

# Nottingham College

## Access and participation plan

### 2020-21 to 2024-25

Nottingham College is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all students and our community. The provision of higher education offers a wealth of opportunities for students and can be a key driver for social mobility and development. However, the realisation of these opportunities is not shared equally by all groups of students.

Nottingham College continually strives to ensure that underrepresented groups have equality of opportunity - to access higher education, to succeed, and to progress from higher education to positive destinations. The context in which the College operates provides an added dimension to its education and training facility.

The College serves a community that faces multiple facets of fundamental disadvantage. Nottingham is the 8<sup>th</sup> most deprived Local Authority District (out of 326) in England, with challenges across income, employment, health and disability, education skills and training, housing and crime (Index of Multiple Deprivation from the Indices of Deprivation 2015).

Nottingham also performs poorly in the Social Mobility Index. The Social Mobility Index compares the chances that a child from a disadvantaged background will do well at school and get a good job across each of the local authority district areas of England. It examines a range of measures of the educational outcomes achieved by young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and the local job and housing markets to identify which are the best and worst places in England. In terms of the opportunities young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed, Nottingham is identified as a social mobility cold spot, being in the bottom 20 per cent of local authority areas and just 15<sup>th</sup> place from the bottom of the overall league table. Nottingham ranks in Performance Zone 4 with weak performance across the board. Zone 4 performing areas are those described as providing little opportunity for young people to acquire the education and skills they need to achieve good outcomes as an adult. Even if they are able to overcome this, a weak labour market and high housing costs make it difficult to secure good outcomes in adult life. Zone 4 areas are the most concerning social mobility cold spots.

The College remains a key catalyst for the development of education, skills and training, at all levels within the community, including the provision of opportunities for the community to engage in higher education across the City.

This access and participation plan will analyse where opportunities are not being realised equally among different higher education groups at the College. It will outline our ambition for change and how the College will achieve that change, through ambitious targets and laying down of our investment plans.

## 1. Assessment of performance

The assessment of Nottingham College's performance for this APP has been undertaken solely using the Office for Students access and participation data resources and consideration given to key performance measures (where applicable). This has been done to allow a consistent approach to year-on-year monitoring of performance and tracking against targets set.

In future, new datasets will be included to enhance the assessment of current performance in areas where the access and participation resources provide limited insight. At the infancy of this plan the College will implement a new student record system with additional software modules for the system to allow enhanced recording of student academic outcomes along with the ability to report outcomes against all student characteristics. This will significantly improve the ability of the College to report against all student characteristics and be configured during the 2019/20 academic year with full reporting opportunities available for the 2020/21 academic year. This will enable even closer monitoring or any gaps between groups and outcomes for 'other undergraduate' groups and enable the College to both identify and address any gaps as they exist or emerge year-on-year, and to put place actions to address accordingly. As the OfS access and participation data resources focus on specific categories such as attainment (eg students achieving a first or upper-second class degree only), our planned internal data model will provide a much richer analysis of gap data as it will cover students studying on a range of other undergraduate qualifications such as HNDs and Foundation Degrees. These students make up the majority of our HE student population. This will enable us to report on outcomes such as high/medium/low grades across student characteristics for a broad range of HE qualifications

### 1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

#### Access

Nottingham College performs exceedingly well in terms of access to students from areas with high level of multiple deprivation (IMD) and also from areas where students are least likely to progress to higher education (POLAR4). In 2017/18, 42% of full-time undergraduates were from areas with the highest levels of multiple deprivation (IMD quintile 1) compared with just 21.6% for all English providers. Access for student from POLAR4 quintile 1 areas is also very good, 39% of full-time undergraduate students were from quintile 1 compared to 12% for all English providers. The proportions of students from IMD quintile 1 and POLAR4 quintile 1 have increased steadily over the last five years growing 5% and 8% respectively. This supports the Office for Students (OfS) Key Performance Measure (KPM) 1 regarding narrowing the gap in participation between the most and least represented groups in higher education. This further supports equality of opportunity for students, and furthers the belief that background should not limit access to higher education.

#### Success

##### Non-continuation

Continuation rates of POLAR4 quintile 1 full-time students was 89% in 2012/13. This has fallen steadily over the last five years to 73% in 2016/17. Similar trends can be witnessed with IMD quintile 1 students falling from 86% to 77% over the same period. This trend in non-continuation for the least represented group's needs to be addressed. The Non-continuation gap between quintile 1 and all other quintile student was 7% in 16/17, this has grown from 0% in 2012/13.

## Attainment

In terms of attainment, nationally the gap between level 6 graduates achieving a first, or upper second class degree, has remained at circa 12% between those from IMD quintile 3-5, compared with those from quintile 1 or 2. At the College however, this gap is significantly smaller and between 2016/17-2017/18 it has been just 5%. Whilst this is considered low, much of the College's activities will seek to eliminate this differential.

## Progression to employment or further study

Progression rates to highly skilled employment or further study from full-time POLAR4 quintile 1 students was 75% in 2016/17, above the average for all English institutions at 68.8%. The five year trend for this group of students at the College has been positive and upward increasing from 70% in 12/13 to 75% most recently.

## 1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

### Access

In 2017/18, 27% of full-time students were from BME groups. The trend has been relatively flat over the last five years varying by only 1-2% year on year between 2013/14 - 2017/18, although this does broadly reflect the local community. Nationally full-time BME student proportions have increased from 26% to 31% over the same period. At the College, full-time black students have increased proportionately from 9% to 12% over the last five years. As with the national pattern the part-time student cohorts are less diverse although this group is significantly smaller in number. However, this does raise the question as to why only 8% of Nottingham College's part-time HE students are from BME backgrounds.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

There are some variations in continuation rates between different ethnicity groups. Both white and black students have experienced a steady fall in continuation rates between 2013/14 and 2016/17, whilst those from Asian backgrounds have experienced a small increase over the period 2012/13 - 2016/17. Continuation rates for full-time students in 2016/17 by ethnicity groups were as follows; white students 80%, black students 65%, and Asian students 90%. Narrowing the continuation gap between different ethnicity groups would be an appropriate target.

#### Attainment

From the access and participation data resources there is not enough data to establish any attainment gap data regarding different ethnicity groups. However, for 2021/22 the College would like to introduce a new data set that includes all 'other undergraduate' student attainment outcomes ranked by low, medium and high grades (to take account of different overall grading across different course types) we will then be in a position to use a broader data set (rather than just 'first degree' students) to consider where any attainment gaps may exist by different student characteristic.

Published OfS access and participation data does not reveal enough data to establish any attainment gap data regarding different ethnicity groups due to suppression. However, closer inspection of OfS raw data suggests a gap of 34.5% in 2017/18 up from 7.9% in 2016/17.

#### Progression to employment or further study

An analysis of progression data to highly skilled employment or further study across a range of ethnicities did not reveal any gaps or significant differences across a multitude of different statistical splits.

### 1.3 Mature students

#### Access

Fifty-four percent of all full-time undergraduates were aged 21 and over, and therefore, classed as mature. The College has steadily increased the proportion of mature students by 6% over the last five years from 48% in 2013/14 to 54% in 2017/18. Nationally, mature students make up 27.8% of the student population, a figure that has increased just 3.1% over the last five years. Mature students make up 60% of the part-time HE cohort, a figure that has declined steadily from a peak of 76% in 2014/15 but still remains above the 2013/14 proportion of 57%. Nationally mature part-time student populations have been static comparatively.

#### Success

##### Non-continuation

Continuation gap data between young students compared with mature are negligible for both full and part-time students.

##### Attainment

Published OfS access and participation data does not reveal enough data to establish any attainment gaps between young vs mature student groups due to suppression. However, closer inspection of OfS raw data suggests a gap of 21.7% in 2017/18 up from -2.6% in 2014/15.

For 2021/22 the College would like to introduce a new data set that includes all 'other undergraduate' student attainment outcomes ranked by low, medium and high grades (to take account of different overall grading across different course types) we will then be in a position to use a broader data set (rather than just 'first degree' students) to consider where any attainment gaps may exist by different student characteristic.

#### Progression to employment or further study

In terms of progression for mature students (over 21) compared with young students, there was a non-statistically significant gap of 15% in 2016/17, this had increased from -2% in 2015/16. Despite the statistical insignificance of this gap, the College will monitor this gap from 2019/20. This gap has probably arisen due to curriculum changes as a result of the merger of two separate colleges. The merger in June 2017 brought together a range of provision which included more 'other undergraduate' top-up programmes enhancing the proportion of younger student progressing to further study.

## 1.4 Disabled students

### Access

Twenty-four percent of full-time HE students declared a disability, this compares with 14.6% nationally. Part-time proportions are 11% and 14.8% respectively. The trend in the proportion of disabled students over the last five years has been relatively consistent averaging 24% over the period. Nationally disabled student have made a very discreet year-on-year increase to a peak of 14.8% most recently in 2017/18.

In terms of the type of disability for all undergraduates, over the last five years an average of 10% of students have declared a learning difficulty and this has been relatively consistent. Those declaring a mental health difficulty has more than doubled over the same period from 2.3% to 5.4%. Those declaring a social/communication related disability has increased over the last three years whilst those declaring multiple disabilities has fallen over the same period.

### Success

#### Non-continuation

Whilst in 2016/17 there was a continuation gap of 9% between those not known to be disabled and those with a disability, this was -1% in 2015/16. The historical data is sporadic with no underlying trend or habitually significant gap. Despite this the College efforts will resolutely focus on this aspect to maintain uniform continuation rates for all.

#### Attainment

Published OfS access and participation data does not reveal enough data to establish any attainment gaps between disabled students and those not known to be disabled due to suppression. However, closer inspection of OfS raw data suggests a gap of 24.2% in 2017/18 up from 3.9% in 2015/16.

For 2021/22 the College would like to introduce a new data set that includes all 'other undergraduate' student attainment outcomes ranked by low, medium and high grades (to take account of different overall grading across different course types) we will then be in a position to use a broader data set (rather than just 'first degree' students) to consider where any attainment gaps may exist by different student characteristic.

#### Progression to employment or further study

In 2016/17 the progression gap (the activity of students six months after leaving higher education in terms of their progression to highly skilled employment or further study) between full-time disabled students and those not known to be disabled was just 1%, almost half the national average. This gap has consistently narrowed annually at the College from a peak of 10% in 2013/14 and due to the small numbers does not merit further investigation between disability type and intersectionality. In terms of comparisons with all English providers for 2016/17, 61% of disabled students progressed to highly skilled employment or further study, compared with 71.5% for English providers. One explanation for this difference could be that the College HE portfolio has an 'Arts' bias which may explain the small difference in those progressing to highly skilled employment.

## 1.5 Care leavers

### Access, Success and Progression to employment or further study

The College supports a small number of care leavers entering higher education annually. Due to the number involved, any statistical analysis would put individuals at risk of identification. However, strong empirical evidence from support staff advocate that over the last three years, all known care leavers have a zero incidence of non-continuation, and all go on to achieving their qualification aim with a mixed range of final outcomes. Furthermore, due to the very low numbers, no analysis of student progression into employment and/or further student has been undertaken.

## 1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

The intersection of deprivation quintile and ethnicity data shows Nottingham College has a very high proportion of white students from quintiles 1 and 2, hovering around 40% over the last five years of data. Nationally this figure is 20.8% and the national trend has been flat for the last five years. The proportion of male students from deprivation quintile 1 and 2 is 34%, and for women is 26%. Therefore Nottingham College performs very well in terms of access for white male students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Continuation rates for white students from POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2, peaked in 2013/14 at 91% but have fallen subsequently over three years to 74%. For all ethnicities, this also appears to be the case albeit with the limited data available for both 2015/16 and 2016/17. This suggests that targeting continuation rates for the least represented groups as a whole group, rather than by any specific intervention for particular ethnic groups, would be most appropriate.

## 1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The College attracts a small number of student who are carers as demonstrated by the uptake its HE carer bursary. This is provided to help alleviate some of the additional financial burden including travel costs and not be able to take-up part-time employment opportunities. In a similar scenario to our care leavers, due to the number involved, any statistical analysis would put individuals at risk of identification. Therefore no analysis of student progression into employment and/or further student has been undertaken due to the very low numbers.

Whilst the College also has small numbers of other underrepresented groups, including people estranged from their families, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, refugees, and children from military families, there has been no formal analysis of students from these groups. This is identified as an area for development for future APPs, particularly around data collection and how we analyse performance given the very small numbers involved.

## 2. Strategic aims and objectives

### 2.1 Target groups and 2.2 Aims and objectives

Following the assessment of performance, the following target groups have been identified as priorities in this access and participation plan:

- POLAR4 Quintile 1 students - Falling continuation rates are evident for POLAR4 Q1 students over the last five years, from 89% in 2012/13, which has decreased steadily over the last five years to 73% in 2016/17. This needs to be stabilised and improved to ensure equality of opportunity in terms of student success. The non-continuation gap between quintile 1 and all other quintile student was 7% in 16/17; this has grown from 0% in 2012/13. The target for this group will be to stem the growth in the gap and to narrow it over a five year period to 0% in 2024/25. This will require an improvement of continuation rates of quintile 1 learners of 1.4% year-on-year.
- BME Students - Given that only 8% of part-time higher education students in 2017/18 are from BME groups, increasing the proportion of part-time BME students amongst the higher education student population is a priority, to ensure there is equality of opportunity in terms of access and participation in part-time higher education. The target for this group will be to increase the proportion of part-time BME higher education by 2% year-on-year so that by 2024/25, 18% of all part-time higher education students are from BME groups. This target is ambitious given that part-time BME cohort proportions have consistently declined from 18% in 2013/14 to just 7% in 2016/17.
- Black students - Continuation rates for black students are lower than those for white and Asian students. Continuation rates for full-time students in 2016/17 by ethnicity groups were as follows: white students 80%; black students 65%; and Asian students 90%. Narrowing the continuation gap between different ethnicity groups is a priority to ensure equality of opportunity in terms of student success. This is also in line with Annex F of the Office for Students registration decision letter. The target for this group will be to enhance continuation rates of black students by 3% year-on-year so that by 2024/25 are 80% and therefore comparable with white students.
- Those declaring a mental health disability - Students declaring a mental health difficulty have more than doubled over the last five years from 2.3% to 5.4%. The real proportion of students in practice, is likely to be much higher, and so the College must ensure there is due regard for these learners to ensure they have equality of opportunity in terms of succeeding in higher education and progressing. The College will develop a model to track outcomes to ensure no gap exists between outcomes of students with mental health disabilities. If a gap becomes apparent the College will implement a formal target in its next APP to address this.
- First degree students progressing to employment or further study - Increase the proportion of first degree student progressing to employment or further study. This was specifically referenced within Annex F of the Office for Students registration decision letter. However, a closer analysis of first degree students shows that progression outcomes are good and that

27% of students progress to 'other' destinations. This may include being unavailable for work, for example because they are travelling. The College will proactively work to support the progression of students to further study and employment. This will involve narrowing the proportion of students progressing to other destinations (or unemployment) so that by 2024/25, 20% more students progress to employment or further study. Given the statistics below, there is clearly much more opportunity for students to progress to postgraduate study. This should also support work across the sector to widen participation amongst post-graduate education.

First Degree Course	Response Total	Work	Study	Other	Unemployed	Work & Study
BA Business Studies	16	10	1	5	0	0
BA Service Sector Mgt	14	11	0	1	2	0
BA Theatre Arts	15	8	0	5	2	0
BA Digital Media Design	14	6	1	4	2	1
BA Music & Creative Tech	10	5	0	5	0	0
BA Design	5	3	1	0	1	0
<i>Totals</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>
%		<b>58.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>

Data source 16/17 DLHE i-Graduate Dashboard

In terms of progression for mature students (over 21) compared with young students, there was a non-statistically significant gap of 15% in 2016/17, this had increased from -2% in 2015/16. Despite the statistical insignificance of this gap, the College will continue monitor this gap from 2019/20 to ensure that it narrows over the course of the APP to below 5% by 2024/25. This will be achieved by our strategic measures set out in section 3 and monitored alongside releases of HESA Graduate Outcomes survey datasets, with additional actions devised and implemented where necessary should outcomes not converge year-on-year.

Unsuppressed data from the OfS infers an attainment gap of 24.2% in 2017/18 up from 3.9% in 2015/16 attainment gap between non-disabled and disabled students. The College will continue monitor this gap year-on-year from 2019/20 to ensure that it narrows over the course of the APP to 0% by 2024/25. The strategic measures detailed in section 3 will address this gap and if it becomes evident that this gap is not narrowing at sufficient speed additional interventions will be made.

Whilst in 2016/17 there was a continuation gap of 9% between those not known to be disabled and those with a disability, this was -1% in 2015/16. The historical data is sporadic with no underlying trend or habitually significant gap. Despite this the College efforts will resolutely focus on this aspect to maintain uniform continuation rates for all with an objective of reducing this gap by 2% year-on-year to eradicate this gap by 2024/25.

Unsuppressed data from the OfS infers an attainment gap of 34.5% for white compared to all ethnicities except white in 2017/18, up from 7.9% in 2016/17. Monitoring this gap year-on-year from 2019/20 will ensure that it narrows over the course of the APP to 0% by 2024/25. The strategic measures detailed in section 3 will address this gap and if it becomes evident that this gap is not narrowing at sufficient speed additional interventions will be made.

Nottingham College performs very well with regard to providing access to students from underrepresented groups, and in particular, to those from areas with very low levels of participation. Despite already performing very well in this area, providing access to these underrepresented groups (POLAR4) will always remain a fundamental priority for the College and

therefore will remain a strategic priority, whilst also recognising that a formal target is not required at this stage given the performance to date.

Published OfS access and participation data does not reveal enough data to establish any attainment gaps between young vs mature student groups due to suppression. However, closer inspection of OfS raw data suggests a gap of 21.7% in 2017/18 up from -2.6% in 2014/15. Monitoring this gap year-on-year from 2019/20 will ensure that it narrows over the course of the APP to 0% by 2024/25. The strategic measures detailed in section 3 will address this gap and if it becomes evident that this gap is not narrowing at sufficient speed additional interventions will be made.

### **3. Strategic measures**

#### **3.1 Whole provider strategic approach**

The College works towards inclusivity across all stages of the student lifecycle, this includes engaging with different teams across the College to strive towards equality of opportunity for all and to close the gaps that we are aware of. Nottingham College is committed to equality of opportunity for all who learn and work here. The College respects and values the diversity of staff, students, contractors, governors, visitors, and the wider community served, and strives to create a positive working and learning environment where everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential. The College constantly seeks to improve what it offers and how it delivers services to meet the changing needs of learners and local employers. This access and participation plan has been informed and underpinned by the College's equality and diversity strategy, and in turn, successful delivery of the plan will secure the strategic intent of the equality and diversity strategy. The College will have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and will seek to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't, and to foster and encourage good relations for all irrespective of background.

The College will implement a range of strategies:

In order to improve non-continuation rates and enhanced support mechanisms, the College has a dedicated central higher education support team providing specialist information, advice and guidance, including finance and welfare support, to students throughout the entire learner lifecycle. This advice begins at recruitment and admissions stage, through on course support, right through to graduation. This is integral to supporting student success as the team provide expert support that frequently results in supporting students to remain on programme where they might otherwise have left their course. This familiarity and friendly approach of the team means that students feel able to come forward to ask for support when they need it.

The College will continue to put in place additional specific measures to reduce non-continuation further, including pre-entry academic support over the summer period through access to an online study skills pack. This will focus on the provision of online materials to ensure students are up-to-speed with the key study skills they will need to succeed on the on the course. These resources will be in adaptive PDF format making them ultra-accessible on mobile devices. Initial delivery of

courses will also proceed to embed and immerse students in development of academic skills to ensure they are more likely to achieve. This should support students where non continuation arises as a result of students not being prepared for the different types of assessment that will face on higher education programme and will also enhance their familiarity with received academic vernacular. It is anticipated that this will disproportionately advantage and support continuation for POLAR4 Q1 students, because of their comparative educational disadvantage, they are potentially less well prepared for higher education study than other peers from higher POLAR4 quintiles. This will also be further supported by the promotion of other preparation opportunities such as MOOCs, Massive Open Online Courses. The range of MOOCs available now to support students before they enter higher education, and whilst on programme in terms of study skills, is considerable. MOOCs can also support students develop key skills for areas of employability or further study and this will also be promoted to students particularly through organisation such as Future Learn that facilitate a wide range of high quality courses from a variety of partners such as universities, specialist organisations, centres of excellence and associates partners. These measures will seek to narrow the gap in attainment outcomes for students from underrepresented groups with an objective of reducing this gap by 1% year-on-year to eradicate this gap by 2024/25.

Further to this, Nottingham College has a dedicated 'University Centre' at its Adams Building in the Lace Market area of the City. This central facility is located in the heart of the City centre and is easily accessible to students from across the City and at different campuses. This vibrant facility provides a hub for higher education students, creating a diverse, cohesive higher education community where students have a sense of belonging. The Centre is home to the higher education administrative team including a dedicated higher education finance and welfare officer who provide a wide range of support. The Centre also houses its own reception desk and a dedicated study lounge featuring refreshment, IT and print facilities. A sense of community and access to uniform support services, all in one place, supports students to succeed on their study programmes.

The College also draws upon substantial marketing support to encourage entry to HE from low participation areas with a schools liaison team working extensively with local schools to offer engagement and advice to pupils who may have been identified as unlikely to apply for HE and to raise awareness of the opportunities available after school. This work supports both progression to further and higher education, and is strengthened further by alignment with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The College will continue to ensure close alignment with NCOP work and specifically the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Collaborative Outreach Network (DANCOP). The College also currently has a central DANCOP Team that delivers a range of outreach and in-reach activity coupled alongside a newly created a STEM centre. The STEM Centre acts as a hub for local schools and colleges to engage in activities around science, technology, engineering and maths that support progression to related further and higher education programmes. This closely aligned approach will protect access activity and the generation of good outcomes in terms of underrepresented groups accessing our higher education provision and further support the OfS KPM 1 regarding narrowing the gap in participation between the most and least represented groups in higher education. This further supports equality of opportunity for students and also will redress the attainment gap for underrepresented groups.

In addition to the more traditional work the College undertakes with local schools, the College also has a pre-16 team. It delivers close partnership work with schools to broaden the curriculum offer to partners, to offer more vocational option for pupils in years 10 and 11, with a view to them progressing to Nottingham College post-16, to follow vocational routes into further and higher education along their learning journey. The College offers bespoke packages tailored to individual

school needs and the interests and study level of their pupils. This initiative contributes very positively to raising attainment in schools and supports progression through to further education provision.

Given the proportion doubling of those disclosing a mental health difficulty, we recognise that our college has a responsibility to create an environment that promotes student and staff wellbeing and that proactively supports student and staff mental health. Therefore the College has signed up to the Association of Colleges (AoC) Charter on Mental Health and Wellbeing. The Charter includes an 11 point commitment to provide equality of opportunity and to challenge mental health stigma, to provide appropriate mental health training for staff, and to provide targeted individual mental health support where appropriate. This whole college approach should work to support students from adversely affected in terms of their opportunity whilst at the College. As part of the model we wish to implement for 2021/22, for providing enhanced monitoring of outcomes for 'other undergraduate' qualification outcomes, mental health monitoring by outcome and continuation, will also be incorporated into this model. Furthermore, the College also utilises a team of Personal Success Coaches who play an important role in mentoring students that have an moderate mental health issues, in order to maintain progress on course. This is particularly supportive of those students that don't have Disabled Support Allowance (DSA) in place, or where their needs don't quite qualify for DSA support. This personal success coaching may help students overcome a range of barriers to personal success. Beginning in 2019/20 all deliverers of higher education will undertake specialist disability training, to increase support techniques when teaching.

Nottingham College has a dedicated team of Career and Destination Coaches that provides one-to-one advice and guidance. Specialist information, advice and guidance (IAG) will support progression to employment and in particular graduate employment opportunities. Information, advice and guidance will be provided about student support packages for postgraduate study. This should support progression and help widen access for postgraduate study. The final report of the Social Mobility Advisory Group titled *Enabling Social Mobility In Higher Education*, describes IAG for mature students as "largely non-existent" and in state schools "often patchy". Nottingham College, through its Matrix careers service and specialist admissions teams will provide high quality, coherent IAG to prospective and current students to help them achieve their full potential, and to ensure that students make appropriate choices that will shape successful outcomes, given the diversity of routes available now in higher education, including higher and degree apprenticeships.

Nottingham College is committed to an agenda of embedding more employability skills and knowledge within the HE curriculum and many of the higher education programmes now incorporate work placement opportunities, or 'live' briefs provided by industry partners to provide real work experience to develop employability skills. The College has taken steps to define and categorise the most meaningful employability opportunities across HE courses and embed them for all students. The College has taken this approach to ensure students have the skills and experience required to move positively on into employment or further study following the completion of their course.

Our Academic Coaching and Employability Skills (ACES) service steers students towards recognition of the wider employability skills they need to secure jobs and considers the ways in which learning can be transferred into employment by offering advice and training to groups. This support is delivered through a variety of cross college mechanisms and curriculum coaches also features an element of personal success coaching, working closely with students to identify

possible barriers to their success and to develop individual strategies to aid retention, success and progression. Our Library Services team also provide a range of online academic resources as part of this support, to offer students developmental opportunities to improve many aspects of their learning including referencing, academic writing, critical thinking and reflection. Library staff also deliver bespoke sessions on these topics to offer the most effective link to academic resources vital for HE study and research. This package of support should assist with student success and continuation.

The College will also implement a programme of postgraduate study awareness sessions that will support progression to further study for our 'first degree' students. These sessions will raise information of the opportunities available at postgraduate level along with details about the range of financial support that students can access to support their studies, including postgraduate student loans. The College may also seek to undertake this collaboratively by working closely with a local university partner. This will be in line with OfS repository of Effective Practice around working with undergraduates to support progression to post graduate study, and in particular improving the understanding of the demands of higher level study, building confidence and awareness, along with strategies to support success.

Access for full-time students is not problematic. However, part-time students are becoming increasingly difficult to attract. This is a national trend with falling numbers of part-time enrolments. Nottingham College will implement specific measures to address this. In order to support mature students accessing higher education, Nottingham College will continue to invest and support its level three Access to Higher Education provision further with encouragement of internal progression for those wishing to stay in the locality. In 2020/21, part-time higher education course fees will be at or below £4,500. It is anticipated that part-time higher education course fees will be differentiated and discounted to support the recruitment of part-time students. It is clear that part-time study is price sensitive; therefore this measure will help to support the recruitment of part-time students. A very high percentage of our part-time students are mature learners. Consequently, this measure should also help support their recruitment. The College has also recently undertaken a process of revalidation including curriculum design with our main partner HEIs and this has resulted in more HE programmes being available on a part-time basis. This measure broadens the range of part-time study opportunities and therefore should support student choice in part-time HE progression.

In order to bolster the proportion of part-time BME higher education students, the College will undertake some targeted and enhanced marketing activity that will raise awareness of these opportunities more meaningfully within the Nottingham's BME community. This is likely to involve a range of events within specific parts of the City that have a high proportion of BME residents, alongside targeted communications with local people regarding the range of part-time higher education opportunities that are available at the College. The College will also work closely with other partners including DANCOP, to raise awareness of part-time study opportunities for BME students. This activity will commence during the 2019/20 academic year so that the results and impact can be achieved in the first year of this APP. This will then require ongoing, targeted work to ensure that the yearly targets are achieved.

In terms of curriculum changes to enhance the continuation of black students, our provision is validated by external awarding bodies, and therefore there is less flexibility from a curriculum perspective in terms of changes that can be made. However, with this in mind, and as a result of the student forum, some BME student expressed that there is a lack of BME role models in the

College from which to aspire. In 2020/21 we will deliver a series of video case studies from current and past BME students that promote positive role models. We will seek to do this by utilising our TV and Film production students so that it is generated in a way that is truly student centred. Prior to the 2020/2021 academic year we also intend to run a BME focus group that is focused entirely on continuation and success to understand if there any systemic reasons at the College that can be attributed to gaps in outcomes for this group of students.

Separate to the investment identified in this access and participation plan, Nottingham College makes huge investments in providing opportunities in the local community for individuals to participate in a wide range of education and training opportunities. From the provision of access to higher education courses, advanced vocational provision, A-Level provision, through to the provision of numeracy and literacy skills, and engaging adults in lifelong learning opportunities, the College acts as a catalyst in the community. This supports progression to higher education, not merely through course provision, but with the provision of information, advice and guidance, providing ladders of opportunity for individuals to work through different levels of education. This commitment is reinforced further through a £58 million investment in a new City Hub that will provide first class learning facilities in the heart of the City. The College has also recently invested over £27 million in its Basford Hall campus which is situated at the centre of the Nottingham North parliamentary constituency, an area that send some of the lowest number of young people into higher education nationally.

In terms of financial support, in 2020/21 Nottingham College will have an emergency discretionary fund (the Access to Learning Fund) to support students who experience unexpected financial hardship. A fund of £17,000 will be allocated for this purpose. This fund will be managed in line with the old ALF methodology to ensure equity and transparency, but with more flexibility around non-standard awards to reflect the diverse nature of difficulties that students may encounter. The strategic intent of this fund is to reduce, in so far as possible, any students leaving their course of study due to financial emergency, particularly those from low household income backgrounds.

In recognition of the profound challenges that care leavers face, Nottingham College will provide a care leaver's grant worth £2,000 per academic year for those who have been in local authority care. In addition to this financial support, care leavers are offered additional support early on from the application stage to ensure that their independence is well established right from the start. This support includes information about accommodation and signposting to a range of support services. Nottingham College also maintains a full profile on the Propel website, which is a dedicated website resource to support care leavers progressing to higher education. This profile includes a named contact for all care leavers. This is also backed up by a dedicated webpage on the Nottingham College website, which also promotes additional resources for care leavers and information about the support available at the College.

For 2020/21 Nottingham College will continue its carer's bursary to support those students with caring commitments. The College recognises the additional barriers this group of students face, and that very often these students may face additional financial pressures due to additional travel costs along and being unavailable for part-time work. This bursary will be worth £1000 per annum.

Nottingham College has a well-established means tested bursary scheme which has operated for many years. A means tested scheme will continue in 2020/21 offering financial support on a sliding scale, offering more support to those from the lowest income backgrounds.

<b>Household income based on SLC assessment</b>	<b>College Bursary Award</b>
Up to £25,000	£1,000
Between £25,000 and £30,00	£750
Between £30,000 and £35,000	£500
Between £35,000 and £40,000	£300

Feedback from student focus groups to the Higher Education team and course tutors shows that the bursary scheme is invaluable for the students that receive it. It helps to alleviate some of the reliance on students working long part-time hours and provides support for students with travel and maintenance costs. It also makes a vital contribution to enable students to access work placement opportunities in the UK and overseas.

Bursary scheme recipients were surveyed to better understand the impact of the financial support programme for higher education students. A high majority (86.4%) of respondents thought that the bursary scheme was helping them to stay on the course, and of those working part-time, half (48%) thought that the scheme helped to keep working hours to a manageable level. The survey also collected some qualitative data which illustrates that the bursary is highly valued by students and an essential part of support for day to day living costs, including travel and accommodation, along with expenses associated with the course such as materials and printing. The College has a large proportion of students from very low-income households. The bursary, along with our hardship fund, provides essential support and helps students to remain on programme and achieve the best possible outcomes. This year a student finance student focus group was undertaken and the results of which very closely correlated with the bursary survey outcomes.

The outcomes are very supportive of the financial support package that is available and the results of which are detailed both in the student submission and summarised below:

- The care leavers and carers bursary takes account of the fact they don't have the ability to work part-time like other students or that they don't have family support in the same way other students might have.
- Some students have been adversely affected through the introduction of Universal Credit changes, the bursaries and support help those students that have been affected, in particular where this affected their income and the accommodation that they live in.
- The special support bursary also helps students who are employed whilst studying to keep their work to manageable hours, this means that can focus more on their course
- The bursary also helps us buy key equipment for our courses such as laptop computers, or special software that we can use at home, like Creative Suite, so that we can maximise our study time away from the College.
- The bursary payments are made termly and they are conditional on attendance rates. This helps students manage their budgets and it also helps engage with the course as attendance is rewarded.

### **3.2 Student consultation**

In order to develop an effective Access and Participation Plan, the College understands that we must listen and involve our students to fully understand the barriers they face. We want to

understand student perspectives, to help the college build up a more diverse and inclusive picture of what different student experiences involve.

Student representatives receive formal training to prepare for their role at the beginning of tenure; this includes advice on canvassing views and their role in course committees when liaising with academic teachers and course leaders.

The College's approach has been to work closely with student course representatives to feed in to the Access and Participation plan development. This has been through several forums during the academic year, one focussing solely on financial support and one more recently focussing the proposed targets for the College, what students think our targets should be, and its Access and Participation Plan, both in terms of development and monitoring. HE students from the wider pool are invited to meet and share views on access and participation with ideas and actions to address issues from their perspective.

Senior Student representatives also sit on the Academic Board which is the highest level of governance for HE in the College. This group determines strategic review for whole provision. Each HE course elects representatives for who attend course committees with curriculum staff three times per year.

Student involvement in monitoring will take place as part of the calendar of student representative meetings. An access and participation plan annual monitoring review meeting will be timed to coincide with the annual release of the OfS APP dataset. Student reps will be given the opportunity to reflect on the progress made against targets, the evaluation work undertaken by different interventions, and make recommendations where necessary.

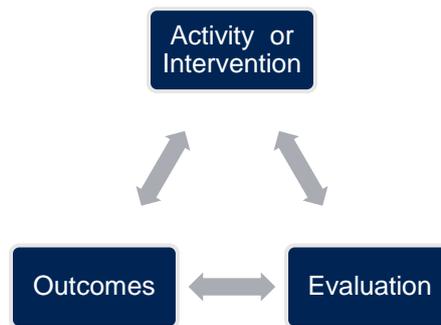
Student representatives sit as part of wider College Students' Union and liaise with the NUS and the local partners in HE. They meet regularly and have direct contact with College Union management and links to external agents.

This access and participation plan is accompanied by a student submission document.

### **3.3 Evaluation strategy**

The evaluation strategy was produced after self-assessment of the College's governance framework for HE, born out of periodic review by partner HEIs and QAA review in 2017. Long-standing approaches to evaluation have been recognised as successful since our small number of HE students provides an immediate and accessible interface so is deemed effective for this plan.

Due to the relatively small numbers involved, our strategic approach to evaluation will be proportional to those numbers. Evaluation of individual activities or interventions will mostly be undertaken by participant evaluations. However, this will be considered in a triangulation process whereby evaluation outcomes, are considered alongside actual outcomes (narrowing of gaps, attainment, continuation etc), in addition to the aims of the original activity. This will ensure that we understand if our theory of change is consistent with those outcomes that are being achieved. Where they are consistent, we can be satisfied that progress is being made towards reaching our targets. Where any inconsistency becomes evident, we can review our practice to ensure it is modified accordingly to ensure that progress to the achievement of targets is being made successfully.



With comparatively smaller group sizes than traditional HEIs, it is often easier to compile empirical evidence. Empirical evidence can provide powerful observations that can add significantly to qualitative evaluation. This will also be considered during evaluation, particularly with feedback from those that work at a student level, with individual students.

Students involved in the pre-16 programme complete college questionnaires – these include an online induction questionnaire and completers survey. The results of these participant evaluations informed an annual ‘You said we did’ exercise and are shared with relevant curriculum areas to support and enhance their offer, delivery and customer satisfaction results going forward. In addition to this, the Pre-16 and Schools team also complete a Self-Assessment Report (SAR). Further to this, progression is monitored to the College and also informs the evaluation process. The annual SAR produces a number of action points to carry forward into the following academic year. Sharing of best practice with other curriculum areas, improved offer to schools recognising the college’s strengths as well as understanding where further development work is required to offer the same standard of service across all curriculum areas.

Financial support evaluation will continue to be undertaken by focus groups as these tend to reveal details through student group discussions, that aren’t as readily understood through individual online/paper based evaluations. The focus group questions will be guided by the OfS financial evaluation interview tool. This will be further supported by an individual award recipient survey which we will seek to deliver using the OfS survey tool. The College will not undertake the OfS statistical evaluation tool due to the number of receipts involved (<300), and its focus solely on first degree students.

Evaluation leads to actions that are embedded into wider College approaches to HE delivery whether these been determined as attitudinal or pedagogic to ensure that equality of opportunity is paramount. Throughout the academic year, deliverers of HE meet in course committees to reflect on practice in response to emergent and longer-term trends. This is in conjunction with student representatives who also share feedback for each course three times per year in this manner. All generated data is available for such purposes and evaluations are discussed at senior executive level in Academic Board and Quality Committees. Where appropriate we also publish externally examples of evaluation feedback, for example our financial support evaluation results which are published annually in our APP.

### **3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

To ensure a consistent approach to monitoring and achieving the targets set, we are focused on using the APP dataset produced by the OfS where possible, alongside our developing range of internal data. As such, monitoring will take place annually, in line with the annual release of OfS

APP datasets, alongside in year reviews that will examine evaluation data in parallel to gauge progress and as a proxy to the direction of travel of our target development.

The governing body will be engaged in the monitoring of performance and provisions of the plan through an annual monitoring report to the board. Students will be involved in monitoring by way of student the HE course representatives. This will be in the form of a yearly review focus group, whereby students can scrutinise progress to date and make any recommendations they feel appropriate to ensure the College makes progress towards its targets. Students are also best placed to understand any barriers that may exist to prevent the closing of any gaps and therefore well placed to provide suggestions and advice as to how these can be narrowed.

Responsibility for monitoring progress against delivery of the plan will remain with the Higher Education Team and supported by cross college teams where appropriate.

Monitoring will be embedded across the College through the all levels of the Higher Education Committee structure which bring together managers and Course Leaders and key support service areas from across the College. These forums are developmental and staff work together to develop strategies and activities to ensure the enhancement of the student experience, to ensure key business processes are undertaken in an efficient manner, and to ensure a cross college approach to meeting strategic goals.

## **4. Provision of information to students**

In order to make informed decisions about progressing to higher education it is important that students have timely access to a range of information.

Information concerning financial support and eligibility will be easily accessible to students. It will be published on the College website through a dedicated webpage and also proactively targeted at students through pre-enrolment welcome packs, in addition to work undertaken by the College's Higher Education team. Financial support, including the Access to Learning Fund and additional support for underrepresented groups will be further signposted by Course Leaders and college support staff who interact with students at open events, interviews, bespoke visits and UCAS events. For all groups who are determined to be underrepresented, advice and guidance documentation confirms the different and appropriate financial support they can access and that this applies for each individual year of study.

Students are informed of fee levels before they apply – our website confirms this is for the duration of their course and they are given written documentation at application and enrolment stages to this effect through the College's higher education welcome guide.

2020/21 course profiles on the UCAS website will also highlight that financial support is available to students. Nottingham College will also ensure a timely submission of the Office for Students Unistats Record so that detailed course information can be widely published, including on the Unistats website Tuition fees will be widely published on the College website, and further on the UCAS website to assist prospective students undertaking research for their course applications. Course information including detailed course specifications, will also be linked from the Unistats websites. This Access and Participation Plan will be easily accessible to current and prospective students. It will be published on the Nottingham College website and will be hosted on a page containing our enrolment terms and conditions and information about consumer protection for higher education students. Applicants will be signposted to this page to highlight important guidance documents.

# 5. Appendix

## 6. Annex

### 6.1 Student Submission



#### **Student Submission - Access and Participation Plan** **Nottingham College 1920/21**

##### College Foreword

In order to develop an effective Access and Participation Plan, the College understands that we must listen and involve our students to fully understand the barriers they face. This student submission document outlines the ways in which the College consults with students in terms of what our Access and Participation Plan should include and how they will be involved with monitoring our progress on an ongoing basis. We want to share student perspectives, to help the college build up a more diverse and inclusive picture of different student experiences involve.

The College's approach has been to work closely with student course representatives to feed in to the Access and Participation plan development. This has been through several forums during the academic year, one focussing solely on financial support and one more recently focussing the proposed targets for the College, what students think our targets should be, and its Access and Participation Plan, both in terms of development and monitoring.

##### Student Representatives

As a groups of student reps, we are a diverse group in terms of age range, our ethnic backgrounds, and we have a range of disabilities. We are nominated by other students in our course group to meet throughout the year to discuss any feedback or issues they have about the College or our courses, with College managers.

Earlier this year we were consulted on the student financial support package that is part of Access and Participation Plans. This currently includes a bursary that depends on household income and additional support for other students. Those who are care leavers or carers also get extra financial support. There's also an additional fund for students experiencing financial hardship.

As a group we strongly support the financial package that is in place and this is for the following reasons that we discussed as a group:

- The care leavers and carers bursary takes account of the fact they don't have the ability to work part-time like other students or that they don't have family support in the same way other students might have.
- Some students have been adversely affected through the introduction of Universal Credit changes, the bursaries and support help those students that have been affected, in particular where this affected their income and the accommodation that they live in.
- The special support bursary also helps students who are employed whilst studying to keep their work to manageable hours, this means that can focus more on their course

- The bursary also helps us buy key equipment for our courses such as laptop computers, or special software that we can use at home, like Creative Suite, so that we can maximise our study time away from the College.
- The bursary payments are made termly and they are conditional on attendance rates. This helps students manage their budgets and it also helps engage with the course as attendance is rewarded.

Looking at the College targets it has identified, these have been identified through data that has been provided from the OfS regulator. The targets sound a fair representation of the College as it doesn't have the same problems that some universities have with providing access to some underrepresented groups. We agree with the OfS aims of making higher education as equal and as fair as possible and that some groups of students don't have the same opportunities.

The College has identified the following targets:

- To reduce the fall in students from disadvantaged backgrounds completing their course and make sure this is not any more than students from other more advantaged groups
- Ensuring more BME students take up part-time HE learning so that they have the same opportunities.
- Making sure Black student continue on their course and succeed
- Making sure those declaring a mental health difficulty are not disadvantaged
- Supporting more first degree students into further study or employment.

As a group of reps we will be involved in monitoring progress of the college targets through a yearly review focus group when the College has received its updated OfS data resources. If the targets goals are not being achieved, we can make recommendations as students, as to how we think they can work better or be changed to make more of a difference and offer ideas of how to change things.

Going beyond 2020/21, the College has said that it will look at more exam board data so that it can see if there are different outcome for different groups, not just for those completing a top-up degree as in 2020/21, but in 2021/22 for the other undergraduate courses that the College offers and this is something that we also strongly support to see if there are any more gaps between different groups. Tuition fees for part-time students have not been increased for several years and are discounted on the equivalent full-time equivalent rate. We welcome this as a measure to support part-time students, both not increasing them and discounting them although we would like the further additional financial support that is available for full-timers. Fees for full-time students will be held in 2020/21 at the same level as 2019/20 which we also welcome, but would prefer all fees for all students in the country to be lower. We also welcome the transparency that may come about from being consulted on fees as we make judgements on value for money.

*by the Higher Education student reps and the student governor to the Board*

**Access and participation plan  
Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: Nottingham College

Provider UKPRN: 10004577

**Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees**

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

We do not intend to raise fees annually

**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		£8,250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£8,250
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
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	EXPRESSIONS ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS LIMITED 10040106	£8,250
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		£3,375
Foundation degree		£4,500
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£3,375
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
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: Nottingham College

Provider UKPRN: 10004577

### 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
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£159,000.00	£159,000.00	£159,000.00	£159,000.00	£159,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£55,300.00	£55,300.00	£55,300.00	£55,300.00	£55,300.00
Access (post-16)	£63,800.00	£63,800.00	£63,800.00	£63,800.00	£63,800.00
Access (adults and the community)	£22,400.00	£22,400.00	£22,400.00	£22,400.00	£22,400.00
Access (other)	£17,500.00	£17,500.00	£17,500.00	£17,500.00	£17,500.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£209,000.00	£204,500.00	£200,000.00	£195,500.00	£191,000.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HF1)</b>	£1,064,250.00	£1,046,250.00	£1,026,000.00	£1,005,750.00	£985,500.00
<b>Access investment</b>	4.7%	4.8%	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%
<b>Financial support</b>	19.6%	19.5%	19.5%	19.4%	19.4%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
<b>Total investment (as %HF1)</b>	24.6%	24.6%	24.7%	24.7%	24.8%

