

## **Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25**

Solihull College and University Centre (SCUC) is a large further education (FE) college which delivers higher education (HE) at its main Blossomfield campus situated in the heart of Solihull, and at a second campus (Woodlands) in North Solihull. The College also has a third campus in Stratford-upon-Avon where no HE programmes are currently offered. SCUC delivers a wide range of further and higher education to approximately 5,000 16 to 19 year olds, 8,500 adult learners, 750 Management and Professional students, 1,000 Apprentices and over 900 HE students in total including franchised provision, although it is important to note that this Access and Participation Plan (APP) covers only those students studying on our validated HE programmes, comprising approximately 80 first degree students and 240 sub-degree students studying Foundation degrees and Higher Nationals.

In recent years, around 8% of our HE students have come from North Solihull, 45% from Birmingham and the remainder from the south of the borough, resulting in around 50% of the HE students having backgrounds which can be classified as Widening Participation (WP).

POLAR4 classifies local areas or wards into 5 groups based on the proportion of 18 year-olds who enter HE aged 18 or 19 years old. The lowest young participation is quintile 1 (Q1-most disadvantaged) up to quintile 5 (Q5) with the highest rates (most advantaged). Birmingham, Solihull and Stratford-upon-Avon wards adjacent to each other demonstrate POLAR characteristics that typically vary from POLAR4Q3 to POLAR4Q1. In North Solihull, the majority of the POLAR classification wards are areas of significant deprivation, with staying-on rates around 11%, and in South Solihull, the majority of the wards are in POLAR4Q5. Staying-on rates in the immediate catchment areas around our Blossomfield campus are over 70%. However, the main arterial roads into Birmingham, including the one from our Stratford-upon-Avon campus, has most wards categorised as POLAR4Q2 or POLAR4Q3 with participation rates post-16 typically around 25%. As part of SCUC's strategic aims to widen participation, curriculum pathways have been developed from further education to levels 4, 5 and 6 which respond to the training and development needs of our local employers. Flexible routes enable students to achieve degrees whilst working and living locally.

## Responding to National Strategic Priorities - June 2022

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education, and although the college's approved plan does not require any amendments or alterations to comply with revised national strategic priorities, the college's evaluation processes have highlighted some areas where additional information may help make the current plan more accessible to prospective and current students, their parents and other stakeholders

**Priority B:** Develop, enhance and expand their partnerships with schools and other local and national organisations, to help raise the pre-16 attainment of young people from underrepresented groups across England.

As noted in the plan, SCUC's commitment to widening participation and improving access in the local area involves includes working with various schools in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area, and regular interactions with our FE students (most of whom are from WP backgrounds) to raise their awareness of, and aspirations towards, progressing to higher levels of study.

Evaluations of these activities has enabled the college to focus more effort on the most effective ways of engagement without reducing any of the commitments described in the plan. This includes an increase in the number and style of our "Taster Days", opportunities to re-take GCSEs, and funding short videos made by HE students which showcase facilities, teaching, and projects. Above 86% of our Level 3 learners obtain a university place. In early 2022 we introduced 'Step-into-HE' sessions to our internal post 16 learners to showcase the skills required in higher education and the benefits of obtaining a higher education qualification together with the support available at FEC's.

**Priority C:** Set out how access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups leads to successful participation on high quality courses and good graduate outcomes.

As the college mainly recruits from the local community, with approximately 8% of our higher education students residing in North Solihull, 45% in Birmingham and the remainder living in the south of the borough, around 50% of our HE students have backgrounds which are classified nationally as "underrepresented" or Widening Participation (WP).

Our curriculum offer is therefore responsive to local need, with approximately 50% of our students on Part-Time courses, and the student body almost equally split by gender and maturity, with ethnicities proportionately represented in numbers reflective of the region, and evaluations of applications, admissions, attainment, continuation and progression by demographic profile has been embedded into college systems.

In 2021, we introduced an interim HE progression report through a monitoring mechanism 'MOT' the report is generated on the HE dashboard where learners' characteristics are reported, based on findings, support mechanisms are implemented. Further evaluation of strategies placed to support learners will be evaluated to monitor their success in the School Annual Monitoring reports. We also introduced a dedicated academic skill tutor to support learners across HE programmes, this role will be also extended to Access to HE programmes across college.

**Priority D:** Seek to develop more diverse pathways into and through higher education through expansion of flexible Level 4 and 5 courses and degree apprenticeships.

As part of our continued commitment to offer qualifications in ways which meets the needs of our local community and employer groups, we have expanded our provision to include higher and degree apprenticeships which will supplement other routes so that employers can have a choice of whether to spend part of their levy or pay course fees to train and upskill their workforce. These qualifications are considered by Solihull (and other colleges) to be Part-Time provision when evaluating performance due to the attendance patterns of students (typically one day per week),

and the fact that they have in the main replaced “traditional” programmes which were taught in the same way.

From September 2022, we will deliver Higher Technical Qualifications in Computing, to be followed by HTQs in Construction, Health and Sports, and as part of our drive to be both responsive and relevant to local economic needs, we are working closely with Greater Birmingham & Solihull Institute of Technology partners to develop more modular provision, particularly for Advanced Manufacturing, which will be incorporated into existing pathways to support effective career development.

It is also important to note that although not articulated in the plan, as part of the college’s responsiveness to student and employer need, curriculum planning has always allowed for flexible and diverse pathways which enable choices of study mode and progression routes to be revised as and when individual circumstances change.

### **Financial Commitments**

Although there has been a reduction in student numbers as a result of the 2019-2020 pandemic which has meant a proportional decrease in higher level funding, the college is committed to meeting the statistical targets set out in the plan of closing gaps but may revise the amount of money necessary to achieve those aims.

## **1. Assessment of performance**

As confirmed by its most recent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review, SCUC’s policies, procedures and operation of recruitment, selection and admission meet the Expectation of the Quality Code in that they adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. We continually assess our performance against internal and national targets utilising the APP dataset, Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) metrics (from all available years and at all subject levels where provided), DLHE, UCAS and internal data covering all stages of the student lifecycle, from initial enquiry, application, acceptance, attendance, continuation and progression. Where possible, we aggregate the data across the entire HE student population, including students not covered by this Plan (such as those on franchised HE provision), in order to generate what we believe to be statistically significant and meaningful data as our total HE recruitment typically reflects the local population. Aggregating in this way allows us to identify gaps, and the success of our initiatives to close historic gaps, which would otherwise not be apparent due to the very small numbers which may be suppressed in individual data sets, or lead to the possibility that conclusions may be drawn based on demographic characteristics which are actually a factor of the programme of study. However, since such aggregation does not generate sufficient numbers for statistically robust conclusions to be drawn with regards to the identification of all possible gaps, particularly with regards to intersectionalities, we supplement our information with academic evidence, student interviews and focus groups to ascertain which interventions and support mechanisms have worked, and to what degree.

We continually assess and evaluate our performance and success in closing gaps in access, achievement, success and progression to employment or further study, and where there are sufficient students, analyse available data to produce evidence-informed action plans and strategic changes, such as set out in the College’s Equality and Diversity Annual Report for 2018.<sup>1</sup> However,

it is not always possible to consider higher education separately due to the relatively low numbers.

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

### **1.1.1. Access**

Analysis of application data (for all HE courses, not just those covered by this Plan) shows a geographic spread consistent with the population of the College's expected recruitment area, and that offers are made and accepted proportionally. There are no discernible gaps in terms of enquiry, application, attendance at initial interview or enrolment based on the socioeconomic status, post code or income.

SCUC is consistently above the sector average for full-time (FT) POLAR4Q1 in terms of recruitment of the most disadvantaged students across the last 5 years of data [SCUC: 15-19% compared to sector: 11-12%]. Additionally, internal data based on student postcode confirms that the College has been particularly successful in recruiting from the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) target wards in our region.

Analysis of the Access and Participation data, correlated against our own internal statistical performance appraisals, shows a percentage gap in Access between POLARQ1 and POLARQ5 which has averaged at around 10% over the last five years, fluctuating typically plus/minus 8%.

The last two of these years (4 and 5) shows an increase in the size of the gap from 11% to 20%, however, due to the small cohort sizes used to calculate these figures, the difference in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 was caused by a slight increase in number of Q5 students coinciding with a very small drop of those categorised as Q1<sup>2</sup>.

Conversely, for our Part Time provision, from an APP data set cohort of 60, 29% of our students are from POLAR Q1 and 11% from Q5 which means that total headcount calculations show a 5% Gap for 2017/18.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.solihull.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ED-Annual-Report-2018-Feb-19.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Due to GDPR legislation, the actual numbers are too small to be reported publicly.

For part-time (PT) provision, if we use what we consider to be the more relevant index of multiple deprivation (IMD), SCUC is well above the sector average for IMDQ1 in terms of recruitment of the most disadvantaged students [SCUC: 18-32% compared to sector: 18.9-19.4%]. Recruitment of disadvantaged students was anomalously low for SCUC in year 3 at 18% (all other years ranged from 28-32%) coinciding with the final year of HE delivery at Stratford-upon-Avon College prior to its merger with SCUC.

### **1.1.2. Success – Continuation**

Unfortunately, the data for POLAR4Q1 and PT IMDQ1 is based on small cohorts and APP data is non-reportable, therefore we have used the broader information sets of POLAR4Q1/2 and IMDQ1/2. Across the 5 years of this data the continuation of FT POLAR4Q1/2 fluctuates from year 1, where performance is greater than for POLARQ3/5 students, changing to a gap of 7% in year 4 and culminating in a 'reverse gap' of 1% in year 5 where continuation of POLAR4Q1/2 students exceeds that of POLAR4Q3/5 students. The APP data indicates annual fluctuations so averaged 3-year aggregated data has been reviewed to provide a more reliable measure of performance which shows a gap of 1.5% between continuation of FT POLARQ3/5 and POLAR4Q1/2 students which the College aims to reduce to 0.5% across the lifetime of this Plan [PTS\_1].

The APP data shows improvement of continuation of PT IMDQ1/2 students from 70% in year 1 to 85% in year 5 but reduced performance compared to IMDQ3/5 students; showing a gap of 3% in the most recent year. This gap is not statistically significant as the cohort sizes range from only 30-50 students. 3-year aggregated TEF data is non-reportable due to small group sizes. To better evaluate performance of under-represented students, the College has reviewed the continuation rates of all its part-time HE students and found no gap between disadvantaged and other students.

### **1.1.3. Success – Attainment**

The APP attainment measure is based on achievement of good outcomes of first degree students – those obtaining a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1. Typically, only 22% of SCUC HE students are registered on first degrees,<sup>3</sup> of whom less than 40 are covered by the College's Access and Participation Plan as the majority of students are studying sub-degree programmes (Foundation degrees and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas). SCUC's final-year first degree cohorts are so small (typically around 20 in each academic year) that APP attainment data is non-reportable. Review of internal data confirms that attainment of POLAR4Q1/2 students is greater than that for POLAR4Q3/5, albeit based on numbers less than 15. Additionally, review of good outcomes of all HE students (first degree students achieving a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 and sub-degree students achieving a Distinction or Merit) also indicates better performance of disadvantaged students.

### **1.1.4. Progression to employment or further study**

The APP progression data for POLAR4Q1/2 and PT IMDQ1/2 is based on cohort numbers of a size which means data is either suppressed or non-reportable. Aggregated TEF data shows a very small gap (0.8%) between progression of FT POLAR4Q3/5 students compared to POLAR4Q1/2, based on a cohort of 87 mature students. The College does not consider this gap to reflect an issue to be addressed and this view is supported by internal data which shows comparable progression for both mature and young students.

TEF data also shows that a small 'reverse' gap exists between progression of PT IMDQ3-5 students at 98.5% (in line with a sector benchmark of 97.9%) and PT POLARQ1/2 at 100% (above

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<sup>3</sup>Year 4 TEF data, OfS 2019

the benchmark of 95.8%); this information can be considered as an indication of the College's success in working towards the needs of students from the most disadvantaged areas.

## **1.2. Black, Asian and minority ethnic students**

Due to the small reporting cohort sizes, disaggregation of students by ethnicity results in suppressed or non-reportable APP data. Similarly, analysis of internal data by ethnicity does not provide any meaningful data (e.g. fewer than 10 Black students eligible for the 2019 NSS) and has potential to identify students. As a result, the evaluation of performance uses aggregated Asian, Black, mixed, or other (ABMO) APP data and aggregated Black, minority and ethnic student (BME) TEF data.

### **1.2.1. Access**

SCUC is typically above the sector average for recruitment of FT mature students across the 5 years of APP data [SCUC: 24-46% compared to sector: 24.7-27.8%].

Typically, SCUC recruitment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students is above that of the sector average, and notably higher than that indicated by local population data. Over the last five years ABMO students have made up 25-37% of our FT recruitment, compared to around 15% locally (and 26.2-31.1% sector-wide), although our PT ABMO recruitment is 15-22% (14.6-16.4% sector-wide) due to the curriculum offer (e.g. HNC Construction) attracting more employed white students from a wider geographic area.

### **1.2.2. Success – Continuation**

Continuation of FT ABMO students fluctuates across the 5 years of data and is at 78% in year 5 below that of FT White students which also fluctuates culminating at 86%. As the cohort sizes of FT ABMO students are small (typically only 50-60 students) the gap has been further evaluated using a larger dataset (TEF), but the Access and Participation data used as the basis for our target PTS\_2 where the .The College aims to reduce this gap to 3% over the lifetime of this Plan.

For PT, there are few ABMO students and APP data is non-reportable. TEF data is also non-reportable due to low numbers, but there are green flags for both white and BAME students indicating high performance across both student groups. Feedback from student focus groups and module evaluations indicate that there is no gap to be addressed.

### **1.2.3. Success – Attainment**

As identified above, SCUC first degree student cohorts are small so APP attainment data is non-reportable for each relevant characteristic. Fewer than 10 BAME students completed first degrees in 2017/18 making internal attainment data unreliable in terms of statistical significance. Review of good outcomes of sub-degree HE students (those achieving a Distinction or Merit) indicates better performance of BAME compared to white students. These findings are confirmed by academic reporting, qualitative findings and focus group interviews conducted by external consultants.

### **1.2.4. Progression to employment or further study**

The APP data for FT ABMO students is based on cohorts which are too small for data to be reportable. Aggregated data indicates a very slight gap for progression between FT White at 95.3% (in line with benchmark of 95.8%) and FT BME at 94.2% (above benchmark of 92.4%). For PT, there are too few ABMO students for APP and TEF data to be reportable. The numbers are too small to provide any statistically significant data. The College's own interactions with ex-students and alumni indicate that there is no gap to be addressed.

Although numbers are small, of students who study at sub-degree level within the College (Fd or HN), and then choose to enrol on top-up degrees taught within our institution, there is no discernible difference in progression rates by ethnic groupings (it is within 1%).

### **1.3. Mature students**

#### **1.3.1. Access**

SCUC is typically above the sector average for recruitment of FT mature students across the 5 years of APP data [SCUC: 24-46% compared to sector: 24.7-27.8%].

SCUC is atypical of the sector for recruitment of PT mature students. This is because the College provides a wide range of programmes available for PT and flexible study and consequently a higher proportion of young students are recruited onto PT programmes, resulting in overall lower proportions of mature students. Across the 5 years of data, SCUC PT mature recruitment ranges from 44-62% compared to the sector: 88-88.9%]. Despite this difference, the College believes the diversity of its programmes and the flexibility of mode of study is beneficial to the community and this is not a weakness or area requiring improvement.

#### **1.3.2. Success – Continuation**

Continuation of FT mature students is slightly below that of FT young students, across the 5 years of data [mature: 78-85% compared to young: 82-88%]. However, TEF data indicates SCUC is at 90.5% for FT mature students (above benchmark of 86.1%) and at 84.7% for FT young continuation (which is at benchmark at 84.7%). The discrepancy between the APP data and TEF data is based on the different years that makes up the two datasets and the fact that the TEF data is aggregated over 3 years. The College believes the reverse gap present in the TEF dataset to be more reliable based on the aggregation of data, and this is supported by internal data. The College will continue to closely monitor the continuation of FT mature students.

Continuation of PT mature students also fluctuates above and below that of PT young students, across the 5 years of data [mature: 68-90% compared to young: 65-91%]. In year 5 a non-statistically significant gap of 9% exists based on a cohort of just 60 students. This gap may be attributable to courses that have been closed in the last 2 years. Aggregated TEF data confirms the College is above benchmark for continuation of both mature and young PT students, however, the data is non-reportable. Based on the current curriculum together with academic reporting and focus groups, the College does not believe there is a gap to be addressed. Nevertheless, the College will closely monitor the continuation of PT mature students to ensure a gap does not emerge.

#### **1.3.3. Success – Attainment**

SCUC first degree student cohorts are so small and APP data non-reportable for each relevant characteristic that it is not possible to generate any statistically significant data. Internal data indicates that attainment is better for mature rather than young students [56% for mature students in 2017/8 compared to 40% for young students] however this is based on a total cohort size of fewer than 25 students. When all final year students are considered, 58% of mature students achieve good outcomes compared to 51% of young students.

#### **1.3.4. Progression to Employment or Further Study**



Most APP progression data for FT mature is non-reportable, but in year 5, progression was at 75% - 11% above progression of FT young students. This reverse gap is non-statistically significant being based on just 30 mature students, but is supported by TEF data which shows that progression for FT mature students at 96.9% (compared to benchmark of 95.1) is better than for FT young students at 93.1% (benchmark of 94.9%).

APP progression data for PT mature is non-reportable except for year 5 which shows progression at 60%; this is below that of young PT students at 70% in year 5, but as it is based on only 30 mature students it cannot be considered as providing a reliable assessment of performance. In order to attempt a more reliable evaluation, we have used average aggregated TEF data which indicates that progression for PT young at 99.4% (benchmark of 97.6) is better than for PT mature students at 96.8% (benchmark of 96.0%). With only 30 students contributing to the PT mature student data, this gap in performance is not considered significant as a change in outcome for one student would reverse this gap. Nevertheless, progression of mature students but will be closely monitored by the College.

#### **1.4. Disabled students**

Due to the small reporting cohort sizes, disaggregation of students by nature of disability results in suppressed or non-reportable APP data. Similarly, analysis of internal data by nature of disability does not provide any meaningful data (e.g. fewer than 10 students with physical impairments enrolled on SCUC HE programmes in 2018/19) and has potential to identify students. As a result, the evaluation of performance uses aggregated disability data.

##### **1.4.1. Access**

SCUC is consistently above the sector average for recruitment of FT disabled students across the 5 years of data [SCUC: 17-21% compared to sector: 11.8-14.6%].

Conversely, SCUC is consistently below the sector average for recruitment of PT disabled students across the 5 years of data [SCUC: 0-8% compared to sector: 10.3-14.8%]. This data is based on low numbers and NOT statistically significant. However, the College believes that the below-sector performance may be the result of inconsistent approaches to encouraging disclosure and recording disability and has started a review of reporting procedures. [PTA\_1].

##### **1.4.2. Success – Continuation**

There are too few disabled students to provide reliable APP data for FT students and all PT disabled (although the College does analyse data from across the institution and provides support based on the findings – see the 2018 Equality and Diversity Report<sup>1</sup>).

APP data shows consistently better continuation for FT disabled students [85-90%] compared to non-disabled students [74-84%], although this is based on cohort sizes of 40 students or fewer. Conversely, aggregated TEF data shows there is a small gap for FT with continuation of non-disabled at 88% (above benchmark of 85.6%) compared to continuation of disabled at 86.3% (slightly below benchmark at 84.2%) and therefore The College is committed to ensuring that not only will there not be a gap in the performance of disabled students but will proactively target those students as part of our overall performance improvement across the lifetime of this Plan. [PTS\_3].

For PT disabled, APP data is non-reportable. TEF data is also non-reportable but a flag does indicate SCUC is above benchmark for non-disabled but in line with benchmark for disabled. The



College does not believe there is a gap to be addressed and this is supported by qualitative findings from academic reporting and focus group interviews conducted by external consultants.

### **1.4.3. Success- Attainment**

SCUC first degree student cohorts are small, and APP data is non-reportable for each relevant characteristic, particularly with regards to declared disability. Review of internal data indicates equal attainment for both disabled and non-disabled students although this is based on a total of fewer than 25 students. Consequently, the College does not believe there is a gap to be addressed but will continue to closely monitor attainment of disabled students.

### **1.4.4. Progression to employment or further study**

There are few disabled students such that APP data is non-reportable for FT for years 2 to 5 and for all 5 years for PT. Aggregated TEF data shows there is a gap for FT with progression of non-disabled at 95.9% compared to disabled at 89.4%, This gap data is based on 59 disabled students and appears to be the impact of a few individuals, not indicative of an issue to be addressed. For students completing sub-degree programmes at the College who choose to progress onto top-up degrees delivered at SCUC, the progression rates of disabled students exceed those of non-disabled students, and over the last five years are close to 100%.

For PT disabled students, TEF data is non-reportable. Internal data derived from annual focus groups and tracking degree top-up enrolments at the College from our level 4/5 programmes indicates that there is no gap to be addressed.

## **1.5. Care leavers**

There is no APP data for care leavers. SCUC recruitment of care leavers can vary annually; and is typically very low (for example no care leavers registered in 2018/19,) but care leavers have been on course in the last 5 years – representing approximately 0.3% of students overall. This is in line with the DfE and Centre for Social Justice sector target of 0.1-0.2% of the 19-21-year-old student population. The cohorts are obviously too small to provide any statistically significant data around success or progression. The College will extend its current support for young carers to care leavers to further encourage recruitment and improve support for this substantially under-represented group.

## **1.6. Intersections of disadvantage**

Almost 50% of SCUC students are from WP backgrounds, but there are insufficient students categorised as ABMO, disabled, etc for any reliable intersectional analysis to be performed. For example, there were only 16 disabled students on programmes covered by this Plan in 2018. However, due to the small group sizes, support can be, and is, provided to students as individuals, with any and all needs taken into consideration.

## **1.7. Other groups who experience barriers in higher education**

SCUC actively supports student carers, students with mental health issues including autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and students who are estranged from their families. Cohort sizes are too small to provide any statistically significant gaps for these groups who experience barriers and challenges in HE. However, as each identified student is supported individually by trained professionals from initial enquiry through application, enrolment, and while on programme, internal reporting mechanisms suggest that their journeys throughout the entire student cycle are in line with expectations.

A range of work is ongoing to support students with mental health issues. A mental health worker has been appointed and works across campuses to support students. A recent initiative has been the provision of coasters to promote the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust. The coasters feature information about support available in College including help-line numbers. The Art & Design programmes, supported and led by students, have developed workshops to support HE students to develop their own strategies to manage stress and improve resilience which will be evaluated throughout the academic year, and refined before their introduction across the curriculum.

SCUC has for a number of years issued Carer Cards to student carers following a supportive interview with an in-house support worker. The Carer Card system enables these vulnerable students to minimise conversations with multiple academic staff when issues arise due to circumstances out of their control. A comparable 'Passport' system will be introduced for care leavers during 2020 and will be fully operational by September.

### 1.8. Students out of scope for the APP data evaluation

SCUC has over 200 students annually on HE programmes franchised by Oxford Brookes University, through the University's Associate College Partnerships scheme (ACP). These students, while out of scope for SCUC's Access and Participation Plan, are supported in line with the College's standard operating procedures, and with the exception of financial aid, treated in the same way as our other HE students.

Oxford Brookes University has undertaken analysis of access, success and progression of students registered through the ACP which has led to the initiation of discussions with its college partners to pinpoint where gaps are significant and to develop action plans to address differences in access, success and progression, where relevant. This analysis has shown a potential gap in attainment of SCUC BAME students, but the cohort sizes are very small and percentage comparisons fluctuate annually. SCUC is working with Oxford Brookes University to monitor attainment across all WP groups

## 2. Strategic aims and objectives

SCUC's overarching strategic aim in relation to access and participation is:

*Working towards the provision of an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious and have very high standards of academic and personal achievement which will enable them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.*

The evaluation of performance, as set out in Section 1, has confirmed that in terms of access and progression to employment or further study, the College is achieving this aim. However, underperformance in continuation has potential to restrict progression and is the key focus of our APP targets.

### 2.1 Target groups

Based on the assessment of performance, the groups that will be targeted in SCUC's access and

Ref	Target group	Lifecycle stage	Broad aim(s)
PTA_1	Disabled	Access	Improve the disclosure and recording of disability for all PT students

N/A	Care leavers	Access	Improve support for care leavers to further encourage recruitment and maximise success
PTS_1	POLAR4Q1/2	Continuation	Reduce the gap in Continuation between POLAR4Q3-5 students and POLAR4Q1/2 students
PTS_2	BAME	Continuation	Reduce the gap in Continuation between white and BAME students
PTS_3	Disabled	Continuation	Close the gap in Continuation between non-disabled and disabled students

Table 1: Target groups and associated stages of the student lifecycle participation work over the lifetime of this Plan are shown in Table 1. The main lifecycle stage to be targeted is continuation and activities are planned to improve performance for disadvantaged, ethnic and disabled students.

## 2.2 Aims and objectives

In order to achieve the 4 overarching APP targets, aims and objectives have been created and provided in Table 2. The broad aims directly align with the targets detailed in the supporting Targets and Investment Plan. The measurable objectives indicate the position the College intends to reach in the given timescale; yearly milestones are given in the Targets and Investment Plan.

Ref	Aim	Measurable objective	Timescale
PTA_1	Improve the disclosure and recording of disability for all PT students	Proportion of PT disabled students increased to 13%. SCUC will review and improve its processes for disclosure and recording of disability for all PT students.	5 years of Plan
N/A	Improve support for care leavers to further encourage recruitment and maximise success	Care leaver data is captured on MIS Care leavers access HE and increase the number of care leavers accessing the support	November 2020
PTS_1	Reduce the gap in Continuation between POLAR4Q3-5 students and POLAR4Q1/2 students	Due to small cohort sizes, the target and milestones are based on averaged aggregate data over 3 years Uniform reduction of gap by 1% over 5 years of the plan.	5 years of Plan
PTS_2	Reduce the gap in Continuation between white and BAME students	Year 5 APP data shows a gap of 8%: 78% for ABMO and 86% for White - reduce the gap by 1% per annum.	5 years of Plan
PTS_3	Improve the Continuation rates of disabled students	Improve continuation of disabled students by 1% per annum.	5 years of the plan

Table 2: Aims and objectives for each APP target

For each aim, a range of actions are planned in order to achieve the objectives and overarching targets (see Table 3 in Section 3).

## 3. Strategic measures

### 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

SCUC is committed to promoting and sustaining the high standards which have consistently delivered the best possible learning opportunities for its students, and has developed a number of related, subsidiary and inter-dependent strategies. In particular, these college-wide strategic goals underpin the College's widening participation and employability success:

- to provide an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious and have very high standards of academic and personal achievement which will enable them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.
- to offer innovative and responsive programmes that meet the needs of employers and students, respond to the demands of the economy and continuously explore new market opportunities.

Further strategic goals provide the framework from which the HE Strategy has been developed, including to:

- continue to develop vocational pathways from the full-time further education provision and respond to the needs of local employers;
- continue to offer higher education provision that is both high quality and affordable;
- provide educational, professional and academic opportunities which are accessible to all members of the local community and in particular to those from disadvantaged areas and non-traditional backgrounds.

### **3.1.1 Overview**

The success of SCUC's approach to inclusivity is demonstrated through its evaluation of performance which confirms above-sector performance for access of disadvantaged, BAME, mature and FT disabled students. Similarly, extensive partnership with employers has resulted in high progression to employment or further study. SCUC's whole college approach to WP led to its inclusion as a case study in a research piece commissioned by the Office for Fair Access.<sup>4</sup> The final report noted that SCUC's "WP work takes place at each phase of the student journey, but as a small institution WP is genuinely undertaken by 'everyone' with no dedicated WProles."

### **3.1.2 Alignment with other strategies**

SCUC is committed to ensuring its environment is both diverse and free from discrimination. We are committed to ensuring that every member of staff and every student feels safe and confident in our College. Solihull College values diversity and welcomes all those who value an excellent education regardless of their age, race, gender, religion disability or sexual orientation. SCUC's Equality Policy describes how the College fulfils its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination. It demonstrates how it is placing the promotion of equality and diversity at the centre of all aspects of SCUC's work.

The College's HE Admissions Policy confirms a commitment to fair access and encourages applications from all who are able to demonstrate potential to meet the entry criteria for the relevant course and benefit from study at undergraduate level. Applicants are considered on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religion or belief. The College's admissions procedures are designed to ensure that all applications are considered

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas, L. (2017) Understanding a whole institution approach to widening participation: Final report. Offa

fairly and consistently and in accordance with professional standards and are motored and evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively annually to ensure that standards are maintained.

Progression to employment or further study is covered within the Careers Education and Guidance Policy which ensures all HE students are provided access to information resources, impartial individual guidance, and a range of co-curricula activities designed to develop skills for employability, assisting in career management and decision-making.

### 3.1.3 Strategic measures

Evaluation of the SCUC's current performance has identified the capacity to increase the proportion of care leavers and PT disabled students, however it is recognised that the under-performance in terms of access may be the result of inconsistent or inaccurate processes relating to disclosure and recording. The measures taken to address access deficiencies are two-fold including actions to encourage disclosure and recruitment as well as improvement of processes to ensure all relevant students are identified, recorded and tracked. The key activities to achieve the access targets are shown in Table 3 below.

Target ref	Actions	
PTA_1	1	Improve advice and guidance sessions for all prospective HE students to encourage greater disclosure of disability and to promote the support available to all disabled students from initial enquiry onwards. A specific post will be created to support Disabled HE students including those with mental health issues and those that cannot access DSA support.
	2	Adapt current processes in order to ensure any disclosures are captured and recorded, including after initial enrolment and induction periods, in order to enable ongoing provision of support and ongoing monitoring
N/A	3	Identify FE students in College who are care leavers and ensure these students are made aware of the support available to them on progression to SCUC HE.
	4	Provide all care leavers with a named support worker as a first point of call in case of difficulty including financial hardship and accommodation issues
	5	Introduce reliable process to ensure all care leavers are recorded, in order to enable ongoing provision of support and monitoring
	6	Introduce care leaver passports to highlight care leaver status and fast-track support including access to emergency hardship funds
PTS_1 PTS_2 PTS_3	7	SCUC will focus on improvement of all FT students' engagement in their learning and foster a sense of community and belonging to the College. The methods to achieve this will be explored and monitored by the HESQB and are likely to focus on cross-college study skills and employability skills development through interactive workshops. The increased number of bursaries for disadvantaged students from POLAR1/2 households will provide greater financial support.
	8	Existing processes to identify students at risk of failure or who are becoming disengaged with their study will be strengthened. Both academic and pastoral tutors will be trained on identifying at risk students and strategies to encourage students to seek additional skills support or provide other intervention activities.
	9	The existing performance dashboard will be enhanced to include WP characteristics including POLAR4 data, ethnicity, age and disability.

	10	Monitoring of the dashboards by characteristic will become embedded within the College's annual cycle of quality improvement and enhancement.
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Table 3: Key activities to achieve the APP targets

The evaluation of performance has also highlighted a weakness in continuation across multiple under-represented groups leading to the creation of our success targets: PTS\_1 to PTS\_3. Table 3 above shows a combined approach to improve continuation of FT students which is expected to impact positively across each of the target groups. Additionally, in line with the SCUC's strategic intention to provide an inclusive and successful learning environment, the senior leadership team has committed to take a more active approach in monitoring access, success and progression across the HE student population with disaggregation of appropriate WP characteristics to enable detailed scrutiny and monitoring.

### 3.1.4 Curriculum, pedagogic and student support

SCUC's HE curricula is diverse and attracts a diverse student population. Some subjects typically have gender imbalances based on well-developed social ideology. For example, the majority of students on Engineering, Construction and IT courses tend to be male, while conversely, Early Years, Animal Management and Health & Social Care courses tend to be female dominated. Regular training events for both teaching and support staff reinforce principles of equality and awareness of good practice such as the use of images, language and in-course examples/scenarios that challenge stereotypes and promote positive ethnic, gender, disability and age characteristics.

56% of SCUC's HE students are recruited with no or low-tariff entry qualifications.<sup>1</sup> The high level of HE student success across SCUC demonstrates a successful pedagogy underpinned with qualified staff and high quality HE staff development. Students entering all HE courses are supported with specialist sessions to develop academic study skills. As part of the approaches to improve continuation through fostering a sense of community and belonging, the College will explore methods to deliver additional interactive academic study and employability skills workshops which will complement the local, course-level sessions already available.

All students receive a high level of personalised support including small group teaching, a high level of formative feedback and regular 1 to 1 tutorials. In its approach to improve continuation, especially for full-time students, tutors will receive additional training to raise awareness of student characteristics that can contribute to difficulties associated with staying-on course. A consultative approach of dialogue with teaching staff, academic and pastoral tutors, current and graduate students will inform the approaches to improve tutorial support for all underrepresented students. Several HE staff have recently trained as Mental First Aiders and further training will continue.

### 3.1.5 Employability

SCUC's HE provision is vocational and the College works closely with employers and employer representatives to ensure all its courses are up to date, relevant and fit for purpose. Employers are involved in curriculum design to ensure graduates leave with skills and knowledge valued by local and regional employers.

The College works with numerous employers to deliver degree apprenticeships and higher apprenticeships to over 200 students. As further partnerships are developed and both student and employer demand for apprenticeships increases, it is expected that this area of provision will

expand over the next 5 years. This expansion provides its own challenge for the College as the growth in apprenticeships is forecast to be in the areas of Engineering and Construction which predominantly attract young males. The College will continue its work around challenging stereotypes and promoting all HE opportunities equally to limit the extent to which apprenticeship growth impacts negatively on its diversity.

Further evidence of the College's strengths around employability is the success of a consortium bid for an Institute of Technology (IoT) in Advanced Manufacturing. The consortium is led by Solihull College & University Centre, Aston University and Birmingham City University, working alongside South and City College Birmingham as a Core partner and supported by BMET College, University College Birmingham and the University of Birmingham. The partnership will jointly design, develop and widen education and training opportunities aligned to the latest skills needs of leading-edge employers; the local, regional and national economy; and Government priorities for technical education. Employers across the region including the West Midlands Combined Authority, the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Aim Higher have contributed to the project. The IoT is likely to aid in the College's aim to increase access and participation of students from disadvantaged neighborhoods, categorised by POLAR4 quintiles 1 and 2.

### **3.1.6 Collaboration**

The above section on Employability outlines SCUC's collaborative approaches with employers and other partners to provide vocational HE and specialist provision through the new Institute of Technology.

SCUC is an active member of the Birmingham-based NCOP, Aim Higher West Midlands, which seeks to increase access to HE particularly for young people from local disadvantaged postcode areas. SCUC already recruits a high proportion of young disadvantaged students and although the College is committed to continuing its work as part of the NCOP, this is unlikely to have direct impact on its key WP targets as set out above.

The College works with a wide range of partners to provide advice and support to students who experience barriers and challenges in HE such as Forward-Thinking Birmingham, the city's mental health partnership for 0-25 year old, a regular presence in the Blossomfield HE Centre from September 2019.

### **3.1.7 Alignment with other work and funding sources**

As an FE college, SCUC has direct access to level 3 students to raise awareness and aspiration of higher education study. Much of the work with these FE students is carried out as part of the normal pastoral support of level 3 learners. The College Careers Service consists of a team of qualified career guidance professionals who are dedicated to helping people to progress successfully into further or higher education, employment or apprenticeships.

As part of its commitment to widening participation and improving access in the local area, SCUC employs a full time Schools Marketing and Events Officer with specific responsibility for providing a dedicated point of contact between schools and sixth forms in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area. This post enables the College to further engage with a wide range of young people in the area and raise aspirations of progression to HE.



### **3.1.8 Financial support**

Up to and including the period covered by its 2020-2021 Access and Participation Plan, SCUC provided a combination of generous scholarships and bursaries to a range of academically able and disadvantaged students. The scholarships predominantly supported access aims and the College acknowledges that its current evaluation of performance has identified no significant gaps in access. Three out of the four targets in this APP relate to continuation and research published by Offa indicates that a whole institution approach to developing students' feeling of belonging to their institution is one of the most effective approaches for improving continuation.

Based on this evidence-led approach, SCUC intends to discontinue its scholarships from 2021 and re-direct the financial investment into an increased number of bursaries targeted to disadvantaged students. This financial support which will be carefully managed to promote and reward retention, attendance and engagement, will sit alongside other approaches identified in Table 3 which provide direct study skills, academic and pastoral support to students from under-represented groups. The number of bursaries for disadvantaged students will be increased to provide greater financial support for FT students. The bursaries will be awarded in each year of study, at three points throughout the academic year, subject to satisfactory attendance and engagement with studies.

## **3.2 Student consultation**

Student engagement is integral to SCUC strategy, policy, management and curriculum delivery, and takes place at all levels and in many different formats within and across the College. It is a key component of the College's monitoring activities with student representation on the HE Quality and Standards Board (HEQSB), HE Strategy Group, Governing Body (we have 2 Student Governors) and our Student Voice Steering Group. Gathering and reacting to student input with regards to course management and monitoring is factored into annual action planning and, where appropriate, with documentation such as this Plan approved through our clearly defined student representative system. Formal representation on committees and groups tends to be undertaken by FT students and the College utilises its VLE to share information and elicit interaction with all students, particularly those on PT courses. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this Plan will be conducted alongside our other engagement activities, with formalised consultation through:

- direct feedback from student representatives.
- opinions and feedback gathered via the VLE;
- feedback from annual Student Focus Groups; and
- student input on the HEQSB, HE Strategy Group, Governing Body and the Student Voice Steering Group.

The College takes great care to ensure that focus groups and other student gatherings are administered in ways which allow and encourage participation from all students regardless of their mode of study, programme area or campus. All HE courses, regardless of the awarding body, have a named student representative who has access to training from the Student Enrichment Coordinator. Written guidance on the role is also provided on the HE Student Hub (part of our internal VLE) together with an annual schedule of events and consultations on cross-college matters such as the content of this Access Plan.

The Student Voice Engagement Strategy is available on the College website. The associated Student Voice Action Plan was reviewed and revised by the Student Voice Steering Group and formally approved by the HEQSB and Governing Body. Similarly, SCUC's Access and Participation Plan for 2019-2020 was approved by student representatives and feedback from students sought via a range of approaches.

Focus groups are regularly held with all HE students to monitor the effectiveness of actions undertaken as part of the College's previous access and participation plans. Student views on the availability of scholarships and bursaries have been sought and students have been consulted on the 2020-2021 APP investment plans including the plan to remove scholarships to provide more bursaries.

### **3.3 Evaluation strategy**

Using a theory of change approach, the College has identified key outcomes which together will lead to the achievement of the strategic APP targets – see Table 4. The outcomes result from consideration of the change that is desired for each target group across the relevant stages of the student lifecycle. A set of activities has been planned to effect change and the identified outcomes will enable structured evaluation of the activities that have taken place and the extent to which change has been achieved.

The actions and outcomes cover a range of activities across the College and, accordingly, responsibility for achieving the outcomes is spread over multiple senior managers supporting the whole-college approach to WP and underpinning the College's strategic commitment to its APP targets.

Where relevant and appropriate the actions are evidence-based. The care leaver actions take account of good practice identified by Buttle UK, especially the named person to encourage communication. The development of approaches to foster a sense of community and belonging has previously been shown to significantly reduce early withdrawal from courses.<sup>5</sup> The provision of bursaries in each year of study, subject to satisfactory attendance and engagement with study, supports continuation into the second year of study and also leads to overall improved completion of awards.

The OfS evaluation self-assessment has highlighted that the College's current evaluation processes are limited and require further development. The use of an evidence-based approach to develop its theory of change approach combined with outcomes enable each stage of the plan to be separately tracked, monitored and evaluated.

SCUC intends to prioritise the current bursary scheme towards students from the NCOP Target wards as they are predominantly POLAR Q1/2 by using the OfS Postcode look-up tool, however as the total cohort sizes are so small, and students from these areas tend to receive support in many ways, it is difficult to determine statistically which measures are particularly effective.

Therefore, in order to evaluate the impact of the bursaries, the college is introducing a formalised interview schedule in addition to the personal tutoring system where the students will be asked to

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas, L (2012) Building student engagement and belonging in HE at a time of change: final report from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme, Paul Hamlyn Foundation

describe how their bursary has helped them, and whether other support measures have contributed to greater or lesser degree.

The intention is for SCUC to conduct these interviews within a month of making each payment (currently three a year) so that early interventions can be put into practice if additional needs are identified, and financial support arranged from other budgets when the evaluation recommendations are scrutinised at the College's Quality and Standards Board and Governors' Meetings.

These additional interventions are expected to include, but will not be limited to, increased one-to-one academic and pastoral support, possible revisions to timetabling for Semesters Two and Three, and if necessary, exceptional case considerations for increased financial aid.

To measure the effectiveness of actions aimed at improving student success, the WP dashboard will be updated and monitored termly by the HE Quality Standards and Board (HEQSB). While access outcomes will be known and updated only once per year, termly monitoring will support close attention to continuation and allow interventions and other actions to be modified in-year, as required. The actions and recommendations of the HEQSB are regularly reported to the senior management team and governors supporting a whole-college approach to monitoring the success of the APP.

Previous evaluation of impact has featured a range of strategies such as post perception surveys, focus groups and post engagement surveys distributed to appropriate stakeholders. Similar strategies will be used to evaluate impact of activities arising from this APP action plan.

To evaluate effectiveness of actions to improve disclosure and recording of disabled students and care leavers, the WP dashboard will be 'sense-checked' against tutor feedback to confirm relevant student data has been captured. Take-up of support for disabled students and care leavers will be reviewed by the Student Support team. If discrepancies are found to occur with recording, the MIS Manager, under the direction of the Deputy Principal, will review the processes and amend accordingly. If discrepancies occur with disclosure or take-up of support, interviews and/or focus groups will be held with both students and support staff to identify potential reasons for non-disclosure or lack of take-up of support and modify practices as a result of the feedback.

The WP dashboard will be the primary vehicle to measure quantitative improvements in continuation, but the effectiveness of cross-college study skills and employability skills development will be better evaluated through qualitative measures. Immediate and longitudinal feedback from study skills and employability skills workshops will be sought from both students and staff to gauge student interest, engagement and impact. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted to identify best practice and to help improve workshop content and delivery each year. Further feedback from academic and support staff will be solicited and evaluated at course level, through Programme Quality Boards/Review Meetings and College level at HEQSB.

Part of the College's continuous improvement cycle is the identification of courses designated as 'at risk', such as when students are at risk of withdrawal or failure. When an 'at risk' course is identified, an 'intensive care' process is implemented to fully understand the nature of the issue and to provide remedial action. This process will continue operate throughout each academic year and the improved WP dashboard will support identification of issues affecting underrepresented students.

Findings and outcomes of our evaluation and monitoring will be disseminated to all staff at the annual HE summer professional development sessions.

The senior staff identified in Table 4 will be required to provide annual summary reports to the Access and Participation Monitoring Group (see also Section 3.4 below). These reports will include an evaluation of the activities using the methods identified above and, combined with quantitative data, provide an overview of the effectiveness of the measures employed. Where the measures are deemed to be ineffective or it is likely that the milestones and/or strategic targets may not be achieved in the given timescales set out in the Target Investment Plan, the reports will include recommendations of how the actions are to be revised with clear timescales and responsibilities set out for any changes.

The main resource for evaluation of the Plan is £15,000 per annum, as set out in the Target Investment Plan, and will be used to cover the cost of student and staff interviews and focus groups. The College already employs external advisers to provide such services to ensure evaluations are independent and robust in their conclusions. The College will also invest in staff development in evaluation, for relevant middle and senior managers, taking account of the findings of the OfS evaluation self-assessment tool. The cost of this development is covered within the 'funded by other sources' part of the Target Investment Plan and will be built into the annual college staff development budget.

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

All of our HE provision is reviewed quarterly at School Level against key performance indicators set at the highest level of the college, to cover widening participation, access, continuation, progression (internal and external), attendance, achievement, attainment, student feedback and course/module evaluations. In particular, The Deputy Principal (Solihull)/Chief Operating Officer (Stratford), Vice Principal (Solihull) and the Dean of Higher Education and Curriculum Innovation are responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this Access and Participation Plan through the quarterly meetings of the Quality and Standards Board (HEQSB) and, where applicable the Equality and Diversity Committee.

The primary measures of success of the APP will be improved rates of access and continuation for the under-represented groups as set out in the targets. The creation of a detailed dashboard disaggregated by WP characteristics will enable effective data monitoring. Use of other data such as from HESA, TEF and NSS will support the monitoring and help to place internal achievements in a wider context. Additionally, SCUC will monitor WP progress for students on partnership programmes not covered within the scope of this APP and will use partner HEI data to further contextualise the SCUC position. Monitoring and evaluation of progress against the targets related to our WP activities will be reported through the HEQSB, the HE Strategy Group and Senior Leadership Team, and ultimately to the College Governors.

Evaluation of progress against the targets expressed in this plan, and those for the HE students on franchised provision, are standing items for the HE Quality and Standards Committee, and the cross-college Equality and Diversity Committee, with data, analysis and actions fed into the College's Equality and Diversity Annual Report<sup>6</sup> which shows how we prioritise the most effective

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.solihull.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ED-Annual-Report-2018-Feb-19.pdf>

activities and initiatives. Actions, include, but are not limited to, increased oversight, re-allocation of resources such as staff - both teaching and support personnel - and facilities, and the determination of more effective metrics which may allow the identification of any emerging gaps.

If gaps in progress towards targets are identified, the College will take to action to address any deficiencies. These actions will be tailored in response to which target may be in danger of not being met. A typical action may be to bring together a task and finish group to analyse evaluation of progress to date and identify potential solutions. These may include collaboration with other providers to explore successful strategies. The College is an active member of a number of HE provider networks and is confident appropriate support will be available if needed. The task and finish group will be chaired by a member of the Senior Executive and will report to the Principal and Chief Executive's Access and Participation Monitoring Group.

The Principal and Chief Executive will take overarching responsibility for the APP and will convene a termly Access and Participation Monitoring Group. Each senior manager with a lead responsibility for an action to achieve a target, as set out in Table 4, will report to this group. Using a range of evaluative information and input from relevant groups as described above, the reports will provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the activities, the likelihood of the milestones and strategic targets being achieved in the given timescales as set out in the Target Investment Plan, and recommendations of how the actions are to be revised, if necessary, to achieve the targets.

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

Clear information about the tuition fees that apply to SCUC's higher education and the financial support available to students is, and will continue to be, publicised on the College website at [www.solihull.ac.uk](http://www.solihull.ac.uk).

SCUC will provide a £1,000 bursary to eligible FT disadvantaged students for each year of study based on the eligibility criteria below. For PT students, the bursary will be pro-rata based on intensity of study.

In order to be eligible for a bursary, a student must:

- be studying an undergraduate HE programme covered by the College's Access and Participation Plan;
- be liable for the new tuition fee rates;
- be from Irish or UK Nationals or EEA Nationals with settled or pre settled status.
- if part-time, be studying at least 25% intensity of the full-time course;
- have a household income of £25,000 or below.

Household income will be used to target available bursaries to the most disadvantaged students.

The bursaries will be awarded in each year of study, at three points throughout the academic year, subject to satisfactory attendance and engagement with studies.

Information about bursaries will be provided on the College website and shared with students at interview. Once on course, bursary recipients will be reminded of the three-stage payment process and the need to maintain minimum attendance thresholds and engagement with study.

This Access and Participation Plan (and other documents) is published on the College website in an accessible format, with other formats such as Braille produced on request and sent to current or prospective students by our Student Services Team. The Student Services Team can be contacted by telephone and/or in writing for additional guidance, and to respond to questions or requests for supplementary information, Individual advice is always provided at course interview prior to any offers of a place.

We provide information to UCAS and to the Student Loans Company in a timely fashion for incorporation in their databases for each academic year and ensure compliance to the mandatory information required in relation to Key Information Sets and Wider Information Sets as required for OfS, Unistats, and other bodies to whom we report as part of our normal college operating procedures.

Information specific to the costs of local accommodation is given on the College website and individual advice can be provided by Student Services upon request either by e-mail, telephone or at personal interviews which can be arranged by appointment.

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Desired change</b>	<b>Measurable outcomes</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1	Improve information advice and guidance (IAG) sessions for prospective HE students to encourage greater disclosure of disability and to promote the support available to all disabled students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Students with disabilities are inspired and encouraged to access HE</li> <li>✓ Students readily disclose disabilities</li> <li>✓ Disabled students are directed toward support</li> <li>✓ Disabled students take advantage of support provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New IAG guidance for admissions and careers staff to be used at interview and open days</li> <li>• Training for admissions and careers staff focussed on disability awareness and maximising disclosure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Student Services</li> <li>• Director Student Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 2020</li> <li>• Dec 2020</li> </ul>
2	Update processes to ensure disclosures are captured and recorded, including after initial enrolment and induction periods, to enable ongoing provision of support and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ All students' disabilities are correctly recorded on MIS and the College's ILR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved process for disability disclosures to be recorded on SCUC MIS and ILR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 2020</li> </ul>
3	Identify FE students in College who are care leavers and ensure these students are made aware of the support available to them on progression to HE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ All care leaver FE students are identified and are inspired and encouraged to access HE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for admissions and careers staff focussed on care leaver awareness and maximising disclosure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Student Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dec 2020</li> </ul>
4	Create process to ensure care leavers are recorded, tracked and monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ HE students readily disclose care leaver status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved process for care leaver status to be recorded on SCUC MIS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 2021</li> </ul>
5	Provide all care leavers with a named support worker as a first point of call in case of difficulty including financial hardship and accommodation issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Care leavers can easily find person to provide help or support</li> <li>✓ Care leavers readily seek support when needed and before issues reach crisis level</li> <li>✓ Care leavers take advantage of support provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Named care leaver support worker</li> <li>• Record of care leaver support accessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Student Services</li> <li>• Director Student Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 2020</li> <li>• Nov 2020</li> </ul>
6	Introduce Care Leaver Passports to highlight care leaver status and fast-track support including access to emergency hardship funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Care leavers feel they are understood and supported by the College</li> <li>✓ When situations arise, care leavers can access support promptly without the need to repeat or describe their circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care Leaver Passports issued to all care leavers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Student Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oct 2020</li> </ul>

Table 4: Desired change and measurable outcomes to achieve APP targets



	<b>Action</b>	<b>Desired change</b>	<b>Measurable outcomes</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
7	Improve FT students' engagement in their learning and foster a sense of community and belonging to the College. The methods to achieve this will be explored and monitored by the HEQSB and will focus on cross-college study skills and employability skills development through interactive workshops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ All HE students feel a sense of community and belonging to SCUC</li> <li>✓ The sense of community and belonging leads students to seek support at an early stage when issues arise that may impact on engagement with their studies</li> <li>✓ All HE students have improved study skills to enable better engagement with study throughout their HE courses</li> <li>✓ All HE students have improved employability skills that support progression to employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased continuation</li> <li>• Increased demand for HE study skills sessions</li> <li>• Increased progression to positive destinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dean HE &amp; Curriculum</li> <li>• Dean HE &amp; Curriculum</li> <li>• Dean HE &amp; Curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aug 2021</li> <li>• Aug 2021</li> <li>• Aug 2023</li> </ul>
8	Existing processes to identify students at risk of failure or who are becoming disengaged with their study will be strengthened. Both academic and pastoral tutors will be trained on identifying at risk students and strategies to encourage students to seek additional skills support or provide other intervention activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ HE students at risk of failure or who are becoming disengaged with their study are identified at an early stage</li> <li>✓ Intervention activities are implemented for any HE student at risk of failure or withdrawal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New HE tutorial guidance</li> <li>• Training for academic and pastoral tutors on identifying at risk students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Student Services</li> <li>• Director Student Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan 2020</li> <li>• May 2020</li> </ul>
9	The existing performance dashboard will be enhanced to include WP characteristics including POLAR4 data, ethnicity, age and disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mechanisms are in place to enable ready tracking and monitoring of students by WP characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated and improved WP dashboard</li> <li>• Further dashboard updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May 2020</li> <li>• May 2021</li> </ul>
10	Monitoring of the dashboards by WP characteristic will become embedded within the College's annual cycle of quality improvement and enhancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Monitoring of the dashboards by WP characteristic is systematically embedded into the College's annual cycle of quality improvement and enhancement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated annual cycle of quality improvement and enhancement explicitly including WP monitoring via dashboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director Quality Improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan 2021</li> </ul>

Table 4 cont: Desired change and measurable outcomes to achieve APP targets

## **5. Appendix**

The OfS will append the following items from the fees and targets and investment documents when an access and participation plan is published:

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)

## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

We do not intend to raise fees for continuing students. Subject to maximum fee limits we may increase fees from £7500 to £8500 over the lifecycle of the plan.

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Coventry validation	£8,500
First degree	includes top up degrees and 3 year degrees	£7,500
Foundation degree		£7,500
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£6,500
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£3,750
Foundation degree		£3,750
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	Aircraft Maintenance	£4,000
HNC/HND	Networking and Security	£3,750
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Solihull College and University Centre

Provider UKPRN: 10005946

## Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

### Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£66,000.00	£66,000.00	£66,000.00	£66,000.00	£66,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Access (post-16)	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00
Access (other)	£21,000.00	£21,000.00	£21,000.00	£21,000.00	£21,000.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£45,000.00	£45,000.00	£45,000.00	£45,000.00	£45,000.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00	£40,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£370,135.00	£374,140.00	£374,140.00	£374,140.00	£374,140.00
<b>Access investment</b>	17.8%	17.6%	17.6%	17.6%	17.6%
<b>Financial support</b>	12.2%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	4.1%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	34.0%	33.7%	33.7%	33.7%	33.7%

