



Evaluation Strategy & Action Plan 2019-20

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INTRODUCTION

1. This paper details the evaluation strategy and actions for implementation of the strategy relating to access and participation work at the New College of the Humanities.
2. This Strategy and Activity Plan for Evaluation is provided as a supplement to the New College of the Humanities 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan, as required by the Office for Students. 2019-20 is the “foundation building” phase of this agenda, providing the initial necessary key capabilities for the medium and longer-term, sustained evaluation practices through and beyond our next Access and Participation Plan (APP). Detail in this paper will inform and flow through to the 2020-25 APP and will incorporate the new five-year strategy.

KEY CONTEXT

3. This Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Outreach Strategy and Action Plan 2019-20.

4. In approaching the development of an evaluation strategy, New College of the Humanities (the College) acknowledges the particular challenges facing new and small providers as they attempt to develop their evaluation capacity. These include lower levels of available resource for activities, more limited institutional capability and generally fewer existing partnerships, networking and collaboration opportunities.
5. These considerations set the context for proportionality and a developmental approach as the College determines its evaluation strategy and practice.

OVERARCHING INTENTIONS

6. The College has used the Office for Students (OfS) evaluation self-assessment tool to contextualise its current evaluation approach, which shows the College as emerging across all categories. While some components are in place, for example a Fair Access and Participation Strategy Group (FAPSG) to receive and respond to evaluation data (Section 6), others need to be established or strengthened. This strategy sets out our plans for development.
7. The evaluation approach will develop alongside the College's access development and will be informed by OfS guidance in this area, including Regulatory Notice 1: Access and Participation Plan Guidance, Regulatory Notice 6: How to Prepare Your Access and Participation Plan – Effective Practice Advice, and Access and Participation Standards of Evidence; and Regulatory Advice 6: How to Prepare your Access and Participation Plan.
8. The College will continue to design and develop an evaluation approach and capacity that:
 - 8.1. Is embedded in the organisation and part of a culture of evaluation.
 - 8.2. Is based on the collection and analysis of robust student data that aligns with regulator datasets.
 - 8.3. Generates a robust institution-specific evidence base of impacts, outcomes and value for money.
 - 8.4. Is designed to generate outcomes that feed into development and enhancement of our activities.
 - 8.5. Has a feedback and review process at its core, to ensure that our evaluation activity informs and is informed by our access activity.
 - 8.6. Draws on externally available research and evaluation outcomes to build a broader evidence base.
 - 8.7. Draws on and is informed by the practice and outcomes of others across the HE sector.
 - 8.8. Generates outcomes that will be disseminated to sector colleagues, particularly those in similar small and specialist or new provider contexts.
9. Given that the College is still building its foundations, it will work with and draw on the expertise of external agencies and third sector organisations to expedite activity specific evaluation frameworks, establishing theories of

change and undertaking rapid literature reviews to draw on existing expertise and good practice across the sector.

10. The College will look to the sector and the Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) centre for best practice and use sector research, evidence and evaluation approaches, applied to its specific context, to develop our evaluation strategy. The College also endeavours to share its learning and outcomes through the sector, contributing to network and sector discussion. The College anticipates its learning and evaluation outcomes will be particularly useful for other small and / or specialist providers.
11. The College will continue to develop and enhance student data collection and monitoring to support analysis across the student lifecycle. In the immediate phases small cohort numbers mean that the College will not have access to statistically significant data, but it will be able to begin to identify some correlations and suggested trends and will draw on nationally available datasets (e.g. the OfS Access and Participation Dashboard) and the analysis of other providers.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE EVALUATION PRACTICE

12. Given the College's size and newness to this market, outreach evaluation is a new area of activity and the College is building evaluation capacity in-house and through the support of external advisors. The relative newness of the College's outreach approach and activities, however, provides an opportunity to consider and build evaluation into practice from the outset. This is particularly the case where the College is developing new outreach activity (refer to the Outreach Strategy and Action Plan).
13. The College is encouraging staff to develop evaluation capacity. As a new requirement the College's Fair Access and Participation Steering Group (FAPSG) expect to see robust evaluation approaches built into proposals and plans for new outreach activities; as well as strengthened evaluation practices in relation to student success and progression areas.
14. The College is developing an internal community of practice to ensure that evaluation tools, resources and good practice are shared and that this provides for collaboration and quality, consistency and efficiency of practice.
15. At the same time, the College will ensure that the evaluation process is part of a clear formative feedback loop. Through a close working relationships between key staff involved in activity delivery and those involved in evaluation, as well as overall monitoring through the FAPSG, the College will ensure that activity and evaluation activity are aligned and mutually reinforcing.
16. The College is also instituting a process by which staff delivering different outreach activity and strategy act as critical friends to each other's' projects, feeding back observations and sharing their own practice. This will happen across the lifecycle.

17. In developing this Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan, the College has drawn heavily on sector and OfS research and good practice, to create an effective, appropriate and evidence-led framework for evaluation. In particular, the following materials have been used to create the evaluation activity:
- 17.1. Office for Students¹ and NESTA² guidance on developing theories of change – to ensure that the College has effectively bounded and understood activities and interventions, defined objectives and have a working causal model for how to achieve them. The College will use its understanding of activity mechanisms to develop and define evaluation measures.
 - 17.2. The design and proposed development of the evaluation strategy has been based on OfS discussion of detailed provider outcomes and three core outcomes³, to ensure that an institutional culture of evaluation is built and prioritised. This takes an evidenced-based approach to activity design based on the contexts in which the College works and impact-focused evaluation approaches.
 - 17.3. The College has referred to the Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit⁴, to help prioritise the types of activities and interventions that will provide the best balance between cost, impact and a robust evidence base. As can be seen in the Outreach Strategy and Action Plan, there is a focus on activities that include elements of collaborative learning (though interactive approach to workshop design), individualised instruction (participant specific focus) and small group work, peer mentoring (through the use of student ambassadors).
 - 17.4. The College also draws on OfS research and guidance on the evaluation of outreach interventions for under-16s⁵ and associated tools and guidance⁶. In particular, this includes the advice about the risks of over-reliance on self-reported data from participants including the risks of introducing biases, as identified in such as the 'Dunning-Kruger effect'. Evidence suggests that participants expectations are

¹ Office for Students (2018) *Using Standards of Evidence to Evaluation the Impact of Outreach*, Bristol: OfS. Available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/f2424bc6-38d5-446c-881e-f4f54b73c2bc/using-standards-of-evidence-to-evaluate-impact-of-outreach.pdf>

² NESTA (2019) *Theory of Change*, London: NESTA. Available at <https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/theory-change/>

³ Office for Students (2019) *What Needs to Change*, Bristol: OfS. Available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/strategy-for-evidence-and-evaluation-in-access-and-participation/what-needs-to-change/>

⁴ Teaching Endowment Foundation (2018) *Teaching and Learning Toolkit*, London: EEF. Available at <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

⁵ Office for Students (2019) *Understanding the evaluation of access and participation outreach interventions for under 16 year olds*, Bristol: OfS. Available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/a8ad5c94-7a33-4b53-8f09-824d0705f073/ofs2018_apevaluation.pdf

⁶ Office for Students (2018) *Evaluation of outreach interventions for under 16 year olds Tools and guidance for higher education providers*, Bristol: OfS. Available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/e2c5eea5-b262-4ff6-8261-5b0bc84ba46a/ofs2018_apevaluation_a.pdf

more important determinants of outcomes than aspirations, and emphasises the importance of using pre- post- designs.

EVIDENCE-LED PRACTICE AND INVESTMENT IN ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION MEASURES

18. The FAPSG will formally consider evaluation outcomes, to ensure that the evaluation process is delivering on its objectives and is supporting the positive development of outreach and participation approaches. The FAPSG will use this oversight to review the balance of spend between outreach, student success and progression and evaluation activities on an annual basis.
19. The College will continue to work closely with the independent adviser, external experts in the sector, and other groups, such as TASO-HE, who have familiarity with OfS guidance and good sector practice. This will help to ensure that evaluation activities meet the regulator's expectations and that the College and its access and participation measures are underpinned by sector evidence. The College will continue to respond to up-to-date thinking and guidance in this area, including alignment with and utilisation of OfS good practice advice, including Regulatory Advice 6 and other good practice guidance, applied in context.

DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE CAPABILITY

20. Given the small student intake and the limitations in resourcing the evaluation of access activities compared to larger institutions, the College will build a shared and iterative understanding of the impact of its access and success activities, to encourage coherence and consistency in approach and support a culture of learning.
21. This will be achieved by developing theory of change documentation for each form of activity (see the College's Outreach Strategy and Action Plan 2019-20 for examples of our theories of change in this area) and making it available to colleagues across the institution to ensure that thinking and best practice is available and feeds into a cycle of learning and development. Such documentation may include:
 - 21.1. Mapping of the theory of change underpinning activities, where possible making use of existing sector good practice, in context.
 - 21.2. Copies of, or links to, the research and evidence documents scaffolding the theory of change.
 - 21.3. Clear and detailed documentation of the evaluation measures and a description of how they are embedded in the theory of change.
 - 21.4. Reflections from practitioners.
 - 21.5. Evaluation outcomes.
22. This documentation will be held centrally and made available as a shared resource.

DEVELOPING EVALUATION TOOLS

23. The College has invested in Quercus and a CRM system to support enhanced data capability over the long-term. These systems will be developed to ensure continuous practice improvement and increasingly data-driven, evidence-based activity and monitoring; and support the capacity for more effective evaluation.
24. Currently, the College aims to build and develop shared resource of evaluation tools, which draw on existing sector good practice, as well as institution-specific tools and approaches, to encourage coherence and consistency in evaluation approach, to encourage iterative development and reduce the risk of evaluators 'reinventing the wheel'.
25. As the College builds its evaluation capacity, most of the evaluations will be a combination of Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) approaches, as described in the *Access and Participation Standards of Evidence*.
26. The initial approach to evaluating access activities will consist of pre-/post-questionnaire designs, qualitative data collection via participant interviews and focus groups, and stakeholder interviews (e.g. teachers, parents) and practitioner / student ambassador reflections.
27. The College's initial approach to evaluating student success and progression activities will consist of monitoring assessment outcomes at levels from individual course level, to whole year and programme level, reflecting on student evaluation data with a focus on flagging areas that have implications for disparities in outcome, experience or attainment. The protocol for viewing this data will be shared with all relevant staff. The College will collect qualitative data about the impact of the activity through student interviews and focus groups, as well as collecting structured reflections from faculty. Topic guides and data collection templates will be stored in the repository.
28. The College will make available the evaluation instruments used for each activity to relevant colleagues across the institution to ensure that thinking and best practice is available and consistent and feeds into a cycle of learning and development. Such documentation will include:
 - 28.1. Standardised and semi-standardised questionnaires – annotated to indicate the purpose and use of the data collected.
 - 28.2. A library of standardised questions – annotated to indicate their domain of reference and the purpose and use of the data collected.
 - 28.3. Interview and focus group guides and templates for self-reflection – annotated to outline context and outputs they were designed to deliver.
 - 28.4. Descriptions of other evaluation tools used – for example, descriptions of visual data collection methods used with younger pupils and evaluation tools for learning and teaching activities.
29. Members of the FAPSG will review and discuss the contents of the repository on an annual basis.

USING EVALUATION TO INFORM, DEVELOP AND IMPROVE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PRACTICES

30. The College is establishing a recurrent feedback cycle to ensure that evaluation measures used to assess the impact of activities are calibrated to reflect the scale of, and the theory of change assumptions about, the intervention. By reflecting on the impact of evaluation outcomes the College will ensure that they are meaningful, useful and informative to practitioners and support development and improvement of interventions.
31. Outcomes of evaluation practices will consequently influence practice at the College and the mechanisms for sharing this will be in place.
32. As well as the previously detailed activity relating to sharing evaluation practice internally, the College is establishing an annual internal evaluation forum to support staff and share thinking about the evaluation tools and approaches employed, as well as sharing, analysing and determining relevant outcomes from, the findings from evaluation.
33. More broadly, as the College's practice develops it aims to contribute to the new centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO-HE). We will keep a watching brief on TASO-HE and other evaluation networks to ensure that our approach is informed by the latest practice and to identify relevant opportunities to contribute, particularly in relation to our context.

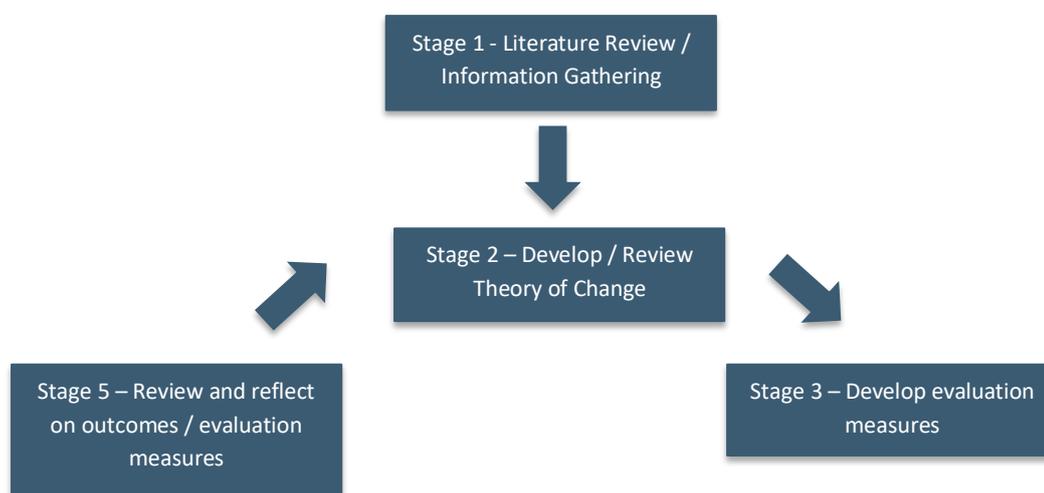
STANDARDISED SCHEDULE FOR EMBEDDING EVALUATION IN ACTIVITY DESIGN

34. The College is introducing a standardised five stage schedule for ensuring that effective evaluation and theory of change inform all current and future access and participation activity.

Stage	
1 Prior to Activity planning	Literature review / information gathering The College will carry out or commission a rapid review to gather information about the issue we are addressing or seek out existing literature reviews. This could include academic research, grey literature, collaboration with academic colleagues, investigation of related activities delivered by comparator institutions.
2 During planning of Activity	Development of Theory of Change Using the information gathered, the College will hold a workshop with delivery leads and practitioner staff and other stakeholders to explore and interrogate assumptions about how and why the activity works and for whom it works (or does not work). This stage leads to the formulation of mechanisms (Pawson and Tilly 1996).

<p>3</p> <p>Prior to Activity delivery</p>	<p>Development of Evaluation Measures</p> <p>On the basis of the documented theory of change the College will review the implications of the mechanisms established (in stage 2) and decide on appropriate evaluation measures. The College will test these measures and sample output data with key evaluation stakeholders and sponsors to ensure that evaluation outcomes are meaningful, useful, relevant to the development of practice, and reflect assumed causal factors in the activity.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Activity delivery</p>	<p>Implementation and evaluation of activity</p> <p>The activity and the evaluation will be undertaken as planned. Any implementation issues will be logged for later discussion.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Post-activity delivery review</p>	<p>Review and reflect on formative evaluation measures / outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Interview or ask for reflections from delivery stakeholders / participants to gather qualitative data about perceived outcomes ii) Capture implementation challenges / successes from delivery practitioners iii) Analyse and contextualise evaluation outcomes <p>At this point the evaluation stakeholder group will review the outcomes of the above to assess impact, outcomes and implementation issues of the activity.</p> <p>Evaluation outcomes and reflections on implementation issues will be used to review the outcomes and impacts of the activity. Any revisions or changes will be discussed and agreed for the next phase of delivery.</p> <p>In light of any revisions and an assessment of the usefulness and relevance of the evaluation measures and consider whether the evaluation approach, theory of change or selected measure also need revision to reflect changes to the activity.</p>

35. This approach results in the following feedback cycle:





36. This standardised and integrated approach to reviewing both activities and the evaluation process, supports effective and holistic reflection on both.

MONITORING PROGRESS AND REFLECTION ON ACTIVITY AND EVALUATION OUTCOMES

37. To ensure a coherent and consistent strategic approach to both access and evaluation strategies both will be reviewed on a regular (six monthly) basis by an institutional body constituted for this purpose.

FAIR ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STRATEGY GROUP (FAPSG)

38. The College established the FAPSG in summer 2018 with the specific purpose of overseeing the Access and Participation Plan, to monitor its effectiveness (or otherwise) and to revise and develop future Plans. As advised by the OfS it includes an independent adviser. The FAPSG's terms of reference are to develop, monitor and review:
 - 38.1. The College's Access and Participation Plan, as approved by the Office for Students.
 - 38.2. All metrics relating to the performance of the Access and Participation Plan.
 - 38.3. Other policies and strategies in the areas of fair access and participation, as appropriate ensuring that these remain consistent with each other and enable the College to achieve its objectives in widening participation.
 - 38.4. To lead on projects for the monitoring and enhancement of the College's widening participation activities.
 - 38.5. To assess the impact of external trends and internal developments including student funding matters on student recruitment and admissions, including widening participation.
39. This group, or its delegates, will conduct the post- activity delivery and evaluation review (Stage 5) in the standardised schedule outlined above (5.1). It will have holistic overview of all of the colleges access and success activity and will be able to assess impact and the utility of both activity and evaluation outcomes in the context of the institutional strategic approach.

ANNUAL REVIEW AND REFLECTION ON EVALUATION MEASURES, APPROACH AND STRATEGY

40. In addition to the regular overview provided by the FAPSG, the College will also review the outcomes and impact of this evaluation strategy on an annual basis to ensure that:
- 40.1. Members of the FAPSG specifically review and discuss the outcomes of evaluation and set remedial courses of action in instances where evaluation outcomes demonstrate lack of, or negative progress towards achieving milestones and targets. Such measures may include decisions relating to redevelopment / changes to strategic measures and activity based on feedback and evaluation outcomes; allocation of additional resource; instigation of identified research/ investigations that may be required to better understand and address the challenges and evidence; or other appropriate changes to activity such as targeting, collaboration measures, or activity types.
 - 40.2. It delivers maximum value for resource invested.
 - 40.3. Evaluation remains central to the College's Access and Participation strategy.
 - 40.4. Evaluation approaches and methodology remain coherent and relevant to both broader sector contexts and the College's other strategic aims and objectives. In particular, the College will review evaluation measures to ensure that they maintain an effective causal relationship with the associated theory of change underpinning each activity type.
 - 40.5. The latest sector developments and information coming from the Evidence and Impact Exchange is considered to ensure evidenced improvement.

THE ACTIONS

41. Whilst it notes that performance gaps in relation to access and participation are concentrated in the Access area, the College will implement a range of evaluation measures across the lifecycle. This is important as part of a whole-provider, whole-lifecycle approach; and, ensures that excellent outcomes in success and progression are monitored and maintained as the access work starts to generate a more diverse student body.
42. The following summary provides the range of evaluation measures that the College will implement in a whole-provider approach:

Lifecycle area	Success / Evaluation Measures
All areas (institutional capability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear progression of the access and participation agenda • Annual milestones and 5-year targets met • Whole institution approach assessed through staff feedback and consultation (operations to governance) • New data provision rolled out to key stakeholders across the institution

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders are able to make decisions on the basis of consistent, detailed and up to date data Staff focus group and survey feedback Collaboration arrangements with students are in place Formal feedback from the Student Union Officers reviewing how effective collaboration has been
Access	<p>See section below for detailed account of evaluation according to the Outreach Strategy and Plan.</p> <p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of partner schools Increased number of pupil engagements Pre-/post- questionnaire for participants. Assessing initial rates of aspiration / expectation about HE progression, test awareness of HE and application process, test knowledge of financial aspects of HE progression Record of applications, offers and enrolments from partner schools Surveys and focus groups/ interviews with teachers and school/college SLT Record of successful relationship building Increase in applications from target students
Transition-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of a contextual data process – with the aim of increasing the proportion of offers to target students Survey students to assess sense of belonging / transition process feedback Student engagement levels along the applicant pipeline
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSS and other student survey on student experience and teaching, learning and assessment, by target groups and programmes Student satisfaction measures to assess academic engagement / learning and teaching and College culture and experience Focus group with sample of target students to assess sense of belonging and relationship to pedagogic aspects of course, and College community Monitor support and development take up and engagement by student demographic Focus group with participating students (support and development activities) Students on co-op programme Student evaluation and satisfaction with co-op programme Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment as result of co-op programme and other work-related development activities Regular review of student satisfaction survey outcomes – increased response rate for personal tutoring support.
Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students on co-op programme Student evaluation and satisfaction with co-op programme Number of students (by target groups) gaining employment as result of co-op programme and other work-related development activities

43. The following section details the College’s steps for implementation of this Evaluation Strategy in practice in relation to the Outreach Strategy and Plan. Given the College’s performance gaps are in the Access area, it specifically draws on activity in the Outreach Strategy and Action Plan, which also

contains evaluation measures aligned to this Evaluation Strategy and Action Plan. Each activity is dealt with separately, as follows.

<p>1. STRATEGIC AIM – DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITY Aim: To work across the institution to improve the understanding, cohesiveness, targeting, evaluation and monitoring, and overall effectiveness of the activities delivered under this Strategy and Plan.</p>
<p>Activity 1.1: Build data capacity to support analysis to inform activity</p>
<p>Objectives: To enable better understanding and performance analysis in relation to target groups, through improvements to the College’s data collection, collation and analysis capabilities.</p> <p>Short Term Data gaps in access and participation are clearly identified. Accurate and detailed data is recorded for all students, identifying under-represented categories and target groups, in terms of application, enrolment, retention, success, and progression. Medium Term Detailed data recording and analysis is embedded in the institution.</p> <p>Long Term Data is in use for targeting purposes, including at individual learner and whole school/ community level, and for planning and further developing outreach activity.</p>
<p>Theory of Change: More complete and detailed data <i>Leads to</i> increase in ability to i) identify potential feeder schools, with WP student cohorts ii) identify existing feeder schools iii) map student intake iv) identify patterns in application, offer-making, acceptances across key WP student groups v) establish a time series analysis to identify potential impacts of activities vi) support analysis of the correlation between targeted interventions and progression from particular schools <i>Leads to</i> Better targeting leads to greater return on outreach investment by increasing potential impact of outreach</p>
<p>Implementation Measures: Annual review – report showing increased capacity and map of data provision Annual feedback from practitioners and evaluators on the impact and effect of increased data provision</p>
<p>Success Indicators: Data is increasingly fit for purpose – i.e. deals with robust access and participation performance assessment requirements, and informs activity and investment. All stakeholders, from Managers to outreach delivery staff are able to identify key feeder schools. Outreach activities built bottom up from this intelligence (aim to increase feeder school portfolio from 17 to 20)</p>
<p>Steps to Achieve Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Task and finish group to assess data requirements 2. Task and finish group to audit current data provision 3. Task and finish group to create action plan to develop existing to required data provision 4. Key stakeholders to develop required data provision 5. Task and finish group to assess progress towards required data provision on a quarterly basis
<p>Time Frame / Milestone: September 2019 – January 2020: Assess required and current data provision January 2020 – March 2020: Create action plan March 2020 – June 2020: Develop required data provision March 2020 – June 2020: Engage key delivery stakeholders to ensure awareness / use of data resource June 2020: Review and sign off by task and finish group</p>

<p>Activity 1.2: Establishing Effective Governance, Leadership and Resource</p>
<p>Objective: As a new provider, the College recognises the need to establish a good internal infrastructure to support, embed and drive access & participation.</p> <p>Short Term Leadership and new delivery staff are in place and the FAPSG is fully functioning, with reporting and monitoring mechanisms.</p> <p>Access and Participation Plan commitments are driven, aligned to core strategy where relevant, and monitored.</p> <p>Medium Term Outreach is appropriately resourced with skilled and knowledgeable staff and expertise. A cross-institution governance and monitoring process and infrastructure, with toolkits (as identified in the Outreach and Evaluation Strategies) is developed and operating.</p> <p>Long Term Access and participation is embedded into core strategic thinking at the College.</p>
<p>Theory of Change: Assumption that as a small / developing institution an embedded culture of access and participation has not yet been established and that the mission is relatively opaque to many members of University staff. On this basis the mission is not as targeted or as effective as it could be. Creating a clear mission statement and documenting a clear institution-wide approach will lead to a consistent and focused institutional approach</p> <p><i>Leads to</i> i) better use of resources ii) more consistent approach iii) better sharing of success factors and good practice iv) better co-ordination of institutional activity v) clearer strategic relationship between difference components of institutional activity</p> <p><i>Leads to</i> More coherent, more consistent work. Better embedding of access and participation strategy and activity into day-to-day institutional business. Better integration of the access agenda into institution activities – for example, teaching and learning approaches.</p> <p><i>Leads to</i> More effective access and participation work as it becomes 'business as usual' Clearer targeting and objective setting.</p>
<p>Implementation Measures: Documentation of outreach agenda in key institutional documents Senior stakeholder ownership of this agenda Access and outreach as a standing item across a range of agendas Outreach included in staff appraisal processes Map showing integration of outreach agenda with other core areas of College business Evaluation surveys /feedback from staff regarding understanding and awareness.</p>
<p>Success Indicators: Outreach agenda appears in key outward facing documents (website, marketing material) Outreach agenda minuted across a range of relevant institutional meetings Outreach agenda documented in strategic documents across all levels of the institution</p>
<p>Steps to Achieve Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment of staff 2. Identification of key internal stakeholder groups (such as subject groupings, marketing, executive boards) where access and participation agenda needs to be integrated 3. Responsibility delegated to 'outreach champion' in each of these groupings 4. Sharing of key strategic outreach documents with each of these groupings 5. Representatives from each grouping to document how outreach agenda has been integrated into core business 6. Staff briefings, development and training workshops

Time Frame / Milestone:

September 2019 – December 2019: Identification of key internal stakeholder groups / delegation of outreach champion / sharing of strategic outreach document
 January 2020 – April 2020: Outreach agenda champions integrate outreach agenda into area of work
 May 2020: Documentation of how outreach agenda has been integrated

Activity 1.3:

Build institutional understanding of effective activities, which demonstrate impact on improving access and participation at the College, of those from under-represented groups.

Objective:

To develop staff capacity to access and use relevant data to reflect on, design and review outreach objectives and aims, and drive continued improvement and impact.

Short Term

Staff development to include a series of workshops, providing an introduction to Outreach Strategy, rationale, contextual relevance and good practice.

Medium Term

Ongoing training ensures that staff are kept up to date. Outreach is included in induction for new staff.

Long Term

Access and participation is embedded into core strategic thinking at the College.

Theory of Change:

Assumption that as a small / developing institution an embedded culture of outreach has not yet been established and that the outreach mission is opaque to many members of University staff. On this basis the mission is not as targeted or as effective as it could be.

Creating a clear mission statement and documenting a clear institution-wide approach will lead to a consistent and focused institutional approach

Leads to

- ii) better use of resources ii) more consistent approach iii) better sharing of success factors and good practice iv) better co-ordination of institutional activity v) clearer strategic relationship between difference components of institutional activity

Leads to

More coherent, more consistent work. Better embedding of outreach strategy and activity into day-to-day institutional business. Better integration of the access agenda into institution activities – for example, teaching and learning approaches.

Leads to

More effective outreach and access work as it becomes 'business as usual'
 Clearer targeting and objective setting

Implementation Measures:

Documentation of outreach agenda in key institutional documents

Senior stakeholder ownership of this agenda

Access and outreach as a standing item across a range of agendas

Outreach included in staff appraisal processes

Map showing integration of outreach agenda with other core areas of College business

Evaluation surveys /feedback from staff regarding understanding and awareness.

Success Indicators:

Outreach agenda appears in key outward facing documents (website, marketing material)

Outreach agenda minuted across a range of relevant institutional meetings

Outreach agenda documented in strategic documents across all levels of the institution

Steps to Achieve Objectives:

7. Identification of key internal stakeholder groups (such as subject groupings, marketing, executive boards) where Outreach agenda needs to be integrated
8. Responsibility delegated to 'outreach champion' in each of these groupings
9. Sharing of key strategic outreach documents with each of these groupings
10. Representatives from each grouping to document how outreach agenda has been integrated into core business

<p>11. Staff briefings, development and training workshops</p> <p>Time Frame / Milestone: September 2019 – December 2019: Identification of key internal stakeholder groups / delegation of outreach champion / sharing of strategic outreach document January 2020 – April 2020: Outreach agenda champions integrate outreach agenda into area of work May 2020: Documentation of how outreach agenda has been integrated</p>
<p>2. STRATEGIC AIM: DEVELOPMENT OF NETWORKS WITH OTHERS IN THE SECTOR (INCL. HEPs and THIRD SECTOR) Aim: To build networks, relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders, including schools and colleges, organisations and communities, to advance outcomes in participation at the College from under-represented groups.</p>
<p>Activity 2.1: Collaboration with other Stakeholders</p>
<p>Objectives: To increase the reach of the College’s targeted recruitment and outreach activities by working in partnership and/or collaboration with other more established organisations and key stakeholders in relevant local and community organisations.</p> <p>Short Term Positive links (e.g. meetings, membership) made with NCOP and one or more of the other organisations as appropriate and if viable. Some collaborative activity will have taken place by the end of the year.</p> <p>Medium Term All identified schools and colleges receive some outreach activity. Regular outreach activity takes place with schools identified as formal partners across three year groups.</p> <p>Long Term Formal partnerships with schools increase - the number will depend upon school willingness to participate. Outreach activity takes place across at least three year groups, more than once annually.</p>
<p>Theory of Change: Collaborative partnerships will expand outreach reach and give access to other potential students and offer the potential for collaboration and economies of scale <i>Leads to</i> Targeted and effective interaction with more WP students. Opportunity to present NCH as a potential destination. <i>Leads to</i> Increase in proportion of WP students entering NCH Access to Third Sector evaluation resources</p>
<p>Implementation Measures: Schedule of meetings with third sector organisations and collaborative networks. Record of meeting and strategic decisions on partnership and collaboration options Agreements and action plans for collaboration</p>
<p>Success Indicators: Agreements with one or more third sector / collaborative networks Evaluation outcomes from third sector Increased number of activities with collaborative partners from 2 to 5 pupil engagements</p>
<p>Steps to Achieve Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek advice / investigate potential options for collaborators 2. Investigate offer and assesses against current strategies and approaches 3. Meet with candidates and discuss integration with NCH recruitment profile 4. Work with collaborators to target potential WP students
<p>Time Frame / Milestone: September 2019 – December 2019: Seek advice and make contact with potential collaborators January 2020 – March 2020: Meet candidates and discuss fit with NCH’s specific objectives</p>

March 2020 – September 2020: Work with collaborators
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Activity 2.2:

Building Partnerships with Schools and Colleges

Objectives:

To increase the reach of the College's targeted WP recruitment and outreach activities by increasing collaborative and partnership work with target feeder and potential feeder schools and colleges.

To convert teachers, advisors or other key influences, who may have little knowledge about the potential opportunities for WP students offered by the College and its USP. To reach and provide information to key influencers to enable them to support and advise potential target students.

Short Term

10 schools and colleges have been identified and preliminary discussions held with senior staff to discuss partnership. Two schools are selected for formal partnership activity.

Information for teachers and school careers advisers has been provided for all partner schools and a presentation delivered to teachers/advisers in at least two schools or colleges. Outreach activities have been planned for potential adult students and delivered in at least one community setting.

Medium Term

All identified schools and colleges receive some outreach activity. Regular outreach activity takes place with schools identified as formal partners across three-year groups.

Information sessions for teachers and advisers take place in at least five partner schools. Community based outreach activity is delivered in at least three settings. Information for parents has been developed and tested with focus group(s) at partner schools.

Long Term

Formal partnerships with schools increase - the number will depend upon school willingness to participate. Outreach activity takes place across at least three-year groups, more than once annually.

An annual teacher and adviser day takes place at the College and is attended by staff from a wide range of schools, particularly partner schools. Individual school CPD sessions continue to take place on request. The College attends community events in a range of locations to target parents and potential adult students. Drop-in visit days/evenings with information sessions for adults/parents take place at least three times a year.

Theory of Change:

Assumption: Current outreach relationships with schools and colleges could be expanded and deepened to increase outreach; better reach and engagement with more potential students.

Gathering intelligence about potential schools – based on student cohort

Leads to

Expansion and reach of outreach activities

Leads to

Reaching an increased number of target students

Leads to

Increase in applications and registrations from target students

Implementation Measures:

Increased list of potential target and feeder schools

Record of changes to outreach activity and approach to incorporate new target schools

Record of progression from partner schools

Evaluation/ feedback from target schools – teacher and SLT surveys and interviews.

Success Indicators:

Targeting of 10-15 new schools during 2019-20

Record of increased outreach engagements as per outreach and action plan targets

Record of increased rate of applications from targeted schools against 2018-19 application cycle

Positive survey/ interview feedback; informs activity development.

Steps to Achieve Objectives:

1. Access and collate relevant data about local school context and rank potential schools on the basis of distance, outcomes and WP indicators
2. Revise existing outreach approach to include new schools
3. Liaise with schools for internal targeting of potential students on the basis of subject choice / academic attainment
4. Revise outreach approach and activities to include new schools
5. Implement evaluation surveys and feedback opportunities (meetings, interviews, focus groups)

Time Frame / Milestone:

September 2019- December 2019: Collect intelligence about potential schools
 January 2020 – March 2020: Make contact and build relationship with most promising feeder schools and arrange for integration into outreach approach
 April 2020 – September 2020: Incorporate schools into outreach strategy/ evaluate.

3. STRATEGIC AIM – EFFECTIVE ACTIVITIES WITH TARGET GROUPS

Aim: To deliver a range of progressive, impactful and increasingly collaborative outreach activities with target learners and collaborators.

Activity 3.1:

Enhancing communications and provision of information
 (for different target groups and age groups)

Objectives:

To ensure that all marketing and communication material intended for target groups are tailored to that particular audience for maximum impact and reach. To tailor our marketing message to reflect the specific needs and requirements of these groups.

Short Term

Communications in all formats for use in outreach work have been assessed and redesigned as necessary. Specific information is produced for different age ranges and target groups.

Medium Term

New information for outreach is in use in schools and colleges and for other target groups. The marketing and communications strategy aligns with Access and Participation principles.

Long Term

Outreach information in all formats is updated on an annual basis.

Theory of Change:

Assumptions: The USP of the College presents particular challenges in approaching and recruiting WP students – consequently there is less brand awareness of the College and the potential for this student group

Increased rationalisation and targeting of communication for a broader range of students

Leads to

Increased brand awareness amongst WP student cohorts

Leads to

Increased consideration and relevance for WP students

Leads to

Increased rate of applications from this student group

Implementation Measures:

Document review of current marketing mix / materials

Report of focus group outcomes

New marketing materials / strategy

Success Indicators:

Focus group outcomes discussing the impact of the College’s communications (staff and students)

New communications / marketing materials and recruitment strategy

Increased applications from POLAR 4, Quintile 1 students, from 9 to 15

Steps to Achieve Objectives:

1. Review existing marketing and communication materials in the context of appeal to target students
2. Review marketing material from key competitors to assess their communication strategy and appeal to target students
3. Focus group / market research to test effectiveness of communication for this student cohort – receive feedback
4. Develop new communication strategy

Time Frame / Milestone:

September 2019- December 2019: Review existing marketing materials / marketing strategy – Gather marketing material from competitors to assess strategy – focus group with potential students

January 2020 – March 2020: Review focus group outcomes and marketing review and devise marketing response

April 2020 – Launch of new marketing materials / approach

Activity 3.2:

Delivery of an evidence-based framework of outreach activity, while continuing to develop more impactful activities for target learners in collaboration with key stakeholders (e.g. schools)

Objectives:

To increase the range and diversity of the College’s outreach provision to expand the engagement of target students who we can reach and impact in terms of choosing HE routes, and specifically routes to the College.

Short Term

The existing outreach offer has been reviewed and updated with additional activity including for younger students (from Y9). A training programme is in place for student ambassadors, incorporating Access and Participation principles and issues.

Medium Term

Existing schools are offered new or additional outreach activity. At least 10 new schools are receiving outreach activity. Identified partner schools receive appropriate outreach activity within at least three year groups.

Long Term

An enhanced, evidence-based 'menu' of activities has been designed and produced, with related activity, programmes and resources, and is in use. Partner schools receive a programme of appropriate activity which builds over the school year.

Theory of Change:

Assumption: Current outreach approach reaches a limited range of potential target students. An expansion of the range and type of activities will engage more target students. Greater engagement and different types of outreach activity will be more impactful

Leads to

Reaching and impacting more target students and setting them on a HE pathway

Leads to

Increase in applications from target students who may not have considered HE, or the College, before

Implementation Measures:

Document detailing new activities

Delivery plan and resources for new activities

Record of expanded delivery

Record of new groups of WP students incorporated into outreach mix

Evaluation measures for activities, including pre- and post-event surveys from students, ambassadors and teachers; focus groups with target students and teachers. Surveys include a range of indicators exploring reaction, attitude, behaviour and impact to HE experiences and in relation to future intentions.

Success Indicators:

Increase in range of school years that students engaged with from current Y12-13 to Y9-11

Record of increased portfolio of outreach activities available to staff across the College

Increase in applications of POLAR 4, Quintile 1, from 9 to 15 students.

Steps to Achieve Objectives:

1. Audit existing outreach provision
2. Liaise with colleagues and collaborators / review other institutions' outreach offer to increase portfolio of activities
3. Work with outreach staff to develop and integrate new activities, including evaluation measures from the outset.

Time Frame / Milestone:

September 2019- January 2020: Review existing outreach portfolio - Gather intelligence from other institutions to identify other potential outreach activities / target groups
 January 2020 – April 2020: Develop new interventions / target groups / liaise with target schools
 April 2020 – Roll out new interventions / approaches

Activity 3.3:

Provision of intensive support to targeted learners

Objectives:

To work with specifically targeted learners with the potential and interest to progress into the College and provide them with specific and individual support to achieve this outcome.

Short Term

Systems are agreed with two formally partnered schools for the selection of a limited number of students with high potential from target groups, and for the setting up, delivery and monitoring of activity for them via an agreed programme. Parents are involved from the outset.

Medium Term

A programme for selected students is in place, to be agreed with schools. This may include mentoring, study support, student challenges, employer engagement, focused support around applications, and residential activity. Student progress, attainment and destinations are tracked.

Long Term

A rolling programme of intensive activity is in place, as a new group starts each year. Attitudinal change and confidence among selected students, with increased progression to higher education, and specifically to the College.

Theory of Change:

Assumption: Some students with the academic potential and potential interest in the College do not progress because they lack confidence or other resources required to achieve their potential grades or to progress into the College.

Individual work with these students results in a responsive programme that can develop their personal attributes

Leads to

Potential students developing required skills and attributes to achieve their academic potential

Leads to relationship between the College and these students

Leads to increased likelihood of their applying and being successful at the College

Implementation Measures:

Agree systems with two partner schools to target specific students and engage them in a targeted programme

Programme components developed and delivered

Suitable potential students targeted and selected

Programme delivered

Evaluation measures for activities, including pre- and post-event surveys from students, ambassadors and teachers; focus groups with target students and teachers. Surveys include a range of indicators exploring reaction, attitude, behaviour and impact to HE experiences and in relation to future intentions.

Success Indicators:

Increase in students engaged in this way from 0 to 20 in year 1, 30 in year 2.

Pre-post measures via self-report questionnaire assessing attitudinal / confidence / expectations in terms of progression to the College

Proportion of all participating students applying to the College - 10%

Proportion of all participating students applying to HE - 30%

Outreach Specific Success Indicators / Evaluation Measures (Please see Theory of Change Framework for Outreach Activity in Outreach Strategy and Action Plan 2019-20):

Raising aspirations / expectations and HE awareness:

- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor attitudinal and knowledge changes.*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*

Access Focused Activities (General):

- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor changes in attitudes and expectations to HE progression generally and progressing into NCH specifically.*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*
- *Focus groups with students and potential students to gain feedback on impact*

Access Focused Activities (On-Campus):

- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor attitudinal and knowledge changes*
- *Focus groups with students and potential students to gain feedback on impact*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*

Learner-Focused Activities (Use of Student Ambassadors):

- *Noting the risks of negative impact on the relational nature of these activities, evaluation will be primarily qualitative – via focus groups / individual interviews with both participants and Student Ambassadors to understand more about the forms of impact.*
- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor attitudinal and knowledge changes*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*
- *Collection of data on use of social media and mentoring platform to understand patterns of engagement and correlate with application outcomes.*

Learner-Focused Activities (Intensive, Repeated Experiences):

- *Focus groups / individual interviews with both participants and Student Ambassadors to understand more about the forms of impact.*
- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor attitudinal and knowledge changes*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*
- *Collection of data on use of social media and mentoring platform to understand patterns of engagement and correlate with application outcomes.*

Enabling Environment (Partnerships):

- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor attitudinal and knowledge changes*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*

Enabling Environment (Engaging Key Influencers):

- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor attitudinal and knowledge changes*
- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess changes and development*
- *Semi-structured interview with a small sample of influencers*
- *Participant questionnaire to include question about key advisors*

Enabling Environment (Contextual Admissions Policies):

- *Centrally recording contextual admissions offers – and using application and enrolment monitoring to assess impact on application and application outcomes with a particular focus on key WP groups.*

Enabling Environment (Collaborative Networks):

- *Application and enrolment monitoring to assess impact on application and application outcomes with a particular focus on key WP groups where we can establish interaction with collaborative networks.*

Affordability Advice and Guidance:

- *Pre-post questionnaire design to monitor self-reported attitudinal and knowledge changes*
- *Annual focus group with students in receipt of NCH financial support to assess experienced impact of provision.*
- *Use of OfS Financial Support Evaluation Tool – Initially as indicative and once student numbers are large enough to have statistical significance as a robust monitoring tool.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Application, enrolment, retention and outcomes monitoring to assess changes and development</i> <p>Achievement / Attainment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monitoring KS benchmarks in partner schools. Where possible we will request equivalent data from a non-participation group to support a quasi-trial design.</i> <p>Retention and Success Monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Annual review of student retention and success data with a particular focus on all WP student groups.</i>
<p>Steps to Achieve Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegate responsibility for developing programme to NCH staff and establish collaborative partnership with staff in participating schools 2. Agree targeting criteria with school staff 3. Target and recruit WP students meeting the criteria (pre-questionnaire) 4. Work with students and deliver programme across cycle 5. End of year (post-questionnaire) 6. Review outcomes for formative review of next round of activity
<p>Time Frame / Milestone:</p> <p>September 2019- January 2020: Liaise with schools to establish foundations for programme / targeting criteria / content of programme</p> <p>January 2020 – April 2020: Develop new programme / begin to engage students</p> <p>September 2020 – (Pre-questionnaire) Begin programme</p> <p>July 2021 – End programme (Post- questionnaire)</p>

4. STRATEGIC AIM – REDUCING BARRIERS TO ADMISSION

Aim: To reduce prior attainment (qualifications) as a potential barrier to admission, which is more likely experienced by target learners due to prior disadvantage. This acknowledges that GCSE/ A-level grades are not always an effective predictor of success in higher education, particularly where disadvantage is experienced; and that learners can be better assessed through a rounded consideration of their context, other achievements and skills, as a forward-looking measure of potential.

Activity 4.1:

Explore and develop Contextual Admissions Process

Activity:

Assess the extent to which Admissions and Recruitment policies include consideration of Access and Participation. Investigate models of Contextual Admissions, including consulting with similar providers, benchmarked institutions or partner organisations, and make changes accordingly.

Objectives:

To mitigate downstream education disadvantage experienced by some target students by acknowledging the challenges they face and the potential they offer via a reduced grade offer where appropriate. To develop a robust, consistent and fair way of assigning contextual offers.

Short Term

The institutional Admissions and Recruitment policies are reframed to include Access and Participation principles. A framework for making contextual offers to some students has been developed. Alternative qualifications for entry are under consideration.

Medium Term

In addition to academic attainment, the educational and social context of applicants is considered on an individual basis and alternative offers and confirmations have been made. Partner schools are involved in highlighting potential. Alternative qualifications and/ or experience are identified for entry to specified courses.

Long Term

Contextually based offers are routinely made to appropriate applicants. Alternative Level 3 qualifications and routes are built into the admissions system. A special entry pathway into the

College has been developed for students with potential and is available to partner schools. Some applicants are made offers based on equivalent or alternative qualifications / experience.
<p>Theory of Change: Assumption: Current admissions practices may not mitigate challenges experienced by some target students. A more nuanced admissions process could support target students <i>Leading to</i> More intensive consideration of applications from target students – including consideration of contextual offers <i>Leading to</i> Increases in the success rate of target students and increases in offer accepts</p>
<p>Implementation Measures: Report collating current thinking about HE admissions (e.g. SPA and OfS guidance on the use of contextual offers) Report on approaches by similar providers towards WP students in Admissions process Revision of current admissions process / model</p>
<p>Success Indicators: Pre- change verses post-change analysis of offers and accepts for WP students Monitor outcomes in terms of progression into the College Monitor academic progression of students in receipt of contextual offer</p>
<p>Steps to Achieve Objectives: 1. Audit current admissions process 2. Analyse current application data to look for patterns suggesting that WP students are less likely to get / accept an offer / meet conditions of offer and model new process accordingly. 3. Roll out revised admissions strategy and approach – potentially with contextual offers 4. Monitor impact of changes</p>
<p>Time Frame / Milestone: September 2019- December 2019: Review current admissions process / application data – Gather published advice about contextual admissions – Liaise with comparator institutions to learn from their processes / experience. January 2020 – May 2020: Develop and model new admissions process approach. September 2020 – Role out new interventions / approaches</p>

Title: Evaluation Strategy & Action Plan					
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Version number	Date approved	Date published	Author	Location	Proposed next review date
1.0	May 2019	October 2019	Executive Dean	Academic Handbook, Widening Access and Participation	N/A