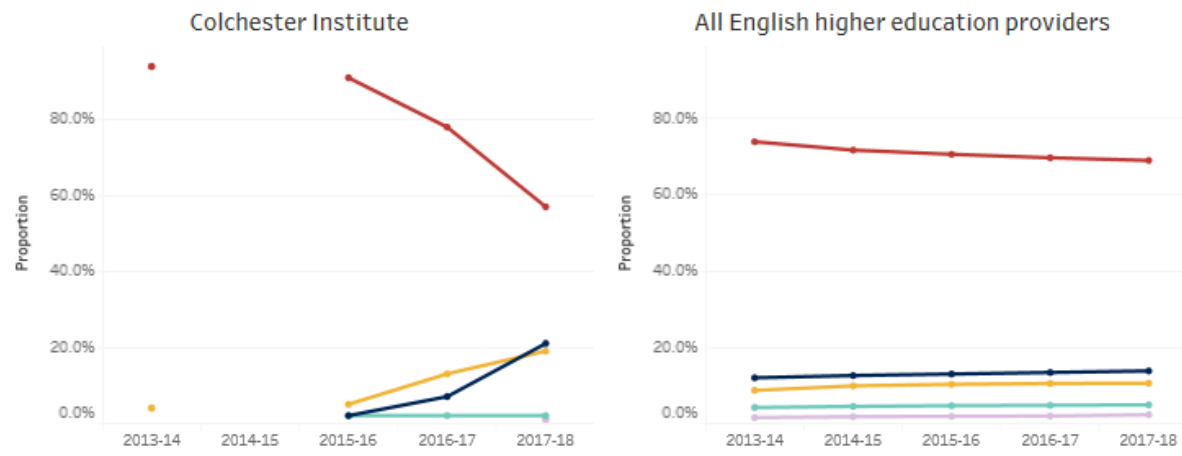
1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

University Centre Colchester has, in recent years, successfully increased the volume of BAME students on its programmes. In 2017-18, UCC's student population included 21% Asian, 19% Black and 2% mixed race students, as shown in Fig. 1 below.

Fig.1

Access proportions for: full-time or apprenticeship



A comparison with the recruitment of AEHEP in 2017-18 shows UCC above sector statistics, except for mixed race students, which stood at over twice UCC's performance at 4.8%.

Interim observation: We note our below sector percentage for access of mixed race students.

Success

In 2017-18, continuation rates at UCC stood at 81% for white students, 67% for Asian students and 54% for black students, resulting in a statistically significant gap of 27% between white and black students. It also appears that the continuation rate for black students had dropped from 70% the year before.

Interim observation: UCC acknowledges that more targeted support for BAME students is needed, particularly in relation to the 27% gap in continuation between black and white students.

Attainment

In addition to the OfS dashboard data we have considered the HESA 2017/18 degree classification and ethnicity statistics, to be able to illustrate how the continuation information set out above connects to attainment amongst BAME students at UCC.

There does appear to be an attainment 'ceiling' for Asian students at 2:1 level, which is not reflected in national data sets. However, the context to this gap must be noted as the percentage of students at UCC consist of a smaller cohort than should be identified numerically.

Interim observation: we note the potential for an attainment 'ceiling' for Asian students within the context of the data set.

Progression to employment or further study

There is currently no UCC data available for this section, when considering all ethnicities except white. However, we note that AEHEP achieved 70.1% in 2016-17. We will therefore take UCC's overall target for student progression, 65%, as a benchmark to aim for as part of the APP.

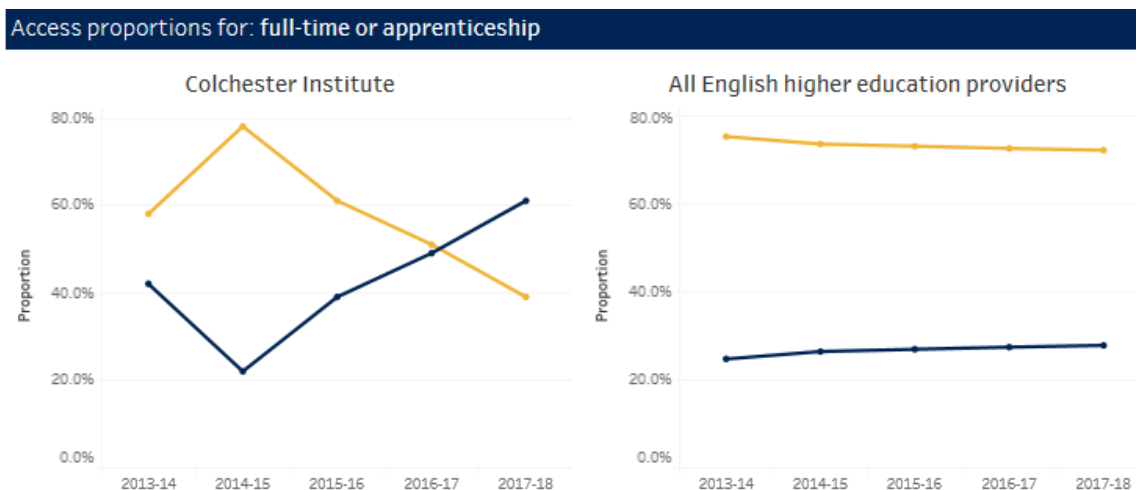
Interim observation: To identify BAME progression statistics at UCC, and to apply the overall institutional results as a target to BAME students' progression.

1.3 Mature students

Access

The impact of University Centre Colchester's widening participation agenda is clearly evidenced in the accessibility of its programmes by mature students. In recent years the profile of the organisation has reflected a more mature student community, and this is captured in the OFS data dashboard (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2



In 2017-18 the data dashboard data shows 61% of full-time students were mature, compared a national average of 27.8% at AEHEP. Over a number of years, UCC's percentage of mature students has risen systematically, from 22% in 2014-15 to 67% in 2018-19. At the same time, the percentage of quintile 1 students in this category grew from 17% to 43%.

Interim observation: The increase in number of mature students from a quintile1 background requires the allocation of extra support as part of this APP.

Success

Continuation amongst mature full-time student at UCC dropped from 84% to 79% in the year to 2018-19, which is around 5% below the figures achieved by AEHEP. We note drop of 10% to 75% in continuation between 2015-16 and 2017-18 amongst mature UCC students from a quintile 1 background.

An intersectional consideration by age 21-25 confirms UCC's continuation rates, but no other intersectional data by age categories has been available to allow for a more detailed breakdown of these numbers.

Interim observation: UCC notes the drop in percentages over two-year period. To allow more detailed actions to be taken, the institution needs to identify relevant intersectional criteria as part of the APP.

Attainment

The OfS data dashboard indicates a change from below sector performance to exceeding it during a two-year period from 2015-16 to 2018-19: the attainment of UCC students rose from 65% to 77%, compared to AEHEP, who recorded a rise of around 3% to 70%. There is currently no data available to allow for an intersectional analysis in terms of ethnicity or deprivation quintile.

Interim observation: we note that the improvement in attainment amongst mature students was proportionate to that of young students at UCC between 2015-16 and 2018-19.

Progression to employment or further study

The data available on the OfS dashboard indicates an institutional performance that, despite some improvements, remains significantly below that of AEHEP. In 2015-16, UCC recorded 40% progression amongst its mature students, and in 2016-17 this had risen to 55%. The comparative level of achievement amongst AEHEP was 73.1% and 75.7% respectively.

The fact that progression percentages fell by 4% amongst young students at UCC over the same period which witnessed a 15% in rise in progression amongst mature students, underlines that this an area of concern.

Interim observation: We note a below sector performance in student progression, which requires targeted actions by the institution, and the identifying of an organisation-specific target.

1.4 Disabled students

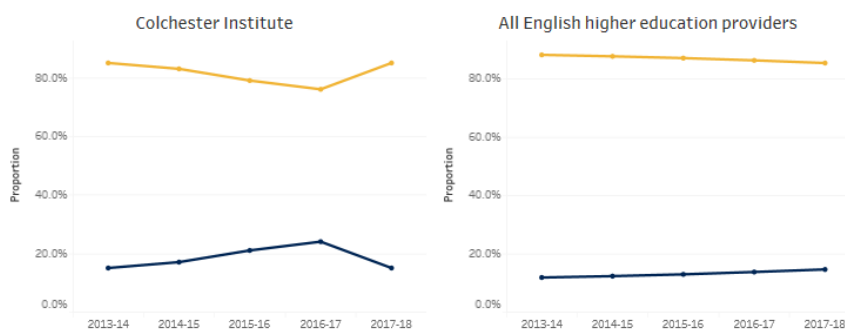
Access

In our recent experience, there is a significant gap between the percentage of students joining UCC who declare a disability and those who do not.³ Nevertheless, OfS data dashboard (Fig.3) shows that UCC has consistently recruited above the national average for the past 5 years.

Fig. 3. OfS dashboard. UCC students with disability

³ The appointment of a DSA specialist in our Academic Services team at the beginning of the academic year 2019-20 has resulted a threefold increase in the number of UCC students who receive DSA support.

Access proportions for: full-time or apprenticeship



Although access for disabled students had dropped from 24% to 15% in 2017-18, the subsequent year saw an increase in disabled students to 20%. However, there was not sufficient data available to allow further intersectional evaluation by either ethnicity or deprivation.

Interim observation: Based on internal organisational data, we believe that it is necessary to further amend our registration process, to enable more students to declare a disability.

Success

The data available on the OfS dashboard indicates 50% continuation in 2016-17, compared to AEHEP at 84.7%. In 2015-16, the continuation data at UCC stood at 79%, and in 2017-18 was at 73%, just 1% below continuation for non-disabled students. At present, there is no credible data to allow for intersectional analysis.

Interim observation: we note our below national average performance in the context of relatively limited student numbers, but acknowledge the need to improve this performance through targeted support. We also note the almost identical continuation percentage for disabled and non-disabled students in 2017-18, but are aware of the difference in overall numbers involved in both student groups.

Attainment

2017-18 was the first year with an available data set for UCC. Student attainment for disabled students stood at 67% at this institution, compared with 75.9% across AEHEP. In 2018-19, this percentage had risen to 70%, which is 8% below the figure recorded for non-disabled students. There was no intersectional data available.

Interim observation: It is encouraging that the gap in student success is narrowed at the point when students achieve their awards. However, to ensure that more targeted support can be given, UCC needs to capture intersectional student characteristics to be able to formulate an effective improvement plan.

Progression to employment or further study

There is currently no data available on the OfS dashboard that allows for a robust evaluation of progression to employment or further study in this category.

Interim observation: across AEHEP students achieve 73.7% in this category. In order to put forward a credible target, UCC will take its highest progression percentage to date, 55% for mature students in 2016-17, as a benchmark for its performance in this category at the end of the present APP.

1.5 Care leavers

There have been fewer than five students in each year for the last five consecutive years, and numbers are therefore too low to report on in the APP.

Interim observation: UCC commits to changing its registration forms, which may lead to an increased number of students declaring themselves as being care leavers. Once sufficient data becomes available, we will monitor student retention and success on programme. In line with other groups identified in this document, we will collect data on access to employment and further study in due course.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

In section 1.1 to 1.5, we have considered our institutional performance, and wherever possible, defined intersections of disadvantage by age, ethnicity or deprivation quintile. The interim observations set out above have led to being able to identify the following, overarching, intersections of disadvantage that have informed our strategic aims and objectives:

Higher Education participation

We need to prioritise our support of students to address non-continuation amongst certain deprivation quintiles. In terms attainment, younger students up to the age of 21 are most at risk, while overall progression, though improving, is still below sector benchmark.

BAME

Access to study at UCC is positive, but success and attainment rates for BAME at UCC need more targeted support. The 27% attainment gap between white and black students is of concern. Furthermore, there appears to be an attainment ceiling for Asian students.

Mature

Access to UCC by mature students is highly effective, but success and progression require more designated support. Progression in particular is some 20% below AEHEP. Further intersectional information needs to be generated to allow a targeted strategy to emerge over time.

Disabled

UCC needs to be more effective at differentiating between the various needs of its students. Success rates are currently below institutional non-disabled averages, attainment less so. In the absence of conclusive progression data, we will need to identify and put in place measuring mechanisms in this category.

Care leavers

There is, at present, a lack of information about this underrepresented group. Numbers are so small that it has not been possible to include this information.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

Internal data sets, at present mostly qualitative, suggest that single parents are a growing category in our student community, although we acknowledge that more work needs to be done to be able to have credible statistical data to draw on. During 2019-20 we will further develop internal data collection and evaluation processes to be able to design and implement more targeted assistance for the following underrepresented groups: care leavers, single parents and those with English as a second language.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

2.1 Overview

Based on the data sets for underrepresented groups in higher education (as set out in section 1), UCC has identified the following considerations in formulating its approach to the design of strategic aims and objectives:

- A self-evaluation of its recent performance as reflected in the largest gaps in terms of its key metrics per characteristic, where available.
- A differentiation between institutional and subject level where appropriate, given the small number of students per subject cohort.
- An awareness of UCC's profile as a higher education provider that already attracts significant percentages of students with specific characteristics (e.g. HE participation/mature students).
- The intention to support students from underrepresented groups more effectively through targeted interventions.
- The need for UCC to deepen its understanding of its current student population to be able to pursue an evidence-based institutional approach to reducing success, attainment and progression gaps.
- An improved understanding of the longitudinal organisational impact of working with underrepresented groups, both pre- and post Higher Education.

2.2 Target groups, aims and objectives

Working with the following target groups is central to UCC's access and participation strategy in order to meet its aims and objectives. We also note the findings of a report published by the OfS in February 2019: Understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds.⁴

Target groups and aims

Higher Education participation:

- Retaining our positive performance in relation to access;
- Raising the continuation performance of young full-time students from 79% to 85%;
- Raising the continuation of mature full-time students from 70% to 78%;
- Increasing continuation of quintile 1 students from 75% to 85%;
- Improving progression for young full-time students from 41% to 65%;
- Improving progression for mature full-time students from 55% to 65%.

BAME students:

⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/d21cb263-526d-401c-bc74-299c748e9ecd/ethnicity-targeting-research-report.pdf>

- Retaining our strong performance in relation to access, while monitoring more closely any emerging trends relating to mixed race students;
- Investing in targeted support to close the continuation gap of 27% between black and white students;
- Removing the attainment ceiling for Asian students, evidenced in HESA's 2017-18 degree classifications, through academic support;
- Identifying BAME students' progression performance at UCC, and developing a support strategy, as applicable.

Mature students:

- Retaining our positive performance with regard to access and attainment;
- Collecting intersectional data to understand the drop of 4% in success between 2015-16 and 2016-17, to enable us to design and put in place interventions;
- Allocating additional academic support for improving success amongst mature quintile 1 students by 12% to 87%;
- Investing in the support of students to improve the progression to employment or further study performance by 10% to 65%.

Disabled students:

- Improving the intersectional data available to understand the institutions' performance in terms of access;
- Resourcing student support to close the continuation gap to meet the performance of non-disabled students (74%);
- Enabling disabled students to evidence the same attainment as non-disabled students (78%) at UCC;

Care leavers:

- Establishing a more effective approach to identifying care leavers;
- Providing academic assistance to support care leavers' success in Higher Education.

In addition, the institution has decided to include a focus on students with interrupted journeys to and through higher education for whom we currently hold no conclusive data. Qualitative feedback from academic staff underlines the need to learn more about these categories. These include:

- a) Single parents
- b) Students whose first language is not English

We note that some of the above aims require more detailed data than may currently be available. Where this applies, we propose a two-year data collection period from 2020-21 and 2021-22, including an annual evaluation of performance. This will then lead to the proposing of targets for the remainder of the current APP, to take effect from 2022-2025.

For all underrepresented groups for whom data from the OfS dashboard has been used in section 1, we will identify strategic measures in section 3.

Objectives

UCC has reviewed the objectives of its *Access and Participation Plan 2019-2020* to ensure that the actions proposed align with the strategic direction of the UCC Targets and Investment Plan 2020-2025. In some cases, this has led to a fundamental re-consideration of the institutional priorities. UCC also notes the presence of intersectional characteristics, and how these might impact on the objectives identified below.

The following strategic objectives reflect the outcomes that the aims are designed to achieve:

Higher Education participation:

We intend to raise the continuation of young and mature full-time students to 85% and 78% respectively, over a period of five years, based on year-on-year progress. The same time scale applies to improving the continuation of quintile 1 students from 75% to 85%.

The resourcing of students' progression to employment or further study is intended to enable young students to achieve 55% and mature students 65% over the duration of this five-year plan.

BAME students:

The staffing investment in targeted support seeks to address the continuation gap of 27% between black and white students by closing the gap by the end of this plan. This is an ambitious target, which also seeks to resolve the attainment ceiling in obtaining good degrees, currently recorded for Asian students.

Identifying BAME students' progression performance at UCC during 2020-2022 will lead to developing an evidence-based support strategy, to take effect from 2022-23 onwards.

Mature students:

Collecting intersectional data to understand the drop of 4% in success between 2015-16 and 2016-17 will enable us to design and put in place interventions.

By investing in the academic support of students we wish improve success for quintile 1 students by 12% to 87% by the end of this plan.

We also intend to support an increased student performance in progression to employment, by 10% to 65% within five years.

Disabled students:

The collection and analysis of intersectional data between 2020 and 2022 will help us design an evidence-based approach to supporting student access and progression to further study or employment. This is to take effect from 2023.

By investing in additional academic support we wish to close continuation gap, to meet the performance of non-disabled students (74%) within one year.

Care leavers:

Our objective is to encourage more care leavers to enter Higher Education, and enable them to declare their individual needs. However, the limited data set available suggests that students have either been reluctant to self-identify as part of the category, or that it may be an underrepresented group at UCC. Allowing for a new approach to collect this information to come into effect at the beginning of the academic year 2019/20, we will begin to evaluate data sets for this and the subsequent academic year, and design a bespoke strategy by working with students to determine suitable mechanisms of support. The strategy will take effect from 2021 onwards, by which time UCC will commit to evidence-based targets for 2025.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

UCC's whole provider strategic approach is built on a number of preconditions that need to be in place to be able to achieve the targets set out in this document.

- Financial affordability and sustainability. An understanding that actions taken need to be costed responsibly and have to be in place throughout the duration of a student's studies.
- A commitment to regarding social and cultural diversity as enriching the educational experience and developing 21st century citizens.
- An analytical and annually reviewed understanding of contributory factors that shape the student experience.
- An inclusive approach to understanding the student life cycle to include pre and post HE stages of personal development through targeted and quantifiable outreach and alumni activities.
- The belief that a community of people consists of individuals, some of whose profiles may be measured as part of a category, but who must all personally benefit from institutional actions.

Overview

Based on the five preconditions set out above, UCC has a whole institution approach to improving student access and participation. It takes a broad and inclusive view of the student journey, which includes academic, personal, social and professional development. It requires all staff (academic,

administrative and support), to ensure that equality of opportunity, progression and attainment, are available to all students.

UCC's Academic Board receives papers every Semester from UCC's Widening Participation Committee, in which our progress against the targets of the APP are tabled and measured. Academic Board has Governing Body representation.

The responsibility for oversight of activities, data evaluation and policy recommendations relating to the APP rests with the UCC's Widening Participation Committee, chaired by the UCC Director of Inclusion and Achievement (usually a Head or Assistant Head of School), and assisted by the UCC Accessibility Officer in UCC's Academic Services team. The committee meets mid-Semester to review qualitative and quantitative evidence from student module evaluations and UCC Academic Services staff, to ensure that

- The commitments of UCC's APP are tracked and evaluated systematically;
- Interventions, if necessary, can be put in place to assist students before course work is submitted at the end of the semester;
- The student voice can contribute to the development of targeted assistance;
- Best practice in relation to Widening Access and Participation can be disseminated formally;
- Students from underrepresented groups are represented on boards and committees at institutional and School level.

UCC is committed to ensuring that Widening Access and Participation continues to be key performance indicators for internal and external evaluations by:

- Including a performance evaluation at programme and/or school level in relation to all underrepresented groups;
- Providing specialist training for admissions tutors in matters relating to Widening Access and participation;
- Developing a strategic institutional approach to documenting and sharing pedagogical approaches and digital innovation that facilitates learning gain in underrepresented groups.

Alignment with other strategies

UCC's Strategic Plan 2017-2020 is based on eight aims, the fourth of which sets out 'to provide appropriate, high quality support (including study skills, learning support and pastoral support) to all students'.⁵ Success indicator 4b identifies 'creating mechanisms to provide effective and appropriate support to students from disparate social and economic backgrounds' as one of the aim's criteria for evaluation.

UCC's Strategic Plan 2020-2023 is currently in preparation but will include the following repositioning of the fourth aim as seeking to 'provide effective high quality, high impact support to

⁵ https://www.colchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/UCC_Strategic_Plan_2017-20.pdf

all students'. Amongst the success indicators will be 'creating mechanisms to provide measurable learning gain to students from underrepresented groups' and 'evidencing progression and attainment amongst students from underrepresented groups'.

As part of UCC's annual policy revision, we will embed the strategic aims and proposed actions of this document in all relevant institutional policies, including UCC's Student Charter, Teaching, Learning & Assessment policy and the Equality & Diversity policy.

Strategic measures

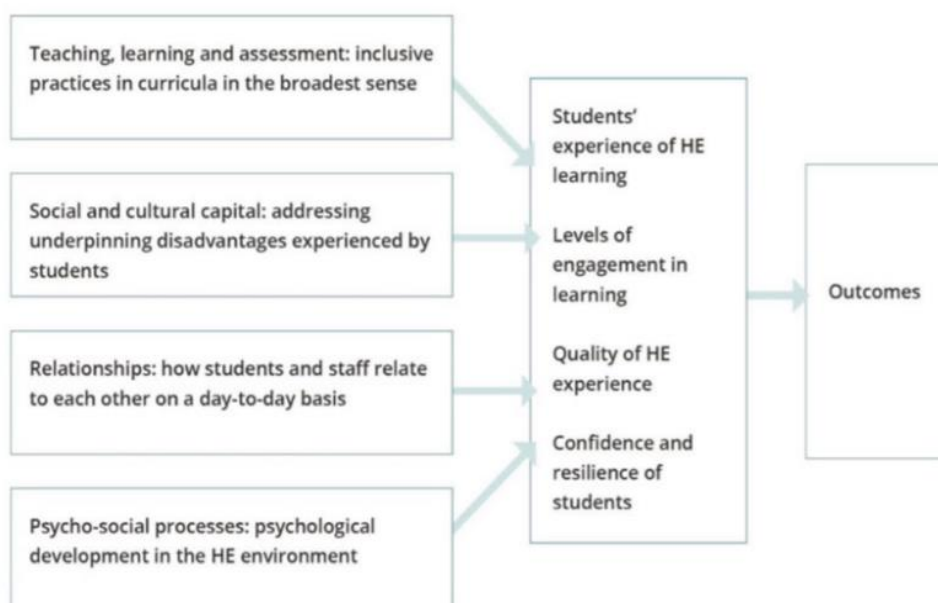
UCC believes that the impact of the proposed actions is at its most effective when all elements of the APP are understood to be interrelated, in other words, that inclusivity in educational opportunity must be a holistic approach. This is particularly relevant to the present document, which seeks to outline how we plan to improve student success, attainment and progression through carefully considered changes in our curriculum delivery.

Our *Theory of Change* is based on the combination of various factors: our size as a smaller institution that can respond quickly to students' needs, but the necessity to become more effective in collecting and evaluating statistical evidence from our student community. We understand that the capacity to do better can apply to all areas involving underrepresented groups, even those in which we exceed national benchmarks or regional demographic averages. Our *Theory of Change* is an evidence-based live process that is updated and evaluated every Semester to offer maximum responsiveness.

Curriculum development and student support

UCC's approach to the curriculum takes note of the following chart, which addresses differential outcomes:⁶

Fig. 11: Causes of difference in student outcomes



⁶ Mountford-Zimdars, A et al (2015) Causes of Difference in Student Outcomes. London: HEFCE

Two events have had a significant impact on UCC's recent curriculum development: the work undertaken on the *Access and Participation Plans 2019-2020 and 2020-2025* and the change of validating university from the University of Essex to the University of East Anglia in Autumn 2019. The result has been an evidence-based reconsideration of students' needs, resulting in the following curriculum development to be implemented at the start of the academic year 2020-21;

- Two new 0.5 FTE posts for Learning Mentors will be created, both with particular emphasis: one will focus on supporting SEN, the other on supporting success and attainment in our BAME student community;
- Four academic members of staff will be allocated a 0.1 FTE element in their workload to provide additional small group and individual academic support to students with the following characteristics: young full-time students to raise attainment and mature full-time students to support progression;
- All new and re-validated courses have an updated curriculum delivery which takes note of the specificity of the subject, as well as the nature of UCC's student profiles;
- All courses contain designated study skills/employability/entrepreneurship components, designed to enhance progression and employability;
- All programmes offer one-to-one academic and pastoral tutorials, and make a clear differentiation between both to improve targeted help;
- All students are allocated a personal tutor other than a member of the course teaching team;
- Most 'long-thin' modules have been replaced by one-semester modules, enabling staff to identify those in need of additional support more quickly;
- Submission dates are more carefully considered to allow students to focus on one piece of work at a time, which is of benefit to many, in particular those with particular learning difficulties;
- Introduction of a more detailed student self-declaration form at the point of Registration, to ensure a better understanding of the diverse needs of our students. An initial version of this form was trialled in October 2019:
<https://www.colchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/UCC-Learning-Support-Needs-Update-Form-19-20.pdf>

We will measure the impact of the above actions through:

- The reports prepared each Semester by UCC's Widening Access and Participation committee;
- The actions reported to Academic Board;
- Student module evaluations;
- Student success and attainment.

Employability and Financial Support

Employability

UCC, as part of Colchester Institute, has strong connections to the local community, including businesses, many of who work with both sections of the institution in relation to their employees. For example, an employer who recruits employees from the Further Education provision of Colchester Institute may sponsor degree apprentices, or part-time adult degree students at

University Centre Colchester. The same employer is also likely to contribute to the choice of modules offered as part of UCC's HNC and HND provision, as well as inform the curriculum development of top-up degrees. This relationship between employer, UCC and its student community already exists in some subject areas, such as Engineering. It is UCC's intention to extend our track record of academic and industry collaboration through the establishing of a job shop, with specific brief to facilitate final year student progression to employment or further study.

We will measure the impact of the above action through:

- Increased student progression to employment or further study;
- Improved student satisfaction with professional practice, placement and professional development modules.

Financial support

For the past five years, UCC has trialled a number of different approaches to supporting its students. Having reviewed the effectiveness of the schemes in 2019, we believe that our support needs to become more targeted at those in need, and more specifically, aimed at under-represented groups in Higher Education. Our review concluded that the offering of direct financial support to students in the form of course fee reductions or travel bursaries, had not provided evidence of positive impact on access, success, attainment or progression, particularly in underrepresented student groups in UCC.

In recognition of our institutional performance as set out in section 1 of this document, we will therefore not continue to provide direct financial support to students, but instead invest in relevant targeted staffing resource to support success, attainment and progression to employment or further study, with a particular focus on students from underrepresented groups at UCC.

We continue to honour any student support packages set out in previous offer agreements.

3.2 Student consultation

Student representation in, and contribution to, Access and Participation planning

Student representation is present at all levels of the quality assurance cycle in UCC, from programme-level forums to UCC Learning & Teaching Committee and UCC Academic Board. The specific responsibility for the planning, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of access and participation work rests with the Widening Participation Committee, which commences its activities in the academic year 2019-20. The Committee's remit is set out on page 13 of this document. It will consist of a minimum of two members of staff and three student representatives.

Working with the Student Union and UCC Academic Services, the committee members will plan, monitor and evaluate activities, and make recommendations to UCC's Learning & Teaching Committee.

Committee members will be given planning documentation as set out in the APP, and data sets measuring the institution's performance against its aims. Members will then advise the Dean of Higher Education, the Director of Teaching & Learning and the Head of Academic Services on activities and resources required to narrow any performance gaps in the specified categories.

The inclusion of the student voice in the present document is based on qualitative information shared by current students during Learning & Teaching Committee and Academic Board meetings

in the academic year 2018-19, and student contributions to feedback sessions at institutional and programme validations held between December 2018 and May 2019.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Our evaluation strategy covers all aims and actions set out in the APP to ensure that the impact of the plan is fully understood and documented. Included in this are the outcomes from using the OfS self-assessment tool, so that areas of change and good practice receive equal attention.

Processes for evaluation within the institution

The reporting of the Widening Participation Committee to UCC's wider committee structure and its Academic Services division ensures a whole-provider approach to access and participation. The embedding of annual review processes within the formal annual reporting cycle underlines the data-based approach to monitoring, evaluating, and documenting, continuous improvement. It also ensures that the impact of actions taken are part of a documented reporting mechanism that connects programme-forum based student input with information received by Colchester Institute's Executive Committee and Governing Body.

Where there are currently limited data sets for students in underrepresented groups, or a lack of intersectional information, UCC has proposed a two-year period of data collection from 2020-2022, leading to the implementation of aims, objectives and strategic measures, as agreed with the OfS, from 2022-23 onwards.

Data strategy and resources, including staff skills and expertise

Our approach to data collection and evaluation acknowledges that the up-skilling of Academic Services staff and/or the appointing of new posts are a necessity for the academic year 2020-21. Where applicable, we will outsource specialist tasks to external agencies to ensure an expert approach to working with data sets.

The cycle of data analysis is connected to the cycle of quality assurance committee meetings per semester, which sit within the annual reporting framework. A key feature of our commitment to handling data will be an ethical approach, to ensure that the confidentiality of data and sensitive nature of information do not compromise the anonymity of participants.

Standards of evidence and nature of evaluations

To ensure that our decisions are based on relevant methodologies, we will enter our activities on the Higher Education Access Tracker (H.E.A.T.), to complement our internal data sets.

The internal monitoring of change in outcomes from interventions is currently based on existing metrical and data sets, but supported by module questionnaires. During the academic year 2019-20, we will map the first data sets against NERUPI aims to obtain the first specific benchmarked data set for the current APP.

Use of evidence to inform programme design

We are confident that the available data has enabled us to identify clearly a set of aims and objectives that is designed to improve the success, attainment and progression of HE participation, BAME and mature student groups. We have set out the reasons for wishing to obtain more detailed statistical evidence from our students with regard to disabled students and care leavers, to ensure that targeted interventions will be evidence-based.

This will enable us to refine the actions proposed to achieve the aims of the plan, and to begin to establish clear connections between the overall Theory of Change and the necessary adjustments to our programme design. From 2020 onwards, all new programmes will be mapped against the Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions (NERUPI) framework to measure the impact with regard to the specific aims and objectives set out in the framework.

Results, impact and dissemination of findings

Measuring the results and impact of the APP is part of the annual reporting cycle at UCC, as is the dissemination of findings. Furthermore, the size of the student population at UCC, around 180-200 students per year group, permits for examples of best practice to be developed, shared and implemented quickly through UCC's Widening Participation and Teaching & Learning Committees, and other regular forums involving staff and students.

The formal analysis of data will be conducted by members of the Academic Services team in close collaboration with UCC's teacher training division, staff highly experienced in design, evaluation and analysis of confidential data sets, and ethical procedures in relation to educational research. All institution specific data will be placed in context by using sector benchmarks, public domain data as found on Zotero, as well as relevant academic research literature.

Our evaluation strategy is based on our institutional approach to evaluation and subsequent change: the dissemination of findings will follow the flow of information from UCC's Widening Participation and Learning & Teaching committees to School-level meetings and programme teams to inform programme design and pedagogical delivery targeting the needs of underrepresented groups.

Evaluation of financial support

To be effective, financial investment need to be proportionate, impactful and adjustable.

We intend to review the effectiveness of our financial investment in success, attainment and progression on an annual basis to ensure their best possible relevance to our students' needs. In order to achieve this aim, we will use the OfS toolkit to arrive at a statistical perspective, as well as in-house data sets, which draw on qualitative information. The date of our first annual review will be autumn 2021.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

UCC is committed to continuous monitoring of its institutional progress in relation to the APP through mid-semester meeting of the Widening Access and Participation committee, end-of-semester attainment and progression data emerging from its internal exam boards, and the annual programme/School reporting structure.

Responsibility for reporting our institutional performance in relation to the APP lies with the Director of Widening Access and Participation, who will have standing agenda items at both Learning & Teaching Committee and Academic Board meetings. Minutes from these meetings are shared with College Executive, who in turn report to the Governing Body.

In the event of lack of progress against the aims and targets of the APP, a review of the effectiveness of activities and evaluation of data will be triggered, leading, if necessary, to a mid-year change to our approach.

3.5 Provision of information to students

UCC is aware of perceived barriers to engaging with Higher Education, many of which are based on either lack of accessibility of information, or concerns regarding the financial implications of studying at degree level.⁷ We believe that it is important that we take every reasonable step to provide information, including financial matters, transparently and in an easily accessible centralised way.

Upon approval of the APP, we will publish information regarding contact and learning time, student support services and financial transparency on our website. We will also signpost students to our website through leaflets for UCAS events, outreach and school/college liaison activities. We believe that students have an entitlement to understand how course fees are being spent. For that purpose, we will publish a transparent fee declaration on our website, detailing the overall percentage of our income spent on teaching delivery, student support, curriculum and wider resource investment for the preceding academic year.

We will provide clear links on our website to Student Finance England and on our ethical approach to our fee structure. All relevant information, and links, can be found on our website from 1 October 2019 at www.colchester.ac.uk/ucc

7

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693188/Influence_of_finance_on_higher_education_decision-making.pdf

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£8,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0		£6,165
HNC/HND		£6,165
CertHE/DipHE		£8,250
Postgraduate ITT		£8,250
Accelerated degree		£11,100
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	OLC (Europe) Limited 10021609 - HNC/D Business Management Programmes	£6,165
HNC/HND	Virtual Alliance Limited 10026108 - HNC/D Sport Programmes	£6,165
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Fees charged on pro-rate basis subject to course intensity	£6,190
Foundation degree	Fees charged on pro-rate basis subject to course intensity	£6,190
Foundation year/Year 0	Fees charged on pro-rate basis subject to course intensity	£4,625
HNC/HND	Fees charged on pro-rate basis subject to course intensity	£4,625
CertHE/DipHE	Fees charged on pro-rate basis subject to course intensity	£6,190
Postgraduate ITT	Fees charged on pro-rate basis subject to course intensity	£6,190
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Colchester Institute

Provider UKPRN: 10001535

Investment summary

The OFS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£40,972.00	£43,353.00	£43,353.00	£43,353.00	£43,353.00
Access (pre-16)	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00
Access (post-16)	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00
Access (adults and the community)	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00	£10,243.00
Access (other)	£10,243.00	£12,624.00	£12,624.00	£12,624.00	£12,624.00
Financial support (£)	£142,000.00	£20,000.00	£11,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£9,000.00	£9,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£1,150,045.00	£1,123,315.00	£1,114,888.00	£1,125,888.00	£1,130,888.00
Access investment	3.6%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.8%
Financial support	4.3%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Research and evaluation	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Total investment (as %HFI)	8.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.5%	5.5%

