

University Centre Weston

Access and Participation Plan 2020-2021 to 2024-2025

1. Assessment of performance

1.1. UCW Context

University Centre Weston (UCW) is part of Weston College of Further and Higher Education, referred to hereafter as 'Weston College'. UCW has a diverse student population, many of whom are from underrepresented target groups identified by the Office for Students (OfS); it also has a number of Strategic Aims that align to the OfS priorities of participation, experience and outcomes. This Access and Participation Plan affirms the commitment that UCW has in terms of widening access, enabling success, and supporting students to progress to either higher study or employment.

UCW has considered a wide range of data in order to assess current performance and effectiveness. Although the data provided on the access and participation data dashboard was considered, there are gaps in relation to some of the measures, or within specific years. The information provided has been suppressed and rounded to the extent that there is limited value. Each of the gaps identified in the data was considered in some depth, notably those that were highlighted as being statistically significant. However, several were in relation to UCW's intake compared to the proportion of the population from Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) 4 quintiles 3, 4 and 5. Given that these students are not considered disadvantaged or underrepresented in their own right, it was determined that this was not a group that required addressing as there are others that are more of a priority requiring more focus.

Another point to consider is that data provided by the OfS applies to directly-funded provision only, which currently represents approximately 48% of UCW's provision; however, UCW is committed to supporting all students regardless of whether they are directly or indirectly-funded, and it was deemed important to understand any gaps across the whole spectrum of provision and student body. As such, this Access and Participation Plan applies to all students (although it should be noted that the figures in the fee information documentation relate only to directly-funded students). As a result a range of internal and external data has been used to scrutinise and analyse performance. The internal data has been drawn from Weston College's Individualised Learner Records (ILR) and wherever possible taken from official reports presented at key quality committees including the Governing Body. The external data has primarily been taken from the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) data.

The TEF assesses excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how well they ensure outcomes for students in terms of continuing on their course from one year to the next and progression to graduate-level employment or further/higher study. The data also includes students' views about their experience gathered in the annual National Student Survey (NSS), although that is

not as relevant for this purpose. Institutions can achieve a Gold, Silver, Bronze, or provisional rating. UCW is currently rated Gold. The data for each institution highlights performance for particular groups of students, if the data is significantly different from the benchmark a positive or negative flag is allocated. A flag is allocated where the metric score is at least +/-2 percentage points from the benchmark and a double flag where the score is at least +/- 3 percentage points from the benchmark.

For comparison against the underrepresented groups outlined below, as an institution overall data in relation to achievement, continuation and progression is positive. Internal continuation data for 2017/18 was 86.3% and in 2016-17 it was 83.9%. TEF metrics are higher and indicate a double positive flag in this area showing data is above benchmark. Internal data in relation to achievement of UCW students is high, in 2017-18 31% achieved First Class honours, with 72% achieving a good degree (First and 2.1). In 2016-17 27% achieved First Class honours degrees and 73% good degrees, which is in line with national benchmarks.

Progression data is more complex. Destination of Leavers Higher Education (DLHE) data reports the progression of a proportion of UCW's student population and does not reflect the overall picture with a number of students within the cohort also working within the NHS and guaranteed a higher level job on completion of their Foundation degree. In addition UCW experienced difficulties with two of the companies appointed by HEFCE to carry out the survey for Further Education Colleges; they did not meet the expected response rates and some data was not received. The DLHE data that is available indicates positive results, with 87% progression into work or further/higher study, with an average salary of £16,000 per annum.

TEF Year Four metrics indicate that with 2015-16 graduates 73.2% progressed into highly skilled employment or further study which is 2% higher than 2014-15 graduates. Over the three year period 2013-14; 2014-15 and 2015-16 the UCW average indicator for highly skilled employment or further study is 74.1% which is 3.3% above benchmark, resulting in a positive flag. However, the figure has declined since TEF: Year Two when the figure was 78.2% with a double positive flag. TEF: Year Four metrics indicate that Foundation degree students are progressing to highly skilled employment or further study, with First degree students generally obtaining employment, although they are not necessarily obtaining highly skilled or well-paid graduate roles.

1.2 Higher education participation, household income or socioeconomic status

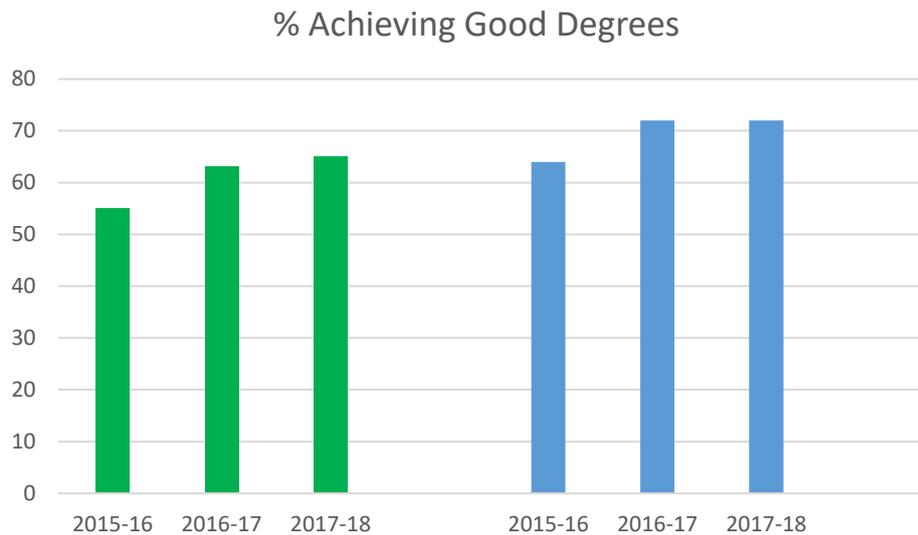
Internal data indicates that UCW is performing well in recruiting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, based on Participation of Local Areas (POLAR 4) data. In 2017-18 21% of UCW students progress from POLAR quintile 1, which reflects those most disadvantaged and least likely to progress to higher education. The percentage of students recruited from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 in 2017-18 is 49.7%. The overall figure has been consistent over three years, although the figure shows a significant increase in students from quintile 1 (from 14% to 21%) although the figures are not completely comparable as previous data was based on POLAR 3.

Student Loan Company data demonstrates that UCW also recruits well in terms of attracting students from low income backgrounds; for the last two years half of the directly-funded UCW students are from low income backgrounds with a declared household income of £25,000 per year or less, in 2017-18 it was 50%, in 2016-17 it was 51%.

TEF Year Four split metrics have double positive flags (92.8%) in continuation for National IMD quintiles 1 and 2. Internal data does show a 6% difference between the continuation of students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 and those from quintiles 3, 4 and 5. 76.2% of quintiles 1 and 2

continued on their programme, but the figure for quintiles 3, 4 and 5 was 82.4%, although interestingly quintile 1 was slightly above quintile 2.

In relation to achievement and success of these students, internal data identifies that UCW is beginning to close the gap in terms of students achieving good degrees. In 2015-16 only 55% of quintile 1 students achieved a good degree compared to 65% of all students achieving at this level. In 2017-18 the figure was 65% against 72% overall.



TEF Data also shows a double positive flag (71.4%) for highly skilled employment or higher study for POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2 students.

1.3 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students

The number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students progressing to UCW has remained broadly static over the last three years ranging from 7.1% in 2015-16 to 6.8% (in both 2017-18 and 2016-17). Due to the small numbers of BAME students represented at UCW it is generally not appropriate to disaggregate this data into more specific ethnic groups as there would be potential for individual students to be identified, even if suppressed over several years. UCW will continue to monitor this data and should the numbers increase we would look to disaggregate the data at all stages of the life cycle.

The OFS Dashboard Data does disaggregate proportion of BAME students at UCW, indicating that in 2017-18 Mixed students are the most represented with 3% of students identifying themselves within this category, the proportion of Black students is 2% and Asian students are the least represented at only 1%.

The 2011 Census data records that only 2.7% of North Somerset residents were from a BAME background. The Office of National Statistics experimental mid-term estimates of changes suggests the figure could have increased to 4.76% in 2004. Similar data published by Somerset Council shows that only 5.4% are from a BAME population. In the light of this data and that UCW recruits from the local region, UCW's recruitment of BAME students reflects the local population and in some ways exceeds local expectation, and UCW remains committed to ensuring it recruits a diverse study body.

The Widening Participation and Recruitment Officer has engaged in outreach and recruitment activity across the region and notably Bristol, often participating in collaborative outreach events. The commitment to work with targeted disadvantaged students remains and closer links have been established with Access to HE Students. A BAME working group has been developed with students and staff and as a result good links now exist with the local BAME Network and Multicultural Friendship Association which both attended Freshers' Fair and UCW is hosting an English class in the Winter Gardens. Application data does not indicate any unconscious bias in making offers but this continues to be closely monitored.

TEF: Year Four split metrics have a double positive flag for continuation of BAME students (94%) and a positive flag for Black and Asian (this data is not reportable, suppressed for data protection).

Internal achievement data for 2017-18 shows BAME students achieved well. The percentage of BAME students achieving at the highest level increased significantly with these students outperforming other students' achievement. This was building on an improvement in 2016-17 where BAME students achieved as well as other students which demonstrates positive progress. However, in 2017-18 a significantly higher proportion received a Third. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there are a small number of BAME students across all years, meaning the number of students completing honours level qualifications is also low, and potentially even one student could significantly influence the data.

In regards to progression, TEF shows a positive flag for Highly Skilled employment or higher study for BAME students at 80%.

1.4 Mature Students

Another underrepresented group that UCW recruits well is mature students. Internal data indicates that 55% of UCW students were over 21 at the start of their programme, and 25.6% of these students were over 30 years of age. Although a marginal decline from last academic year, this compares to 47% of UCW students being over 21 years of age in the 2013-14 academic year. This contrasts with national figures which have seen a decline in mature entrants into higher education.

TEF Year Four split metrics for UCW have a double positive flag for continuation of mature students 92.8%.

Mature students make up the majority of UCW's student population, therefore the overall positive achievement of the student population reflects the achievement of our mature students. However, on analysis of the internal data mature students appear to achieve slightly lower than young students, in 2017-18 68.7% of mature students achieved a good degree compares to 72% overall. Although there is a gap, and UCW will continue to monitor it and be mindful of the needs of mature students, the small scale of this gap is the testimony to the support already in place and smaller than gaps to be targeted elsewhere.

The OfS Dashboard data indicates that there is a gap between the progression of young and mature students. Whilst it is suggested that the gap is not statistically significant, and the data shows there is an improving picture, there is still a gap which requires consideration and attention as part the ongoing analysis of progression data of UCW students.

1.5 Disabled students

According to ILR data the numbers of students recruited who disclose a specific learning difference or disability is increasing year-on-year. In 2017/18 32% of students declared they have a learning difference or disability which is an increase of 2.5% from 29.5% in 2016/17, and in turn this was an increase on the previous two years. Of these only half, 16% have a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) in place.

Of the students who have a learning difference or disability nearly 60% have dyslexia / dyspraxia; by far the biggest percentage of students with additional needs fall into this category or other specific learning difference, including dyscalculia. However, this is a significant drop of just over 7% from the 2016/17 figure, which has been matched by an increase of 8% in students declaring a mental health difficulty, now at 14.6%. This mirrors the HE sector as a whole which is experiencing a significant increase in this area. 6.8% of students with a disability have a physical disability, generally related to a sight or hearing impairment or medical condition.

TEF metrics have a double positive flag (93.9%) for continuation of disabled students. However, on further analysis of internal data those with a mental health diagnosis are more likely to withdraw than others. In 2017/18, 31% of students who did not continue withdrew on the basis of a mental health difficulty. Further analysis of the data indicates that whilst students in receipt of a DSA are most likely to continue from one year to the next, those with mental health difficulties are least likely to progress. Data suggests that if students are engaged with specialist support they continue on their programme and achieve well, but in some cases, the opposite also appears true.

UCW internal achievement data for 2017-18 indicates that students with declared disabilities did not achieve as highly as those without, with fewer students achieving good degrees, although the picture is improving. However, in contrast to this students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) support, are achieving at least as well as other students with 33% achieving First Class Honours and 75% achieving good degrees, both above the national benchmark and UCW's average results.

This indicates that students with a disability but not in receipt of DSA appear disadvantaged as they are more likely to withdraw before completing their programme, and potentially will not achieve as highly as other students.

In terms of progression TEF shows a positive flag (72.3%) for highly skilled employment or higher study for disabled students.

1.6 Care leavers, carers and estranged students

Internal data indicates that in the 2017-18 academic year 2.9% of UCW students were care leavers and 7% deem themselves to be carers, or young carers for another adult. The percentage of care leavers is down slightly from 2016-17 but still represents growth across 3 and 5 years. In 2018/19 a question was added to the enrolment data to identify any estranged students. This will enable UCW to monitor and track these vulnerable students and provide data in future years.

In the last three years the average continuation rate for care leavers studying at UCW is 77.7%. Although this is slightly below the overall continuation rate, it is recognised that these students face significant additional barriers than other students; as such, while UCW is committed to supporting care leavers and would like to increase this figure, at times and depending on individual circumstances, it is sometimes the best option for the student to not continue with higher education at that time. However, UCW continues to work closely with these students.

In 2017-18 60% of care leavers achieved a good degree compared to 73% of students overall. Due to the small numbers of students graduating the achievement of one student could significantly distort the data, but over the past three year figure the average achievement of 1st and 2.1s is 57%, so the figures seems fairly reflective of the achievement. This is not comparable to overall achievement at UCW and there is a clear and noticeable gap in this regard and therefore a target to reduce this has been agreed.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

Weston College and UCW is set in the heart of the community and within close proximity of some of the most deprived wards in Weston-super-Mare. Meeting the needs of the local community and supporting residents to access education and training at all levels is central to the institutions values. Weston College's mission statement is "Creating Brighter Futures", and at its core is the provision of an inclusive learning experience with opportunities for all students, regardless of background or experience to be successful. In recognition of this the College recently won Beacon Awards for its commitment to widening participation in education, inclusive practices and mental health and wellbeing. UCW shares these values and strategic priorities and its mission is "To deliver an outstanding higher education experience, enabling success and inspiring ambition". UCW recognises the responsibility to support students to access higher education, succeed within it and progress into a meaningful career whilst also raising the aspiration of many students. UCW's long term ambition is to eradicate any gaps in continuation, attainment and progression and this has influenced the identification of the target groups and strategic aims. In response to the assessment of performance UCW has identified a number of strategic aims, covering the whole student lifecycle and aligned to the overall Strategic Plan.

2.1 Target Groups

Whilst UCW is committed to supporting all underrepresented groups, with resources directed to the areas where there is most need and where UCW can have the most impact. Therefore, in response to the physical location and student population at UCW, along with the gaps identified it has been determined that the target groups should be:

- Students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2,
- Disabled students, particularly those with a disclosure of poor mental health and those not in receipt of DSA,
- Care leavers.

UCW also recognises the need to support estranged students and help reduce the impact of the significant barriers they face. In the future these students may also be a target group but currently there is limited data in this regard. As a result UCW will continue to monitor these students and give consideration to whether this group should also be a specific target group in the future. In response to the assessment of performance the focus will primarily be on the success of students within the target groups as this is where the greatest gaps are present.

2.2 Aims and objectives

UCW's aims and objectives have therefore been set out as below.

Access

- To maintain UCW's commitment to Outreach activity in order to ensure the continued recruitment of a diverse student population with a high proportion from under-represented groups.
- Continue to recruit significant numbers of students from under-represented groups to higher education courses at UCW. This should include, but will not be limited to, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, care-leavers, mature students, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students, and those with a disability or a specific learning difference.
- To work in collaboration with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) and local Outreach Hub to increase the numbers of students progressing to UCW from POLAR quintile 1.

In response to the deprivation within Weston-super-Mare, and the underperformance of its schools, UCW will continue to fund outreach work within the local community and local schools. Whilst there are no access target because the gaps identified as most significant are in other areas, the commitment to recruiting a diverse student body remains. UCW believes that the reason that it recruits well from most underrepresented groups is due to the range of outreach activity delivered and therefore UCW intends to maintain the programme of activities that have been developed and refined over the last few years.

Partnering with the NCOP covering the wards in Weston-super-Mare, Wessex Inspirational Network (WIN), and Into University whilst working with and local schools and Weston College, UCW will continue to raise aspirations and encourage young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods to progress into Higher Education. The NCOP has targets to work with influencers and UCW continues to look for opportunities to engage with parents and teachers where appropriate.

Although BAME numbers are static, a specific target has not been set in this area, again due to the more significant priorities within other target groups. However, UCW remains committed to this area of work and intends to honour the initiatives already in place to support the progression and recruitment of BAME students whilst also embracing other opportunities to support work in this area, particularly with partners.

Student Success

- All students, regardless of background will be enabled to stay on programme and succeed on their chosen course to the best of their ability, enjoying a fulfilling experience and enriching their lives and careers.
- Continuation rate to be above sector benchmark as reported through the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) data, for all years of study.
- To improve the continuation of students from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2 and those with mental health conditions and care leavers to ensure this is in line with that of other students.
- Good Degrees (First and 2.1) to match national benchmarks and ensure there are no significant gaps in attainment for students in under-represented groups as outlined by the Office for Students (OfS).
- Improving the success rate of students who declare a disability but are not eligible to a Disabled Student Allowance (DSA).
- Encourage students who declare a disability to access support services.

Student success is the area in which the majority of resource will be targeted as there are clear gaps between the most disadvantaged and underrepresented groups and overall continuation and achievement rates. As a result targets have been set in regards to continuation and/or achievement of each of the target groups identified.

UCW recognises the need to support national key performance indicators and aims to positively contribute towards reducing the gap in non-continuation between the most and least represented groups, and to reduce the gap in degree outcomes (Firsts or 2.1s) between disabled students and non-disabled students. Therefore related targets have been set in these areas, along with improving continuation of students with mental health disclosures, care leavers students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2, along with achievement of these students and those who declare a disability but are not in receipt of DSA.

The specific targets relating to success, over the duration of this plan (5 years), have been agreed as:

- Reduce percentage difference in non-continuation rates between POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintile 1 students by 50%
- Reduce percentage difference in non-continuation rates between disabled students with a disclosure of mental health and non-disabled student by 50%
- Reduce percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2.1) between care leavers and all other students by 50%
- Reduce percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2.1) between POLAR4 quintile 5 and quintiles 1 and 2 students by 5%
- Reduce percentage difference in degree attainment (1st and 2.1) between disabled students not in receipt of DSA and non-disabled students by 50%.

The aim is to achieve the above targets over the period of the Access and Participation Plan and interim milestones have been laid out in the Targets and investment plan.

Progression

- All students from all backgrounds are supported effectively to progress into their chosen employment or further study.
- To improve the number of first-degree students securing highly skilled employment or moving on to higher study, matching the sector benchmark.
- Embed effective Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in order to ensure employability and enterprise into the curriculum, developing graduate attributes which foster a culture of ambition and an entrepreneurial approach.

As outlined on page two of the document, although progression data is currently very positive, this does not reflect a complete picture based on some provision being indirectly-funded (franchised). As a consequence a target has not been identified in this area. However, progression of students remains a priority and therefore this area will be closely monitored and reviewed in the light of the transition from DLHE to Graduate Outcomes. In addition UCW will ensure that enterprise and employability are embedded within the curriculum will help to support progression. It is recognised that the least represented groups are often less likely to access extracurricular activity and therefore embedding it within their timetabled programme also ensures they have opportunity to engage with this crucial support, advice and guidance.

Also noteworthy, UCW works collaboratively with the University of the West of England Bristol (UWE) and Bath Spa University (BSU), and UCW franchised students will be contributing towards achievement of their aims, objectives and targets.

3. Strategic measures

3.1. Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

UCW is focused on reducing the gaps in achievement and non-continuation that have been identified and supporting underrepresented groups through all stages of the student lifecycle. Aims and objectives are shared with staff and performance will be monitored at all levels of the organisation, from Governors to Higher Education Board of Studies (HEBS) which monitors quality and standards, to Programme Team Meetings. UCW has always taken a whole provider approach with the measures implemented being applied across the whole institution and embedded in strategy, policy and procedures.

UCW invests in the development and training of its staff and holds Higher Education Continuing Professional Development (HE CPD) events which are mandatory for all HE staff to attend. This enables communication with staff, both academic and support, to ensure they are fully aware of the intentions of the institution and key developments they need to be aware of. For example on a rolling basis training is put in place in regards to how best to support a student with a specific learning difference or disability e.g. dyslexia, autism and mental health. Students are involved in the delivery of these sessions so staff have a clear understanding of their challenges and needs. All staff involved in admissions decisions are also informed of new qualifications and trained in terms of ensuring they support the progression of underrepresented groups and ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants.

Measures to support the development of academic skills and study support, along with careers coaching are also launched at HE CPD events, then reviewed and enhanced with staff and student involvement so that staff are aware of the support available and the referral processes for individual students. However, many of these strategies are being more fully embedded within the curriculum to increase engagement and try to reduce barriers for students accessing additional support on a one-to-one basis. Based on the assessment of performance UCW has also decided to positively target additional students who are now recognised as being at risk of leaving or underperforming.

Strategic Measures

UCW continues to work collaboratively on a number of projects to widen access to higher education, including the NCOP and other sustainable projects. UCW has joined with seven other HEIs in the area to sustain the Western Outreach Network (WON) to organise HE awareness and progression activities for students and their parents. The WON also offers continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities for teachers and advisers in addition to providing a website (www.won.ac.uk) and regular newsletters that act as a single source of information.

UCW also collaborates with nineteen other universities to fund, maintain, develop and promote the free to use, careers and progression planning websites. Lifepilot, engaging and supporting mature and part-time students in progressing to higher level study (www.life-pilot.co.uk), Careerpilot, an award winning website providing one-stop inspirational, impartial pathway and progression information to 13-19 year olds, parents and advisers in the South of England region. The site was used by and used by 420,000+ users in 2017-18. (www.careerpilot.org.uk). Careerpilot supports schools in meeting the 2018 Careers Statutory Guidance and 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and is integrated into the work of six NCOP projects. The WON, Careerpilot and Lifepilot are managed through the Western Vocational Progression Consortium (WVPC) Board.

As a significant number of students are from low income families, the offering of bursaries and scholarships is essential and research has shown that financial support can student retention and achievement, reducing the financial burden for students and the need for those from low income backgrounds to take on significant paid part time work. UCW will offer 40 bursaries of £2,000 spread equally across the first two years of study to targeted students from low income backgrounds from 2019-20 onwards. A further 10 bursaries will be offered in 2020-21 after tuition fees increase (from £8250 to £8,500). Priority will be given to those experiencing multiple factors of deprivation including:

- Care leavers / young carers.
- Students who are estranged or currently living in an accredited Foyer.
- Students from POLAR Quintile one.
- Single parents.
- Those with a declared disability.

Students can either choose cash instalments made twice a year (November and February), a fee waiver or in-kind support, such as help with accommodation costs. This approach to bursary support will continue to be evaluated and if this process indicates further change is required this will be implemented.

In addition UCW intends to provide discretionary funds to support students experiencing financial hardship. This allocation would ensure students are not disadvantaged in terms of accessing additional materials, purchasing kit or participating in residential trips and work placements based on financial barriers. UCW understands that these optional activities can advantage students and support future career opportunities and does not want underrepresented groups to be disadvantaged due to financial limitations. UCW will also ensure that student accommodation is available all year round for care leavers, and if required will cover the cost for vacation periods.

In addition to financial support there are a range of measures to address the gaps in non-continuation and achievement. UCW's Higher Education Library Plus (HE.LP) programme is designed to equip all students with the academic skills they require to successfully complete their programme and is embedded into the curriculum. This commences with the Headstart programme which supports the smooth transition of students and is a progressive programme that continues across all the years of study. Sessions include: research; referencing and plagiarism; dissertation workshops and report writing, and are embedded into every programme of study. Feedback from students has been positive and is used to develop and tailor the programme. Following further evaluation this is being enhanced to ensure academics and study skills support staff within the library work together to develop a bespoke programme of activities which links directly with the assessment and skills required on each year of each programme.

Similarly individual programmes and modules are being reviewed and modified to ensure that Year 1 encourages skills development (both personal and academic), that work-based learning still remains a key feature of all programmes including new three-year honours full honours degrees and that employability and enterprise are being embedded within the curriculum. This is to ensure that students are supported to obtain relevant and meaningful work experience during their programme and that they are enabled to extend their network of contacts to support progression. Programme delivery has always been structured and planned to enable students to engage with work based learning or paid employment alongside timetabled sessions, with most students in attendance

across two days. With the introduction of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships some programmes are delivered across one day. This has been an area of growth for UCW in recent years and whilst all support services are available to these students, more information is provided online now in order that they can access it via their workplace as well. UCW is also working collaboratively with UWE and four other FE institutions within the region as part of the local Institute of Technology. The College led this initiative which will create a digitally networked solution to providing STEM related education and training, which has a particular focus on reaching underrepresented groups.

All students have access to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) from dedicated careers staff. Tailored tutorials are delivered within professional development modules, alongside one-to-one sessions, and volunteering options will be available. Work-based and placement learning will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it is of high quality and enables students to evidence transferable skills that employers desire. CEIAG support will help to nurture resilient, self-assured individuals with graduate attributes required to enter employment. Student from particular underrepresented groups are targeted and actively encouraged to engage with the one-to-one support offered in order that their particular needs can be addressed.

In response to the numbers of students who have a disability UCW has invested in highly qualified, fully trained and experienced Specialist Support practitioners who can provide bespoke one-to-one study skills support and ensure a professional and consistent approach to working with students with a specific learning difference or mental health diagnosis who are in receipt of DSA. This also enables UCW to ensure support is offered to students from the outset of their programme following initial screening, prior to their DSA being in place. The data regarding DSA students demonstrates the positive impact of these staff and that their strategies in supporting students to overcome their disability, become independent learners and manage their studies are effective. Feedback from students is also extremely positive. As a result UCW intends to extend this provision in order to provide additional support to students who have disclosed a specific learning difference or difficulty, regardless of their eligibility to a DSA with the intention of reducing the number of students with a disability, who are not receiving support, that are at risk of withdrawing early. A new procedure is also being implemented to try and further encourage students to persist with their application for DSA support to ensure they get the full package of support they are entitled to, and that those students who are awarded a DSA fully engage with their support.

The Higher Education Registry Team (HEART) deliver student support across the institution and again UCW has expanded this team as detailed in the previous Access and Participation Plan to ensure appropriate staffing levels to meet the needs of students. Student continuation is improving which indicates that current measures are effective in supporting student continuation, including the introduction of a Higher Education Welfare and Retention Officer. HEART also deliver resilience and wellbeing sessions to all first year students and monitor attendance of all students to identify students at risk of leaving. This process has been refined and enhanced and a Student Retention Strategy has been developed this academic year to ensure any student identified as at risk meets at an early stage with their personal tutor and a member of HEART in order to support them to reengage with their programme and agree any additional actions required. This could include accessing additional support either via the Specialist Support Tutors or the HE.LP study skills staff.

Alignment with strategies

UCW's strategic aims and objectives align to UCW's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy which includes a commitment to embracing a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach. The strategy states that learning opportunities will:

“assure that the planning and design of learning and teaching activities take an inclusive approach”.

“assure that disabled people are not put at a disadvantage. UCW will offer disabled students learning opportunities which are accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible, and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary”.

UCW is steadfast in its approach to ensuring all students are enabled to succeed and achieve their full potential. The UDL ensures that learning is accessible to all students including those with specific learning differences, others who have progressed from vocational programme and is recognised as benefitting the whole student body. It aims to ensure that all students are given the tools they need to succeed at UCW.

UCW recognises the social model of disability and views universal learning and teaching as a strategy for removing barriers, empowering individuals and facilitating students to be autonomous, independent and equal in society. This Universal Design for Learning Strategy was developed to enhance and support students at UCW, and to successfully meet the expectations stipulated by the Equality Act 2010, the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Weston College and UCW, are committed to providing an inclusive environment and promoting and advancing equality of opportunity for all and this is clearly articulated through the Equality and Diversity Policy. UCW recognises that promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong, and supports achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. The policy states:

“This policy has direct implications for all other College policies. We believe that delivering Equality and Diversity is one crucial strand of our College approach to overall quality improvement and we place it at the very heart of everything we do.

It is an important part of the mission, vision and values of the College, but also because, by attracting and retaining the most diverse range of talented people as learners, staff and partners, we will ensure the College’s future success. This extends to taking a pro-active approach to seeking opportunities supporting the College’s Equality and Diversity ethos.”

The latest OFSTED inspection noted a strength in the promotion of equality and diversity through a wide range of activities and highly pertinent themed events.

The Head of HE who is responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress of the Access and Participation Plan is a member of the Equality and Diversity Committee and ensures due regard is paid to all the protected characteristics and in particular, that the approach to Access, Success and Progression aligns with the overall Equality and Diversity Policy and aims.

3.2 Student Consultation

UCW regards its students as equal partners in their learning and ensuring that student feedback is received and responded to and is regarded as fundamental to continuous improvement. Students have been consulted during the development of this Plan, the Student Representative Committee

has been the body primarily involved, which includes student representatives from all programmes, modes of study and years. Papers are sent out in advance and any students unable to attend can request to meet with the Chair of the Committee or submit written feedback to be presented at the meeting. The Student Representative Committee approved the target groups and the increase in tuition fees on the basis of additional bursaries and support services being made available. This has been built into the financial expenditure. They also considered the overall approach and commented on the strategic aims, targets and measures. A number of measures will be implemented following the recommendation of the students. The Student Experience and Engagement Officer has also been involved in the process.

The targets will now be monitored by the Student Representatives Committee, and this has been added as a regular agenda item. The Head of HE will take the targets and relevant data to the committee for students to comment on. In addition students are full members of Higher Education Board of Studies and HE Governance Committee who will also monitor progress. Key performance measures, including continuation, achievement and progression are reported and considered at Student Staff Liaison Committees which involve all students.

3.3 Evaluation Strategy

UCW recognises that evaluation can enable enhancement and ensure continuous improvement. Therefore evaluation is embedded in our approach to access, success and progression. UCW worked through the evaluation toolkit and identified areas that are emerging and requiring development, but considers that for the size and scale of the projects the evaluation UCW currently undertakes is appropriate and robust. There is a recognition that the evaluations carried out are primarily qualitative rather than quantitative, again this is primarily due to the scale of the projects and the small numbers of those completing the evaluations.

UCW does recognise that some investment is required in this area in order to move to commended and is intending to make use of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) in order to measure the long term impact of outreach intervention and activities. From 2020-21 UCW will invest in HEAT and start to record and monitor students participating in outreach activity and tracking their progress. However, it will take several years before it will be possible to make any conclusions regarding the impact and long term benefit of UCW's outreach programme.

When designing any programme or activity, consideration is given to how it will be evaluated. On an annual basis programmes are reviewed and if required modified based on the evaluations and feedback received. If appropriate, activities are changed or withdrawn to ensure only those that are most successful remain part of the programme. As part of the overall evaluation of activities, due regard is given to the protected characteristics and Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure any adverse effects on any particular groups of students are minimised.

After all widening access activities, participants complete an evaluation form, this includes pupils, academic staff (where appropriate), widening participation staff, student ambassadors and any other relevant parties. The evaluation captures information on how enjoyable the activity has been, the parts that were successful and suggestions for improvement. In addition it asks whether the activity has made an impact on participant decisions regarding their motivation, aspirations, ambitions and confidence in relation to their education and future progression. In the short term it assesses whether the project has had an impact on the students learning disposition and how staff will continue to build on this back in school. It also establishes whether the event has had an impact on their opinions regarding progression to both post 16 and post 18 education.

UCW staff review the methods of evaluation used to ensure they are appropriate and effective for the age and ability of the participants. All activities have delivery targets expressed within the resource plan, and therefore evaluation of the success of the programme is not just based on the feedback from schools and participants, but also whether UCW has achieved the targets set out in the plan.

The Network for Evaluating and Researching University Participation Interventions (NERUPI) Framework, developed at the University of Bath, is central to the design and evaluation of the measures implemented.

There are five main aims:

- Develop students' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education and graduate employment
- Develop students' capacity to navigate Higher Education and graduate employment sectors and make informed choices
- Develop students' confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenge of university life and graduate progression
- Develop students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment and successful graduate progression
- Develop students' understanding by contextualising subject knowledge and supporting attainment raising

These elements are embedded into the different outreach projects at pre and post 16 level and the evaluation considers how well the aim has been achieved.

With reference to evaluating the financial support, UCW has referred to the Financial Evaluation Toolkit and following the completion of a first cycle of implementation, has embedded recommended questions within the evaluation. A survey has been completed and focus groups will be conducted with all students in receipt of a UCW Bursary. Consideration will also be given to students whose income is under £25,000 but did not receive a bursary (included to confirm this group has not been disadvantaged). It will also be used to inform UCW that students are aware of the other financial support available or any other further actions required in this regard.

In addition, a UCW lecturer is part of the Widening Participation Evaluation Group, and is researching learning dispositions and the readiness of students from widening participation backgrounds to be able to engage fully in higher education. Initial feedback has been disseminated to staff through HE CPD and this ongoing research should help us evaluate activities and measures, particularly HE.LP and the Head Start Study Skills programme and implement any recommended changes that may help students to succeed on their programmes. In addition UCW's Widening Participation and Recruitment Officer has undertaken research into the impact of Outreach work on targeted groups within Weston-super-Mare. The content of the outreach project with key stage 3 was enhanced in response to the research that was carrying out.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The UCW Strategic Plan is currently under review for update during 2019-20. The aims and targets within this plan will be embedded into the new document. Performance against these targets is reported to and scrutinised at Higher Education Board of Studies and HE Governance Committee on

a termly basis in order to monitor progress and implement additional resources or measures if required. These bodies require assurance that UCW is doing all that it can to recruit and retain students and to enable them to succeed and progress, particularly against the targets set. Continuation and the monitoring of at risk students is also a standing agenda item at Higher Education Management Team (HEMT).

Although the Head of HE is responsible for monitoring and reporting progress in relation to the Access and Participation Plan, the Vice Principal HE and the Accountable Officer also monitor progress. If progress is not matching the milestone outlined this would be discussed at the committees mentioned in order to review additional measures and actions that may be required in order to ensure UCW is moving toward its aims and targets.

4. Provision of information to students

UCW will publish the Access and Participation Plan, and relevant associated tables, as required on the UCW website to ensure that the documents are accessible and readily available to applicants and current students. On an annual basis UCW also updates and publishes a Student Finance Guide to ensure that applicants and current students are aware of the financial support that is available to them both from Student Finance England and UCW. It clearly states the eligibility criteria, how bursaries are assessed and awarded and the need for students to agree to share their data for them to be assessed. The guide is available on the UCW website and is brought to the attention of applicants at open days, and as part of the interview/audition process.

UCW also produces information on budgeting and student survival tips. In addition, details regarding measures to support success and progression are outlined in the “Supporting Your Success” booklet which is available through the website and given to all students at enrolment. This also outlines who to go to if you are in financial difficulty or want any help or clarity regarding finance.

Tuition fees are published on programme pages in the prospectus and on the UCW website, to ensure that applicants are aware of the fee level applicable to the programme of study. Any additional costs associated with the programme of study are published on the website, and are available at the research and application stage. The UCW Fees Policy is updated annually in consultation with the students and provided to students as part of their pre contract information and published on the website. This also makes clear any charges applied for students who need to retake a year or module.

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 | | £8,250 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | | £6,500 |
| 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 | * | * |
| 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 | | £5,500 |
| Foundation degree | | £5,500 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | | £3,250 |
| 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: Weston College of Further and Higher Education

Provider UKPRN: 10007459

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 (£) | £82,500.00 | £92,965.00 | £97,103.00 | £98,994.00 | £98,994.00 |
| Access (pre-16) | £50,000.00 | £56,500.00 | £58,760.00 | £59,935.00 | £59,935.00 |
| Access (post-16) | £25,500.00 | £28,815.00 | £29,967.00 | £30,566.00 | £30,566.00 |
| Access (adults and the community) | £5,000.00 | £5,650.00 | £5,876.00 | £5,993.00 | £5,993.00 |
| Access (other) | £2,000.00 | £2,000.00 | £2,500.00 | £2,500.00 | £2,500.00 |
| Financial support (£) | £123,500.00 | £135,000.00 | £145,000.00 | £145,000.00 | £145,000.00 |
| Research and evaluation (£) | £8,000.00 | £10,000.00 | £10,000.00 | £10,000.00 | £10,000.00 |

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) | £810,620.00 | £916,955.00 | £954,740.00 | £974,990.00 | £974,990.00 |
| Access investment | 6.6% | 6.6% | 6.5% | 6.5% | 6.5% |
| Financial support | 15.2% | 14.6% | 15.0% | 14.7% | 14.7% |
| Research and evaluation | 1.0% | 1.1% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% |
| Total investment (as %HFI) | 22.8% | 22.2% | 22.6% | 22.3% | 22.3% |

