

NCG

ACCESS AGREEMENT 2017-18

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NCG

NCG is one of the largest education and training groups in the UK, with an annual turnover that regularly exceeds £150m. NCG has evolved over several years through a process of growth, merger and acquisition, into one of the largest providers of high quality education, training, employability and work-based learning solutions in the UK. There are currently eight divisions of NCG: Newcastle College, West Lancashire College, Kidderminster College, Intraining, Rathbone Training, Newcastle Sixth Form College, Carlisle College and Lewisham Southwark College. NCG is recognised for its strong leadership and management, excellent governance, and is a sector leader in respect of its financial performance. It has a first rate reputation regionally and nationally, and a commitment to the highest standards of delivery.

The growth of Newcastle College to become one of the largest and most successful further and higher education colleges in the country provided the foundation for the development of NCG.

Over the last 24 months NCG has undertaken a complete review of its strategy. This project has engaged with over 2,000 colleagues and learners from across the business in establishing the purpose, strategy and values of the organisation. The process has been led by the Executive Board and outcomes approved by Governors.

The initial outcomes of the work have been the identification of a new purpose: "Unlocking Potential Through Learning", along with establishing the strategy of creating a national group of colleges supported by profitable training providers.

In line with our new organisational strategy, the green paper, fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice a new HE strategy was developed which aims to deliver a higher education experience that guarantees NCG graduates are 'work-ready' and outlines the organisation's commitment to widening participation.

The HE Quality assurance function for the group is operated by the HE Directorate in Newcastle College, with oversight by the HE Academic Board, which in itself reports through to Executive Board. Reports on HE Development and performance are standing items for both Executive Board and Corporation.

Introduction

NCG Divisions are committed to opportunity, choice and excellence in HE and seeks social mobility and future economic growth mainly within the North East via our largest College Division Newcastle College. We promote a student experience that is both enriching and inspiring for students wherever they study.

The customer demand is for seamless access to further and higher education opportunities, which are focused on skills and employability. The vocational HE curriculum has been developed to meet the needs of employers and also to articulate with the FE curriculum in order to promote progression for our Level 3 learners.

Over 90% of our HE provision is delivered in Newcastle College. Newcastle College is able to offer the best of both worlds: the resources, choice and location of a big college combined with the flexibility and responsiveness of a smaller community based institution.

The remaining HE provision is delivered at West Lancashire College, in response to student demand for a local progression route, Kidderminster College, who in 2013-14 commenced delivery of HNDs for directly funded students and in 2014-15 merged with NCG. Carlisle College and Lewisham Southwark College joined NCG in 2017 and each offer a small amount of Higher Education Provision.

The strong organic growth within the Divisions of NCG brings together higher and further education opportunities and progression pathways in a unique way. We are able to build on the success of the individual Divisions within NCG and take advantage of the opportunities for synthesis. Our offer is vocational HE curriculum that articulates well with the further education curriculum enabling progression from programmes of study. The emphasis on Widening Participation (WP) and improving progression into and through HE raises awareness and aspirations of all learners. As an multi Divisional organisation NCG values diversity promotes equality and eliminates bias and discrimination from the way it operates. This commitment is outlined in a number of policies including the Single Equality Scheme.

The Divisions of NCG provide an opportunity to review, further develop and enhance previous initiatives in WP. The range of activities that NCG Divisions covers the complete student life cycle and includes:

- Providing outreach activities, summer schools, taster days/master classes, talks and workshops for students, parents, staff and community to prepare students for higher education;
- Working with applicants in specific subject areas to ensure they meet the entry requirements by providing help such as information and

guidance, diagnostic tests, Maths and English literacy sessions and study skills;

- Activities to promote successful induction and integration of WP students and on-going provision of information and guidance (IAG) for students;
- Providing a coherent service through counselling and learner support services;
- Developing a flexible innovative curriculum that meets the needs of learners in the workplace and supports employers through mentoring;
- Developing curriculum and projects to improve the employability of WP students.

NCG's HE Synthesis

Advantage is taken of the unique contribution that can be made by the Divisions of NCG whether or not they are engaged in delivering HE. For example, activity in West Lancashire College is focussed on developing new pathways into HE whilst at the same time developing the capacity and capability of staff to design and deliver HE. A second example can be found in the Intraining Group Ltd which delivers a wide range of pre-HE and employability programmes across the UK and from 17 /18 have desires to enter into the Higher Apprenticeship market. Here another major role is to also raise awareness and aspirations for learners to enter HE which can be accessed through the Newcastle College Division which has over fifty years' experience of working with non-traditional learners. The College continues to be involved in the development of Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) which further demonstrates NCG's commitment to WP through the development of new and inclusive progression opportunities.

NCGs Success and Retention Position

The overall pass rate across the institution was 90% for 2014-15. The reporting demonstrates overall achievement has increased in all areas compared to 2013-14.

The table shows the overall pass rates, NCG foundation degrees, TU awards and Leeds Beckett University: *(brackets demonstrate % increase compared to 2013-14)

	% Overall Pass rate	% NCG FdA awards	% Teesside University	% Leeds Beckett University
CIND	88 (+8)	89	86	n/a
DSA	95 (+15)	94	95	50
HAND	93 (+10)	94	91	n/a

LSA	88 (+9)	86	91	100
NSED	88 (+8)	94	81	n/a
SCES	94 (+20)	95	91	86
WLC	88 (+9)	87	n/a	n/a
NCG	90 (+10)	91	88	**64

** Note: Leeds Beckett University had a total of 11 students presented at the board (last year of the exit strategy)

The data demonstrates 91% pass rate for students completing their foundation degree programme with NCG in 2014-15. Students on foundation degrees were awarded the following classifications:

Classifications	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
Distinction	11%	12%	14%	13%
Merit	36%	31%	33%	33%
Pass	52%	57%	52%	52%

The foundation degree classifications for 2014-15 reflect an increase in the number of students achieving merit.

- 48% of students studying on foundation degrees achieved their qualification with merit or above which is an increase of 5% from the previous year.

The degree classification for students achieving BA(Hons) and BSc (Hons) Degrees:

Classifications	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13	2011-12
1st	19%	17%	16%	13%
2.1	41%	35%	37%	44%
2.2	31%	34%	36%	29%
3rd	9%	13%	10%	9%
Ordinary Degree	0%	1%	1%	5%

Classification data presented for 2014-15 reflects an increase in the number of students awarded 1st and 2:1 degree.

- 60% of students attained honours degrees classification of 2:1 and above which is an increase of 8% compared to 2013-14 data

The classification profile for PCGE/Masters students:

Classifications	2014-15	2013-14
Distinction	14%	13%
Merit	38%	31%
Pass	48%	56%

- 52% of student obtained a classification of merit or above with an increase of 7% in the number of students achieving a merit.

Staff development and training activities conducted in 2014-15 emphasised the importance of providing students with opportunities to stretched and challenge them during their studies. The impact of these activities can be seen in the rise in the amount of students obtaining higher awards across all levels from level 5 through to 7.

Withdrawal Data

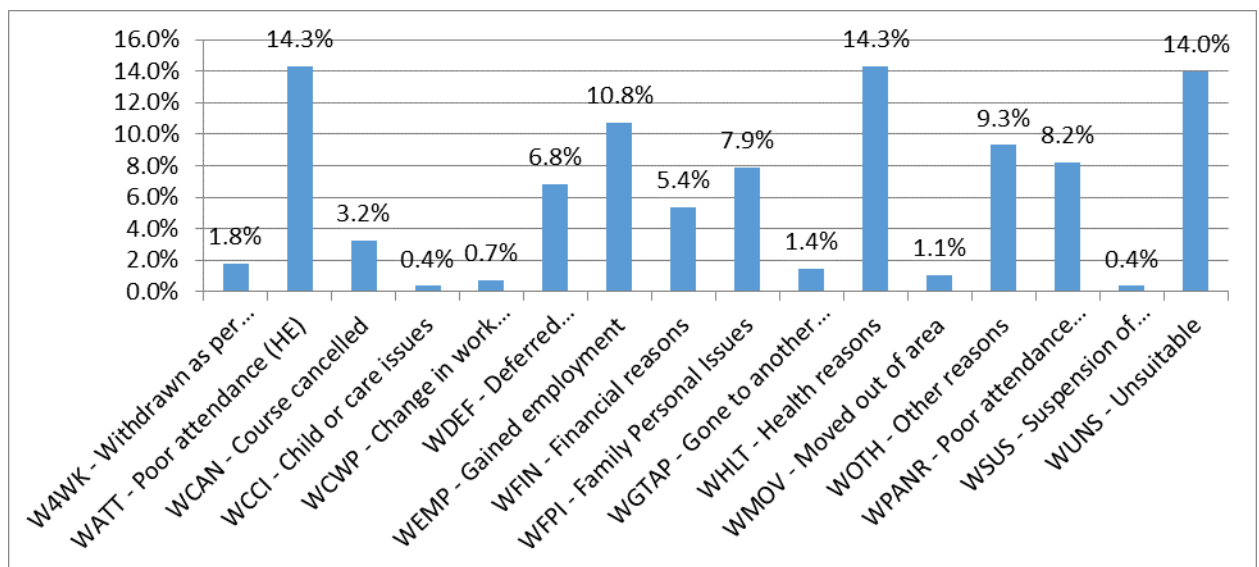
Withdrawal data is provided to all areas of NCG on a monthly basis to enable programmes to monitor withdrawals. Divisions / Subdivisions monitor attendance which allows them to provide interventions and support measures for those students identified as at risk of withdrawing.

Reasons for withdrawals

The graph below shows the main reasons why students have withdrawn from their programmes in 2014-15.

Main reasons for withdrawals are:

- 22.5% Poor attendance
- 14.3% Health reasons
- 14.0% Withdrawn course unsuitable
- 10.8% Gained employment



Comparison of withdrawal data 2014-15 to 2013-14

% withdrawals	SCES	CIND	DSA	HANDE	LFS	NCGD	NSED	WLC	KIDD	NCG Total
2014-15	6.4 %	6.9 %	15.2 %	7.2%	9.6 %	12.2 %	6.7 %	10.3 %	6.7 %	8.0%
2013-14	6.8 %	8.1 %	10.4 %	10.9 %	7.9 %	18.4 %	9.6 %	8.2 %		9.0%

Breakdown of overall withdrawals 2014-15

	SCES	CIND	DSA	HANDE	LFS	NCGD	NSED	WLC	KIDD	NCG Total
Enrolments	391	946	257	755	312	82	374	116	90	3323
Withdrawals	25	65	39	54	30	10	25	12	6	266
Percentage	6.4%	6.9 %	15.2 %	7.2%	9.6 %	12.2 %	6.7%	10.3 %	6.7 %	8.0%

Level

	SCES	CIND	DSA	HANDE	LFS	NCGD	NSED	WLC	KIDD	Total
L4	16	36	26	36	11	10	7	10	0	152
L5	5	12	9	9	13	0	5	2	6	61
L6	4	17	4	9	6	0	4	0	0	44
L7	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	9
Total	25	65	39	54	30	10	25	12	6	266

Mode of attendance

	SCES	CIND	DSA	HANDE	LFS	NCGD	NSED	WLC	KIDD	Total
FT	11	63	33	41	30	0	9	8	6	201
PT	14	2	6	13	0	10	16	4	0	65
Total	25	65	39	54	30	10	25	12	6	266

Comparing data from 2013-14, the institution data shows a decrease of 1% which equates to 34 fewer students withdrawing from their course in 2014-15

with an 8% withdrawal rate across the academic year. The data identified particular high levels of withdrawals in full time level 4 students with 152 level 4 students withdrawing from their course in 2014-15, although high the data indicates an improvement with 49 fewer withdrawals at this level than in 2013-14.

Widening Participation Position

We have reviewed our targets for 2017/18 and our target groups are

- Recruitment from low participation neighbourhoods
- Part Time and Flexible Study
- Mature Students
- Increased representation from BME groups
- Increased representation from white British men from disadvantaged backgrounds

Assessment of our Access and Widening Participation position to date:

Recruit from low participation neighbourhoods

We have used POLAR3 data with postcodes with a quintile range of 1.

Level	% of students from low participation postcodes against total for each level 14/15	% of students from low participation postcodes against total for each level 15/16
L4	39.30%	38.68%
L5	34.38%	40.14%
L6	34.75%	33.77%
L7	32.34%	30.84%
Grand Total	35.41%	36.98%

Mode	% of students from low participation postcodes against total for each mode - 14 / 15	% of students from low participation postcodes against total for each mode - 15 / 16
FT	35.98%	37.78%
PT	33.17%	33.82%
Grand Total	35.41%	36.98%

Ethnicity	% of students from low participation postcodes against total for each mode - 14 / 15	% of students from low participation postcodes against total for each mode - 15 / 16
White British Males	13.98%	14.72%
BME	12.87%	14.03%

As you can see from the table above our recruitment from low participation neighbourhoods using (POLAR3 data) has increased from 14/15 to 15/16 as an overall.

Although we have seen an overall increase we have had a marginal decrease in entrants from L4 and L6. One strategy to reverse the trend at Level 4 is more targeted recruitment activity on schools and 6th forms from the lower quintiles of the POLAR3 postcode data.

We will also continue to conduct outreach activities as detailed later in this Access Agreement.

What is pleasing to see is the representation of both White British Males and members from BME groups within these low participation postcodes has increased. Again our outreach activities and strategic aims will enable this upward trend to continue marginally.

Our targets are to address the very marginal decline in participation at all levels, bar level 5 where we have seen a marked increase.

Representation from BME Groups

Level	% of BME learner by level - 14 / 15	% of BME learner by level - 15 / 16
L4	8.80%	14.97%
L5	8.52%	9.27%
L6	10.66%	13.79%
L7	43.22%	37.99%
Grand Total	12.50%	14.54%

Mode	% of BME Learners by mode - 14 / 15	% of BME Learners by mode - 15 / 16
FT	14.46%	16.41%
PT	4.92%	8.71%
Grand Total	12.50%	14.88%

Across all levels we have seen an increase in our BME representation apart from at L7 where our international cohort has decreased in numbers leading to a decrease in participation percentage.

Within our Equality and Diversity Annual Report we have an organisational equality aim to provide a hospitable and multi-cultural environment that welcomes, respects and protects diverse people.

Through this approach of respect and consideration for others, a zero tolerance stance on bullying and harassment, specific space provided where possible for prayer rooms and catering facilities which meet a wide range of dietary needs including Kosher and Halal (where possible) we are able to promote an organisation and subdivisions that is welcoming to people of all ethnicities and hope to see a marginal increase in BME representation across all levels and modes going forward.

Part Time and Flexible Study

Over the last few years, along with the rest of the sector, we have seen a significant decline in our part time numbers. However across our WP groups we have seen marginal increases in all of our part time recruitment bar a very slight decline in our part time DDA cohort.

NCG Direct, which was established in 2012-13 offering degree courses through online distance learning, has grown its provision over the last two years to 5 Foundation Degrees and a BA(Hons) Degree. From 16/17 they are hoping to deliver two further Foundation Degrees in Cyber Security and IT for Business Managers and have a desire to offer a further Foundation Degree, two BA (Hons) and A BSc (Hons) in 17/18 in a variety of subjects. NCG Direct have a steady growth in learner numbers from point of inception to now and by offering Foundation Degrees that are designed for the existing workforce and with the flexibility of study length and start dates, then this will continue to have a positive impact on our part time numbers.

Another key to driving up our part time numbers is to ensure that our Foundation Degrees remain current and fit for purpose across all vocational areas and some of the ways that we do this are:

- Employers reviewing existing programmes, ensuring that the content meets industry standard and provides students with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter that industry.
- Gaining employer input prior to putting forward a recommendation for a new Foundation or Bachelor Degree, thus ensuring that we are looking to validate degree courses that industry require.

All data within our other WP target groups is broken down by mode of study to include full and part time.

Mature Students

As you will see from the figures in this table the percentage of mature students has increased marginally across all levels. Continued targeting of part time recruitment as an area to focus on we believe will also have a positive impact on our recruitment of mature students.

Level	mature students percentage by level 14/15	mature students percentage by level 15/16
L4	42.5%	44.8%
L5	51.6%	54.1%
L6	73.4%	74.1%
L7	99.6%	100.0%
Grand Total	55.2%	63.1%

Mode	mature students percentage by mode 14/15	mature students percentage by mode 15/16
FT	47.3%	50.5%
PT	86.2%	85.7%
Grand Total	55.2%	57.5%

Supporting students with disabilities or difficulties

Level	14/15 learners with disclosed disabilities / difficulties	15/16 learners with disclosed disabilities / difficulties
L4	5.90%	7.28%
L5	6.12%	6.37%
L6	4.63%	5.88%
L7	2.97%	3.06%
Grand Total	5.11%	6.31%

Level	14/15 learners with disclosed disabilities / difficulties	15/16 learners with disclosed disabilities / difficulties
FT	5.69%	7.00%
PT	4.60%	4.36%
Grand Total	5.47%	6.47%

The NCG Equality Strategy 2014-18 builds on our Single Equality Scheme 2010-14 providing evidence of the strong commitment to achieving an organisation which values diversity, advances equality and eliminates bias and discrimination from the way it operates. Each Division is responsible for taking action to support progress towards meeting the equality aims, ensuring compliance with legislation, relevant quality standards and funding body requirements. NCG has also set specific and measurable equality objectives in relation to staff across the organisation and for each Division. Progress is monitored and published on an annual cycle.

The development of learning and teaching is integral to the institution and as such the organisation has adopted an approach to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which is designed to eliminate discrimination and promote equality through identification of actions for development and maintenance through the higher education committee structure. The process examines programme design and approval processes and frameworks associated with admissions and assessment.

The College has a process that ensures a consistent practice in the support of assessment arrangements for HE students who have disclosed a disability or specific learning need. The Higher Education 'Alternative Assessment Arrangements' (AAA) process offers students an alternative assessment

agreement which, in partnership with staff and support teams, allows students to plan and manage their assessment effectively.

Over the last 3 years students' awareness of the process and support available to them has increased and as a result Learning Support Services has seen an increase in the number of student taking advantage of the opportunity the AAA process can offer to support them in their studies. The team have also enhanced the system for recording student outcomes at the end of each academic year which has resulted in the data offering a more accurate analysis of the impact the support has on our students.

117 students across all levels 4, 5 and 6 took advantage of the alternative assessment agreement (AAA) this academic year, which is an increase of 55 students from the previous year. Data collected by the learning support team indicated:

- 82% of level 4 students who received support successfully progressed to level 5 (an increase from previous year)
- 66% of Level 5 students either continuing with their studies or progressed to a level 6 programme
- 16% level 5 progressing into employment
- 82% level 6 students progressed into employment.

Level 4 students

Progression status	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Progressed to Level 5	41	23	18
Enrolled on an alternative course	1	0	1
Progressed to Level 5 at another HEI	0	2	1
Repeat Level 4/continuing studies	6	0	1
Unknown	0	1	3
Employment	0	2	n/a
Taking time out	1	n/a	n/a
Failed programme	1	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	50	28	24

Level 5 students

Progression status	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Progressed to Level 6	6	5	11
Failed repeat	1	n/a	n/a
Employment	6	5	4
Apprenticeship	0	0	1
Further study	0	3	3
Unknown	0	2	23
Continuing studies	18	n/a	n/a
Taking time out	7	n/a	n/a

TOTAL	38	15	42
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Level 6 students

Progression status	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Progression to Level 7	1	n/a	n/a
Employment	23	17	10
Continuing studies	1	3	2
Unknown	0	1	3
Seeking Employment	3	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	28	21	15

Level 7 students

Progression status	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Employment	1	2	n/a
Continuing studies	0	0	n/a
Unknown	0	0	n/a
TOTAL	1	2	n/a

Student Support

At present there are six support teams within the Learning Support Service (LSS) dedicated to assisting students across the college:

- Autism and Asperger Support Team
- Dyslexia Support Team
- Learning Difficulties and Physical Disabilities
- Sensory Support Team
- Wellbeing Support Team
- Assistive Technology

Kidderminster College and West Lancashire College have Additional Learning Support Teams who work inclusively, using a variety of methods to meet learners' needs across a range of difficulties and disabilities which includes:

- In-class Support
- Dyslexia and Coursework Support
- Learning Aids and Specialist Equipment

Level of fees

The fee levels for all franchised (indirectly funded) courses are those determined by the franchising institution and contained in their own access agreements.

We have a proposed maximum fee of £7,900 for our HE provision in 17/18. This could vary from course to course dependent on the Divisions / Directors understanding of the local market.

- Higher National Certificates (HNC)
- Higher National Diplomas (HND)
- Foundation degrees
- Bachelor with Honours degrees
- Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE)
- Professional Graduate Certificate of Education (ProfGCE)

All courses at Newcastle College will have a fee of £7,900 per full time course. These courses are Foundation Degrees, HNDs, PGCEs and First Degrees.

Courses at Kidderminster College will have a fee of £7150 per full time course which relate to their HND provision

All courses at West Lancashire College will have a fee of £7900 which will apply to their Foundation Degrees.

Courses at Carlisle College have fees below the basic fee level of £6165

All courses at Lewisham Southwark College have fees below the basic fee level of £6165

The fees set will apply equally to United Kingdom students and to students who are nationals of any other state of the European Union. This may change as a result of the UK leaving the European Union however.

In addition to the tuition fees the Divisions within NCG reserve the right to charge students for additional professional registration and/or sector skills requirements.

Bursaries and other financial support for students:

The level of tuition fee set by this institution takes account of the policy considerations which it has adopted to guide its thinking in relation to fee income. These considerations are:

- That the cost of full time higher education to students should not act as a entry barrier to those capable of benefiting from such an education and otherwise willing to engage in it;

- That income from tuition revenue should be managed to provide financial support for students, and to enhance their learning, and to encourage their progression and achievement.

Bursary Payments

All new full-time undergraduate students who enrol on designated courses from September 2017 onwards would be entitled to a bursary of £1000 if their household income is less than £25k via the means tested process through the Student Loans Company only.

Also in Newcastle College students who are from low participation wards as identified by POLAR3 data. The wards that will also receive £1000 are those in quintiles 1 and 2. All other students at Newcastle College will receive £400.

Bursary payments will be administered in the following way;

The table below highlights the financials for year 2016-17 within the agreement as an example:

Total Bursary	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
£1000	£300	£300	£400
£400 (NCL only)	£100	£100	£200

Students receiving £1000 per year:

- An initial payment of £300 following census completion, which is the 1 November, in the first term of study. It is anticipated that this payment will assist students in acquiring personal learning resources for their programme;
- A subsequent payment of £300 in second Term, to provide general financial support.
- And a final payment of £400 to act as an incentive to assist retention and achievement.
- The bursary is also used as an incentive for students to progress through levels as they entitled to this bursary should they continue their studies in subsequent years if they have successfully completed the previous year.

We will continue to conduct research to establish whether the bursary was a factor when students were deciding firstly, if they wanted to progress to Higher Education and secondly, their choice to study with NCG.

Hardship Fund

All learners who are on a full year HE program are eligible to apply for hardship fund.

This is an assessment based fund with no fixed set amount granted. It takes into consideration individual learners financial requirements and allocated based on need.

Outreach activities:

Primarily outreach activity engages learners who come within widening participation and interventions categories which are targeted at students in the 16-30 range. The target group is students studying within the North East in sixth forms, colleges of FE including the institution's own students and work based learners.

Activities will include:

- Open days aimed at the wider local population and for our own internal FE students.
- A monthly Information, Advice and Guidance event will be held which encourages applications to HE from a wide range of people.
- Targeted visits, organised by our dedicated HE School Liaison Assistant, by College staff to schools across the North East, especially those which serve low participation neighbourhoods, to promote the benefits of a vocational HE route.
- The "Careers Coach" which is a vehicle which visits deprived areas of Newcastle to encourage engagement in education and training, including HE.

At West Lancashire College they undertake the following activities:

- Monthly advice and guidance evenings on the first Wednesday of each month. During these evenings applicants and members of the community are welcome to visit the college to get advice on HE courses. HE applicants have access to IAG staff who could advise on fees, loans and bursaries, they would also be able to speak to Tutors about course specific information.
- 2 open events a year, one in November and one in March. In a similar way to the advice and guidance evening the community are welcome to visit but more of the college is accessible to them. So they are able to tour around campus and watch learner demonstrations, see displays and speak to current learners.

At Kidderminster College they undertake the following activities:

- Group and personal visits to the college where students and parents will be able to speak with Tutors and learners and find out about the facilities and services available at Kidderminster College.
- 1 open day and 2 open evenings, which are similar to that conducted at West Lancashire College.

Information on financial support available to students:

Financial information will be made available to all prospective students considering whether to join courses coming under this agreement. Such information will be guided by the principles of accessibility, transparency and clarity especially regarding offsetting bursaries against outstanding fees.

Information will summarise the annual and aggregate fee for the chosen course, bursary arrangements, and other sources of financial support available to students. It will also identify the sources from which students can obtain advice both within and outside the institution regarding the general financial framework applying to students undertaking full time higher education studies, so that they can establish the likely level of debt they will incur by the end of their studies. The institution is able to provide a full range of financial advice to prospective and current students through its Student Services department.

During induction all students will receive a presentation from the Student Services team which will, inter alia, cover issues associated with student finance.

All information relating to costs and means of support for students are available on the college website.

Expenditure of access measures:

The institution will direct additional revenue to support access measures in the following ways:

- Through bursary and hardship payments to students
- Enhancing the learners HE experience by maintaining dedicated HE facilities.
- Forge local partnerships with institutions that are located in disadvantaged postcode areas.
- Through outreach activities, involving road shows, transport, and promotional materials;

- Through funding to provide additional support for academic tutors in relation to assessment of students and the provision of work based learning;
- Through capital spending to ensure that appropriate facilities are available.

Other direct expenditure is for a member of staff to work on outreach activity for HE, this costs £38k a year. A further 0.4 FTE member of staff is dedicated to working on the retention of HE students by providing advice and guidance to learners progressing on from their Foundation Degree to the Top up and they also attend events for our internal level 3 students who are looking to progress on to foundation degrees.

We plan to spend £1.1 million on financial support, but this will largely be driven by recruitment and retention as this is driven by our full time bursary.

This OFFA expenditure represents 93.2% of the additional income for 2017/18, with 38.4% off this being on financial support, 48.5% on student success expenditure and 6.3% spent on access.

The rationale for this split is evidenced through our NSS results and our desire to ensure the most appropriate students within our institution receive the financial support and all learners are supported in their efforts to succeed by excellent Tutors and facilities.

Institutional milestones and objectives:

The institution has established milestones and objectives in relation to its higher education provision falling under this access agreement.

The primary is to meet the planned target for the proportion of students coming from the widening participation categories. They are, at baseline:

- 36% from low participating neighbourhoods
- 19% of our OFFA countable student population are part time
- 52% of our OFFA countable student population are Mature

The College also has other targets which have a positive effect on WP but will not be monitored as part of WP. These are:

- Recruitment targets: to meet the planned target intake
- Retention targets: to achieve an annual retention rate of 85% in each year on higher education programmes.

- Progression targets: to achieve an annual internal progression rate of 35% from completers of full time FE vocational level 3 programmes, and to achieve an annual minimum internal progression rate of at least 40% from completers of foundation degree onto honours degree programmes.
- Curriculum development: to respond to the identified needs of employers and students by developing new programmes and offering curriculum flexibility.

These will be monitored as part of the College's normal business planning processes.

Consultation with the Student Body

The NCG Higher Education Partnership Strategy enables higher education students at the college to actively participate in shaping their learning experience and contributing to the future direction of the institution. The strategy includes all higher education students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, irrespective of location, mode of study, teaching delivery, or discipline. The college aims to provide an inclusive environment for student engagement which anticipates the varied needs of learners and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.

The strategy aims to:

- Promote the concept of the 'engaged student' as an important driver for quality enhancement across the institution;
- Provide opportunities for effective student representation in decision-making processes including on governing boards and senior committees at college, school and course level;
- Promote and nurture a culture of belonging within the academic and social community;
- Facilitate the sharing of mutual information with students to enable meaningful discussions which promote educational enhancement and quality assurance;
- Actively engage students in shaping and developing quality assurance and the enhancement of higher education
- Ensure support and training are available to staff and students in relation to their roles as active partners in the development of quality assurance and enhancement;
- Provide fair and equitable access for all students to participate in a wide range of activities which promote enhancement and quality assurance;

- Recognise and celebrate the effort and contribute made by students who undertake a student engagement role;

The College engages with students on an on-going basis. They are active participants in HE committee meetings where the content of this agreement has been discussed. There is also a cross college student forum for HE where issues are discussed and reported through the HE committee structure. These discussions have included fees, student financial support and WP issues in general.

In 2013-14, Newcastle College introduced student internships, which has now changed in title to student fellowships. Here we focus on two specific areas of which student engagement was one. The aim of the student engagement fellowship is to gain a greater insight into the needs of our students and help develop a greater higher education learning experience within the College. Applications are invited from all areas of NCG that deliver Higher Education and from all programmes.

Market research was carried out by the College 2012/13 to identify from current undergraduates the reasons that they chose Newcastle College for HE study and to gain an understanding of the key influences on their decision. The research also set out to establish the importance of fees and bursaries when making the final decision. Following the introduction of the bursary in 2014-15 we will, in the future conduct, an analysis as to whether the bursary incentivised students to study at NCG.

The results of this survey would then feed in directly to the proposals for the level of fees and bursaries in this Access Agreement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation for the proposal

The fee and bursary proposals are based on evidence from different sources. These include:

- Feedback from the Student Forums
- Knowledge of local market and its need.
- Feedback from recruitment staff
- Feedback from employers

For full-time students, a consistent theme was that the level of financial support was more important than the level of the fee.

It was therefore decided that a higher fee should be introduced to fund a bursary for students facing financial hardship.

Monitoring of implementation

The institution will undertake annual monitoring and evaluation of this access agreement to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement of the milestones it has established. Responsibility for the monitoring report will rest with the Director of Higher Education.

The annual monitoring report will be submitted to the Director of OFFA following its approval by the College Governors. The report will be presented to the Executive at such time as to ensure that OFFA will receive the report by its published deadline.

The report will incorporate the following sections:

- Financial data summarising recruitment levels, payment of bursaries, and other financial support made available to students;
- Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year
 - Number of open days held
 - Number of schools/colleges visited
 - Proportion of schools/colleges in Low Participation Neighbourhoods (as a proxy for WP pupils/students)
 - Enquiries from those with a postcode from a Low Participation Neighbourhood
- Progression made in meeting institutional milestones and objectives.

As well as the institutional-level reporting, the Schools in Newcastle College and the other Divisions within NCG which deliver HE have a quality review twice a year for their HE courses. This is in addition to the business planning that all divisions undertake.

As part of these meetings, colleagues will be asked to assess their performance against the access targets. This will be not just in terms of enrolment but also retention, progression and achievement.

Retention is monitored by monthly reporting which looks at the current number of withdrawals and the trend across the year. High-level data is presented to highlight any patterns and trends and low-level data is made available so that HE Managers can investigate whether withdrawals are affecting any particular type of student, especially those from a WP background.

On an annual basis, at the HE quality review meetings, colleagues are provided with high-level and low-level data on progression and achievement. HE Managers are asked to investigate whether any

particular type of student, especially those from a WP backgrounds, have significantly different outcomes.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: NCG
Institution UKPRN: 10004599

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16a_01	Access	Other statistic - Part-time (please give details in the next column)	Increase part time recruitment utilising vocational Foundation Degrees and working with employers	No	2014-15	19%	20.8	21.1	21.4	21.7	22	
T16a_02	Access	Other statistic - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Maintenance / increase in mature entrants to Higher Education	No	2013-14	52%	53%	53.5%	54%	54.5%	54.5%	
T16a_03	Access	Other statistic - Location (please give details in the next column)	Recruit from low participation neighbourhoods	No	2013-14	30%	32%	33%	34%	35%	35%	
T16a_04	Access	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increase in recruitment from BME groups	No	2014-15	12.5%	14.5%	14.7%	14.9%	15.1%	15.3%	
T16a_05	Access	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increased representation from white British men from disadvantaged backgrounds	No	2014-15	13.9%	15%	15.5%	16%	16.5%	16.7%	
T16a_06	Student success	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase in success from BME groups - to be completed in next years agreement	No	2016-17	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	
T16a_07	Student success	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase in success from learners from disadvantaged backgrounds - to be completed in next years agreement	No	2016-17	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	to be confirmed	

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16b_01	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Provide taster/masterclass days for internal and external students	No	2013-14	4 taster/masterclass days	5 taster/masterclass days	6 taster/masterclass days	6 taster/masterclass days	7 taster/masterclass days		
T16b_02	Access	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Target secondary and schools within the Group with high proportions of non-traditional students.	No	2013-14	15 Schools	16 schools	16 schools	17 schools	17 schools		