

2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by The City of Liverpool College against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

1. Ambition and strategy

The City of Liverpool College's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

The College's overall ambition and strategy in the 19-20 access and participation plan involved working both independently and collaboratively with other local HE institutions to meet national, local and College-set targets relating to access to HE, success and progression of students from underrepresented groups.

Locally, working with the Shaping Futures partners, the College's strategy included active engagement to work with 14-18 year old learners (School Years 9-13) from 22 'gap' wards across the Liverpool City Region. The progression to HE for young people in these wards is lower than it should be, based on historic attainment levels. Priority schools are identified in these wards and both the Shaping Future partnership and the College, through its own initiatives and projects, have been focusing activities to engage young people from these areas in higher education.

The key HE strategic goals, outlined in the College's HE strategy 2015-20, were as follows:

1. To provide high level skills for employment and economic growth in line with the Liverpool City Region LEP priorities, and by working in collaboration with local employers with the view of having a positive impact on economic growth, and development of our students' employability and enterprise skills;
2. To strive for excellence by offering enhanced learning opportunities and outstanding quality of HE provision that is informed by active students' engagement; and
3. To respond to needs of local learners and support widening access to HE to a diverse student population.

Consequently, the College's HE provision supports the development of those skills required by the region's economy, traditionally seen as a service sector and knowledge economy, with financial and professional services, manufacturing, and creative and digital industries providing the majority of the local employment.

To support the delivery of local targets widening access is one of the key priorities for the College. Our approach to widening access has been driven by the fact that the College is recruiting its FE and HE students from predominantly local central wards that are identified to have low socioeconomic status (National IMD Q1, Q2) and low levels of progression to HE (Polar3 Q1 and Q2). The College also identifies, where applicable, care leavers as part of its strategy. The majority of College FE and HE students are from identified, underrepresented groups.

As described in the 19-20 Access and Participation plan, this social profile, associated with the majority of the College students, requires outstanding provision of academic, pastoral, specialised and financial support measures. It requires effective monitoring of students' progress and prompt and effective intervention where underperformance is identified. Equally important, it requires a unique, strict but personal and individualised approach to supporting every one of our students, thus ensuring they have a strong sense of belonging; they feel respected, supported but also stretched and challenged to develop to their full potential.

The plan explained how the College delivers its HE programmes in small groups, with extensive guided learning hours, with the focus on development of independent study and academic research skills, employment skills, and awareness of a range of progression and enterprise opportunities.

The College recognised in its plan that a significant number of our HE students may have multiple equality characteristics that would create additional barriers to success and therefore the need for additional support is critically important to be identified and implemented. Our strategy included ensuring that our reporting and management systems are in place, are effective, and enable intervention.

As described in the ambitions and strategy of the plan, the College takes a holistic approach when providing Higher Education that supports all relevant needs of learners, and we aim to be outstanding in our unique approach to offering innovative academic and individualised

pastoral support. We are fortunate to have many opportunities to celebrate outstanding achievements of our graduates that are enabled through this support. Equally we welcome opportunities for self-assessment and change of our approaches where these are no longer fully effective for all our learners. We work very closely with all our HE students who are equal partners and active contributors to our strategies and who shape their own learning experience via a range of formal and informal input opportunities.

Our ambition has been to strive for excellence and to perform at levels identified nationally as outstanding in relation to all aspects of HE provision for all our students. The College's strategic ambitions for access and participation within our own organisation, and the contribution we planned to make to the priorities identified, focused on the whole student cohort as well as on the specifically targeted underrepresented groups.

The College's strategic ambitions set out in the 19-20 Access and Participation Plan included targets in the areas identified below.

Access:

1. To continue to increase number of entrants to the College HE provision from Polar3, Q1 and Q2 areas;
2. To support progression to HE for identified College 14-16 target ward learners to achieve applications to HE from Polar3, Q1 and Q2 college 14-16 learners is above 25%; (With partial support from NCOP funding and collaborative working with NCOP partners)
3. To increase access to HE especially for white male students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The College is committed to developing new modes of study, including higher apprenticeships (Digital and Construction), and in developing more accessible provision to young people who are working e.g. a blended learning programme in Business.

Access, Success and Progression:

1. To identify and support other underrepresented groups and report on the whole student lifecycle of
 - carers
 - students estranged from their families
 - students from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
 - refugees
 - children of military families
2. To actively engage with OfS recommendations for support and monitoring and reporting and to offer support to our own students where this is requested for
 - students with identified sexual orientation (LGBT)
 - students with identified belief
3. To identify care leavers and students from the additional underrepresented groups to ensure they are supported via individual pastoral, tutorial, academic and financial support systems.
4. To achieve high levels of students' satisfaction relating to NSS survey results with high levels of student satisfaction in all areas and for all identified subgroups.

Success:

1. To achieve high levels of continuation rates, above national benchmark for all students and all identified subgroups, while continuing to offer additional targeted support to ensure we narrow the continuation gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged subgroups.

Progression:

1. To enhance support for employment and further study, which needs to be consistently applied for the whole student cohort with additional career and study progression events; white and male learners will be targeted for additional progression support measures.
2. To provide support for students to engage with enterprise and setting up their own business.
3. To strengthen links with employers and offer local career progression events, including additional work placement and internship opportunities, considering that the majority of HE leavers find employment in the local economy.
4. To aim for progression from College HE programmes to be at the national benchmark level for all higher education leavers and all identified subgroups.
5. To achieve high levels of progression rates, in line with the national benchmark for all students and all identified subgroups, while continuing to offer additional targeted support to ensure we narrow the progression gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged subgroups.

New collaborative targets were set in conjunction with the local NCOP (now Uni Connect), Shaping Futures partner organisations relating to identifying all POLAR Q1 and Q2 learners age 14-16 who are studying on L2 and L3 programmes and engaging them with progression to HE activities and support, aiming to raise the level of applications to study at a HE level to be above 25% from this cohort, this will also contribute towards the collaborative local NCOP target.

BAME learners tend to have a lower level of achievement (continuation level) than the mainstream learners. This was the only group of College students who, based on the TEF year 3 data, did not achieve national levels of continuation rates, falling behind by 1%, while all our other learner groups performed above the national level. The number of BAME FT learners reported in TEF Y3 data was 35, and at 11% to the overall number of FT learners. The College planned to introduce additional monitoring and support activities for this group of learners via internal pastoral and achievement support systems, to ensure this group of learners also perform at the national level in 2018-19, and continue to perform above the benchmark level in 2019-20.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by The City of Liverpool College of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of The City of Liverpool College's 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	Low participation wards with the proportion of young people (15 year olds) who entered HE by the age of 19 during the 2009-10 to 2014-15 academic years (POLAR4 quintile 1 and 2) over the years.	2013-14	50%	60	61	Percentage	2019-20	56	Limited progress
T16a_02 (Success)	BAME studnets BAME learners tend to have lower Level of achievement than the mainstream learners. The gaps are between 5%-8% annually. The College is aiming to introduce addional support for this group of learners to ensure achievement gap is narrowing.	2016-17	82.6%	88%	89%	Percentage	2018-19	81	Limited progress
T16a_03 (Student success)	Retention level of all underrepresented groups to be in line with the mainstream students retention level. Current retention (May 2018) is AT 90.6%. Retention support is put in place to improve it and bring retention to target of 90% by 2018 and to continue the improvement trend above 90%.	2013-14	83%	90%	90.5%	Percentage	2018-19		Limited progress

T16a_04 (Progression)	Aim for 90% of positive progression (DLHE) onto further study or employment for ALL HE graduates groups by 2020-21 with no gap in levels of achievement for any of the identified cathegories of underrepresented groups.	2014-15	85.5%	88%	89%	Percentage	2017-18		Expected progress
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Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	Work with studnets from year 10 and 11 within the region to promote access to HE	2014-15	3 events	6 events	7 events	Other	2019-20	7	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Student success)	Work with studnets from year 10 and 11 within the region to promote access to HE Science and Engineering programmes	2014-15	1 event	4 events	5 events	Other	2019-20	4	Limited progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£10,250.00	£10,067.00	-2%
Financial Support	£45,000.00	£13,064.00	-71%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected The City of Liverpool College has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_01	The College will continue to work independently and collaboratively with other HE providers, schools and sixth forms to continue positive progress against the access targets and ensure we are able to fulfil the targets set out in the 20/21 – 24/25 Access and Participation Plan, including 33% POLAR4 Q1 students accessing our Higher Education provision by 2024/25. This work is being closely monitored the College's HE Data and Information Group and HE Access and Participation Sub-groups, which were established during the 19-20 academic year. Their work is overseen by and aligned with the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group which directs and oversees the implementation of the Plan. The College's programme level monitoring reports are completed in-year and this is supporting timely responses and actions to recruitment at a programme and subject level with equality, diversity and inclusion targets and a strong focus on access to HE for students from low participation neighbourhoods.

T16a_02	As set out in the 2020-21 – 2024-25 Access and Participation Plan it is the College's ambition to ensure that any gap in continuation rates between White and ABMO students is eliminated by 2024-25. While recent continuation rates show positive progress towards this, it is important to ensure that this progress is sustained with less variability across academic years. This is being supported by close monitoring of student retention by ethnicity in-year and continuation trends across years through the HE Data and Information Sub-group. The College has renewed its commitment to being an anti-racist organisation and has an anti-racism action plan in place to achieve this, which includes actions to increase the visibility of AMBO staff and students across its campus and within the curricula.
T16a_03	It is the College's ambition that gaps in completion will be eliminated between students from the most and least advantaged areas (by IMD) and between students from areas with the highest and lowest HE participation areas (POLAR4) by 2025. Progress towards these targets is monitored by the HE Data and Information group and Access and Participation plan subgroup that respond to retention rates in-year for all underrepresented groups and report to the whole-college Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Group. The ambition to reduce these gaps is supported by the target to ensure that there is a positive upward trend in continuation rates for all HE students.
T16b_02	The College plans to continue to work closely with local schools and other HE providers through the Shaping Future network and has been an active member in establishing the Shaping Futures Hub. We will revisit our collaborative targets in line with the Phase 3 focus of the Uni Connect project and expect this to include an opportunity to target further support towards mature students studying at level 3. Similarly, as a Further Education College offering Higher Education, we expect to play a key role in opening up non-traditional routes through Higher Education to underrepresented groups.

5. Confirmation

The City of Liverpool College confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
No	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
The City of Liverpool College has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Elaine Bowker
Position	Principal & Chief Executive

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

The City of Liverpool College's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
There has been a positive increase in the percentage of students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 areas who are entering the Higher Education provision at the City of Liverpool College. This is an absolute increase of 6% from the baseline data in 17-18 which is well above the 0.2% increase among all English Higher Education providers, and demonstrates a relative increase of 12% at the City of Liverpool College compared to 0.7% nationally. Our performance is below the yearly milestone that was set for 19/20 by 5% and so we have assessed this area as 'limited progress'. However, our rate of progress is well above the national benchmark.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Widening access to Higher Education is one of the key priorities for the College. In addition to the steps detailed in the 19-20 Access and Participation Plan, the College created a role for a nominated member of staff to work as the Access and Participation co-ordinator to support the College's independent and collaborative work towards its target to increase access to Higher Education for students from low participation areas. While some outreach activities were disrupted by the pandemic, the College was able to actively engage in offering additional, remote support to its level 2 and 3 learners, who are predominantly from wards with low socio-economic status (IMD Q1, Q2) and low HE participation (POLAR4 Q1, Q2).

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We have made progress in this area but have assessed this here as 'limited progress' because it is our overall ambition that the gap between ABMO and White students is fully eliminated. The 19-20 Access and Participation plan identifies that BAME students tend to have lower levels of achievement than other students. Linked to continuation rates, there was a significant decrease in the continuation rate of Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnicity students in 2016-17 compared to White students and the College has introduced additional monitoring and support activities in an effort to close the gap between these groups of students. However, the most recent continuation data for White and ABMO students shows a reversal of the gap in 2017-18 with the continuation rates of AMBO students three percentage points higher than their white peers (85% to 82%) and a narrow gap of 1% between ABMO and White students (80% to 81%) in 2018-19.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
To achieve its aims for enhanced monitoring and reporting in-year, the College has established the HE Data and Information sub-group which reports to and is overseen by the whole-college Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy group. Student performance

is closely monitored in-year at a course and subject level and by underrepresented group, which is supporting our ambitions of eliminating gaps in continuation between ABMO and White students.

Target reference number: T16a_03

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Success in this area was in relation to the continuation rates of students from low socio-economic backgrounds as identified by IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. The College recruits predominantly from quintile 1 areas, with 61% of learners from Q1 in 2018-19 so it has been important to observe the continuation rates of students in this group. These students have performed better than those in Q3 in 2017-18 (Q1 84% to Q3 75%) and at the same rates in 2018-19 (80% for Q1 and Q3), but those in Q1 are performing at lower rates than Q4 with a gap of 1% in 2017-18. We have assessed this as 'limited progress' because it is our ambition to ensure that the gap is eliminated between students from high and low socio-economic backgrounds. It is also our ambition to ensure an upwards trend in continuation rates for all groups of students to at least 89% by the end of 2024-25 academic year.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Targeted support is in place for students from all underrepresented groups to ensure that we narrow continuation gaps between the most and least advantaged students. This includes the support during the 2019-20 academic year of a dedicated Higher Education Achievement Coach who has been able to work on a one-to-one basis with students from all HE programmes to enable them to successfully complete their studies. This support was able to continue to be offered to learners remotely during the lockdown in 2020. Work towards the continuation target has been supported by in-year monitoring of HE retention rates.

Target reference number: T16b_02

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We have assessed this area as 'limited progress' because some of our activities have been different to what we had aimed achieve prior to the national lockdown. Nevertheless, we have undertaken to meet the aims of this target in different ways. Similar to the statement above, the College continues to be an active member of Shaping Futures and has actively and collaboratively engaged with other HE providers and local schools to offer taster activities and events during the academic year, prior to the national lockdown. Not all activities were able to proceed as planned, but the College was instead able to offer one-to-one support to level 3 students whose HE decision making was impacted by the pandemic to ensure they were able to make informed choices in relation to their future studies. This alternative activity was assessed as a priority for the resources available during the pandemic to mitigate its potential impact on the most underrepresented students in accessing HE.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

We have assessed this area as 'limited progress' because some of our activities have been different to what we had aimed achieve prior to the national lockdown. Nevertheless, we have undertaken to meet the aims of this target in different ways. Similar to the statement above, the College continues to be an active member of Shaping Futures and has actively and collaboratively engaged with other HE providers and local schools to offer taster activities and events during the academic year, prior to the national lockdown. Not all activities were able to proceed as planned, but the College was instead able to offer one-to-one support to level 3 students whose HE decision making was impacted by the pandemic to ensure they were able to make informed choices in relation to their future studies. The majority of these learners are from wards with low socio-economic status (IMD Q1, Q2) and low HE participation (POLAR4 Q1, Q2). This alternative activity was assessed as a priority for the resources available during the pandemic to mitigate its potential impact on the most underrepresented students in accessing HE.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

The City of Liverpool College's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	
T16a_02	
T16a_03	
T16a_04	<p>The progression measure in the 19-20 Access and Participation plan was set in relation to DLHE data. The DLHE survey has now been replaced by the Graduate Outcomes survey, which reports on student progress fifteen months, rather than six months, post-graduation. The measures reported here are not directly comparable to those of the DLHE. Graduate activities from 2017-18 show that 80% graduates are engaged in a form of employment or further study 15 months after graduation from the City of Liverpool College. Previously, male full-time students had been identified as the worst performing group, however, in the 17-18 graduate outcomes data this group is more likely than their female peers to be engaged with work or further study, in particular they are engaged in full-time employment at much higher rates than female students. We note, however, that males are more likely than females to be unemployed fifteen months after graduation and this is a measure that we will keep under close review. As per the 19-20 Access and Participation Plan, the College has been able to expand its offer of level 6 progression routes from FD and HND courses and continues to expand its offer of HE progression activities in relation to employment and postgraduate study. Progress is a key measure that will be monitored through the graduate outcomes data. As per the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25, the College will keep progression data from the Graduate Outcomes survey under close review and may add additional targets and intervention to this plan in future years through its impact report.</p>

T16b_01	<p>Some of our activities have been different to what we had aimed achieve prior to the national lockdown. Nevertheless, we have undertaken to meet the aims of this target in different ways. The College continues to be a member of Shaping Futures, the local Uni Connect network of HE providers, and has actively engaged with this outreach programme to support underrepresented groups of students in accessing Higher Education. The College has been able to use contacts established through the network to engage students from target schools throughout the local area with the College offer of taster activities and events during the first half of the academic year. The activities planned post-March were affected by the coronavirus pandemic. While the College was unable to run summer school activities due to the national lockdown and College closure, through the work of a higher education progression advisor and progress leaders at the College it was possible to offer one-to-one support to level 3 students whose HE decision making was impacted by the pandemic to ensure they were able to make informed choices in relation to their future studies. The majority of these learners are from wards with low socio-economic status (IMD Q1, Q2) and low HE participation (POLAR4 Q1, Q2) and so this alternative activity was assessed as a priority for the resources available during the pandemic to mitigate its potential impact on the most underrepresented students in accessing HE. The College plans to continue to work closely with local schools and other HE providers through the Shaping Future network and has been an active member in establishing the Shaping Futures Hub. We will revisit our collaborative targets in line with the Phase 3 focus of the Uni Connect project and expect this to include an opportunity to target further support towards mature students studying at level 3. Similarly, as a Further Education College offering Higher Education, we expect to play a key role in opening up non-traditional routes through Higher Education to underrepresented groups.</p>
T16b_02	