



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by West Suffolk 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

West Suffolk College's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

Summary

The College seeks to leverage its position as a regionally embedded FE provider—with comprehensive schools engagement, Key Stage 2-4, and Level 3 programmes—to develop local HE progression opportunities that are aligned both with industrial opportunity and the skills need in the East of England.

The strategy seeks to (a) facilitate seamless progression from L3 to L4+ for groups traditionally unrepresented in HE (b) maximise the effectiveness in HE of the support mechanisms traditionally native to FE; and (c) to deliver value-added qualifications that positively impact students' employment prospects and earning power over the long term.

As the first year of our direct funded offer, and with a small number of students on Higher Nationals from prior cohorts/reporting regimes, the 2019-20 plan focusses on the development of our self-assessment architecture and on recruitment to our first suite of non-franchised programmes.

19/20 APP Strategy Statement Reads:

“Through the ongoing Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach project we work closely with a number of HEIs and Colleges to deliver targeted outreach and community engagement activities across the East of England. We work closely with University of Cambridge, University of East Anglia, and Anglia Ruskin University on this project. A large number of local Colleges, Sixth Forms and Schools are also engaged in the activity, supported by a range of Higher Education Champions. In addition, we have historically been involved with NCOP, the local authorities, schools and academies and employers across the region and now the New Anglia LEP.

Through understanding the Industrial strategy documents and the Local Skills Plans we are able to inform our future students through Primary and Secondary outreach work to build interest and aspiration to study and work in those identified fields.

We are very focused [sic] on the development of new technologies that are at the forefront of the industries of the future. We want to muster our forces with business, academia and civil society to work together to innovate and develop the best educational offer to meet the demands of this fast changing and potentially growth limiting area of skills knowledge.

An early example of this approach is our shared vision with BT and the Computational Thinking and Robot Programming outreach programme that we are delivering at KS2 – KS4 which is a small part of our programme to build the skills to support our ever growing Artificial Intelligence and Data-Driven Economy. We endeavour to ensure that our provision has widening participation embedded throughout by monitoring and encouraging engagement in all areas, including teaching and learning, student support services and student voice.

This is supported by the College's vision, "to be the centre of a hub of outstanding education and training in East Anglia by working in a wide collaborative network, creating coherent provision across the region"

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by West Suffolk 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 West Suffolk 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_02 (Access)	yr 13 students from low participation areas progressing to first degree, from schools, sixth forms or WSC	2016-17	67%	69%	70%	Percentage	2019-20	40	Limited progress
T16a_03 (Access)	yr 13 all ethnic groups progressing to first degree	2016-17	8.8%	9%	10%	Percentage	2019-20	0	No progress
T16a_04 (Access)	mature students, aged 25-44 from range of environments including military	2016-17	34%	31%	31%	Percentage	2019-20	10	Limited progress
T16a_05 (Access)	part-time females progressing to first degree	2016-17	19%	20%	21%	Percentage	2019-20	0	No progress
T16a_06 (Access)	raising awareness of degree education with all part time potential applicants	2016-17	39%	40%	41%	Percentage	2019-20	52	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Access)	promoting to students with learning difficulties (in receipt of DSA or not) or disabilities	2016-17	23%	24%	25%	Other	2019-20	25	Expected progress
T16a_09 (Success)	for better achievement rate within ethnic groups	2016-17	7.6%	8%	9%	Percentage points	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16a_10 (Success)	support students with learning difficulties (in receipt of DSA or not) or disabilities to successfully complete their degree	2016-17	21%	22%	22%	Percentage	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16a_11 (Success)	raise success for mature students	2016-17	45%	46%	46%	Percentage	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16a_14 (Progression)	for better progression rate within ethnic groups	2016-17	7.6%	8%	9%	Percentage	2019-20	0	Expected progress

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)	to raise awareness and engagement with HE from schools and colleges low participation groups	Other (please give details in Description column)	will collect from 2019	will collect from 2019	will collect from 2019	Headcount	2019-20	518	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	to recruit from low participation groups	Other (please give details in Description column)	160	22%	22%	Percentage	2019-20	60	Limited progress
T16b_04 (Access)	to raise attainment and aspirations of school/college students in low aspirational areas	Other (please give details in Description column)	160	22%	22%	Percentage	2019-20	60	Limited progress
T16b_05 (Access)	tu support high level achievement at level 3	Other (please give details in Description column)	160	22%	22%	Percentage	2019-20	60	Limited progress
T16b_06 (Progression)	support students with learning difficulties (in receipt of DSA or not) or disabilities to progress to employment or post grad study	2016-17				Other	2019-20	0	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	£9,240.00	£4,238.00	-54%
Financial Support	£15,000.00	£0.00	-100%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected West Suffolk 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_02	We will develop a comprehensive programme of outreach activities for schools, sixth forms and colleges as part of our school outreach programme, to include students from Y11-13, Level 2-3. The programme will include greater information on funding and support. Mentoring sessions will be arranged for L2/3 students to raise aspirations and awareness of the support available. An online Job Shop will be created to provide opportunities for students to search and apply for part-time roles and internships. Our communications with applicants to WSC will include information on the WSC Education Opportunity Trust which exists to help students overcome financial difficulties to access HE. We will work with a number of stakeholders and partners to ensure students recognise and engage with the activities available through the NEACO programme. Parent/Carers will be provided with resources, information and virtual parent/carer progression events to ensure they are aware of the opportunities and support available. These events will be shared within the Eastern College's Group. Current applications (21/22) from Polar Quintile 1 and 2 are 6% higher than our current cohort of enrolled learners (20/21).
T16a_03	We will review whether investment and APP actions can more effectively support entry to HE for other groups that are more widely represented in the College and regional population and where there is a greater access/progression gap, e.g.

T16a_04	In addition to the ongoing development of Access to HE Diplomas, summer schools will be provided for adults to prepare them for higher education study. These will run over a three-week period and include lectures, study skills and student support. The higher education onsite delivery has been moved to a bespoke site to create an adult environment to support 21+ applicants feel ownership of their programmes (as distinct from the College's 16-18yo provision). Current applications from mature applicants are 19% higher than our current cohort of enrolled learners.
T16a_05	Our Access to HE provision will be developed and expanded to include additional courses that not only feed into our higher education programme, but also meet the skills shortages and growth within New Anglia LEP. Maths and English provision for adults starts from entry level to GCSE and classes run daytime or evenings as well as from home. Applicants are informed of the various financial support, to include the Childcare Grant and Parents Learning Allowance. Current applications from females are 6% less than our current cohort of enrolled learners.
T16b_02	We will align the NEACO funded Take Your Place programme alongside the College's unique progression needs in the area, and the needs of their wider communities within Suffolk. In addition to student workshops and taster sessions, enhanced staff training will aim to provide a greater understanding of the UCAS process and options after sixth form and College, thus facilitating more robust advice, support and guidance to students. The "Take Your Place" project will also be used to bring in a guest speakers from local universities and industry as well as funding a host of additional taster sessions and subject specific activities. We will provide NEACO funded Summer Schools to ensure that we can provide those progressing to university a solid foundation of knowledge in relation to higher education study skills.
T16b_04	Utilising NEACO funding, we will provide students the opportunity to engage with external agencies to support their progression to higher education. For example, through courses provided by the BigEd personal branding and development company.
T16b_05	We will introduce a mentoring system whereby undergraduates volunteer to be appointed mentors to Access to HE Level 3 18+ students at WSC. This is to provide invaluable peer support and encouragement to progress to higher education.
T16b_06	We will be appointing a workplace partnership co-ordinator to support the embedding of work placement opportunities across the provision, as well as developing (alongside our apprenticeship offer) a more fluid, interactive relationship between employers and the design and delivery of degrees. This is to be enshrined within a new Employability strategy for our HE work.

5. Confirmation

West Suffolk College confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
West Suffolk 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	Nikos Savvas
Position	CEO

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

West Suffolk College's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No. Despite not meeting the specific POLAR3 LPN targets, the College has increased the overall proportion of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, growing POLARQ2-4 groups to be 65% of the population overall (from 40%). The College halved the proportion of students from Q5. POLAR3 groups grew overall from 30% to 40% of the population, indicating some progress and prompting us to review the reliability of the original baseline data (drawn from other HEPs in the region). We recognise that these proportions are currently drawn from low headcount and that the College needs to be aware of the issues of statistical significance as it uses these metrics for onward planning.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
No. However, the College's position is that the measures outlined in the plan are clearly having a positive impact and at an appropriate rate for us to meet overall expectations. Where the College is investing attention is in its overall data architecture and reporting—given that while progress is marked, the reporting suffers from inadequate original benchmarking.

Target reference number: T16a_03
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No. No degree level study run under the plan during this academic year. Demographic data indicates that within the College's own population (the population on which the plan focuses its attention) there is an insufficient population of ethnic minority students to meet these targets, and that there is no HE progression gap between Level 3 students of different ethnic backgrounds more broadly.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Validation of c.15 new degree-level routes to attract potential applicants across Social Sciences, STEM and business-related disciplines.

Target reference number: T16a_04
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The College has increased the overall number of mature learners (Access proportion 21 and over) from 35% of the student population to 60% of the student population. That is, under the broader definition of mature learners, the College has already reached its year 5 milestone. But only 10% of students are specifically of the subset "mature learners over the age of 25" stipulated in the plan. The College did not recruit students from a military background.

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

Our Access to HE provision has been developed and expanded to include additional courses that not only feed into our higher education programme, but also meet the skills shortages and growth within New Anglia LEP. Maths and English provision for adults have been run to take adult learners through GCSE and classes have been run daytime and evenings as well as via digital means. Applicants are informed of the various financial support, to include the Childcare Grant and Parents Learning Allowance. Specific recruitment exercises were undertaken at RAF and US airforce bases in the region.

Target reference number: T16a_05

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

No. No degree programmes ran during this academic year. Female participation overall remained steady at c.10% of the population for other L4 and 5 courses.

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

Our Access to HE provision has been developed and expanded to include additional courses that not only feed into our higher education programme, but also meet the skills shortages and growth within New Anglia LEP. Maths and English provision for adults have been run to take adult learners through GCSE and classes have been run daytime and evenings as well as via digital means. Applicants are informed of the various financial support, to include the Childcare Grant and Parents Learning Allowance.

Target reference number: T16b_02

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

Yes, however with a reduced overall recruitment figure.

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

Validation of c.15 new degree-level routes to attract potential applicants, several geared towards areas where UCAS and other studies indicates there is particular alignment with predominant aspirations among this demographic group. Working in collaboration with the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach we provided our sixth form students with additional support e.g., personalised one-to-one support sessions to assist with personal statements and applications to university and for conservatoires and apprenticeships. We also delivered several workshops, providing students with all the answers to everything university-related, such as how to apply for Student Finance and accommodation etc.

Target reference number: T16b_04

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

Yes, however with a reduced overall recruitment figure.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We provided 93 (Take Your Place WSC School & College Report March 2021), activities to over 200+ sixth form college students and school students from under represented post codes to help inspire and maximise the number progressing into higher education. Concerted follow up efforts included: repeat sessions, phone contact with individual students, taster sessions, UCAS workshops, live autopsy events, and variety of sporting events. These were additional activities led by staff to secure repeat engagement with target students over the period of the year, exposing them to a greater variety of sessions offered, thus enhancing attendance at multiple events, rather than attendance to one session only.

Target reference number: T16b_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Yes, however with a reduced overall recruitment figure.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
FE staff employed by NEACO worked with subject tutors to support and mentor 55 students with their ambitions through personalised one-to-one support sessions and a variety of group activities, including UCAS application workshops, and one-to-one support in writing personal statements. (Take Your Place WSC School & College Report, March 2021).

Target reference number: T16b_06
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No, due to no progression or graduation taking place within the relevant cohorts during the period under review
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
There is a significant increase in WSC students who have declared a disability. Transparency of information starts at FE application stage and allows support to be put in place and any barriers removed as early as possible. Applications to both FE are reviewed and where necessary referred to the Special Admissions Board who will discuss with the applicant and support or necessary adjustments required. The college is part of the Disability Confident Committed scheme, which is ambitious in its goals for equality, diversity, and inclusivity. Mentoring sessions are arranged for students to raise aspirations and awareness of the support available. Taster sessions are arranged so that applicants can understand the environment they will be studying in.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

West Suffolk College's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_02	Recognising that some APP targets would be more challenging against the baseline data that originally thought, the College has restructured its HE provision and combined responsibilities for FE recruitment and progression with HE recruitment. A single joined-up approach under common management is now being implemented, driven by data insight and linked into Informatuion and Guidance across three local Vlth forms. Leadership of recruitment has been integrated with the HE leadership team to ensure ongoing alignments.
T16a_03	Ethnic minority students represent only 2% of the College's Level 3 cohort of pipeline students. Monitoring at Level 3 indicates there is no difference for retention and achievement within this group compared to White British students, and that there is no signifcant gap in HE progression generally between white students and students from an ethnic minority. Internal pipeline data indicates there will be no change in the numbers of ethnic minority students through the life of the plan, and the College is reviewing this target for fit, relevance and potential to have a meaningful impact.
T16a_04	In broad terms, this appears to be a success in widening access masked by a narrow aim definition in the original plan. The College will seek to determine if specific targeted action to deprioritise those aged 21-24 is realistic, proportionate or ethical. The College is considering adjusting the aim definition to reflect adequately the general success and impact of its actions to date in this area.
T16a_05	
T16a_06	Whilst the majority of students in this year under the auspices of the plan were enrolled on part time study, we recongise the need to grow the overall student volume to make our actions more meaningful in regional terms.
T16a_07	Whilst the majority of students in this year under the auspices of the plan were enrolled on part time study, we recongise the need to grow the overall student volume to make our actions more meaningful in regional terms.
T16a_09	No students graduated during this academic year, as it was the first year of College provision under the plan.
T16a_10	No students graduated during this academic year, as it was the first year of College provision under the plan.
T16a_11	No students graduated during this academic year, as it was the first year of College provision under the plan.
T16a_14	No students graduated during this academic year, as it was the first year of College provision under the plan.

T16b_01	We engaged with 518 widening participation students for the year, which was significantly higher than the stated target. (Take Your Place WSC School & College Report, March 2021). In collaboration with NEACO, we provided a host of HE taster sessions, schools talks, UCAS application workshops, and provided funded travel to university open events. We will refine our targeting of underrepresented students, through enhanced screening of data to deliver bespoke taster sessions specifically to these groups. for example through personal email invitations and through follow up engagements on an individual basis.
T16b_02	
T16b_04	
T16b_05	
T16b_06	No progression or graduation took place from within the relevant cohorts during the period under review. However, current applications from those declaring a disability are 2% higher than our current cohort of enrolled learners.