

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2022/23 – 2024/25

Institutions are required to submit information under each of the headings below. Please see the guidance notes for help in completing this return.

1.1 Please provide a high-level outline of your institution’s Widening Participation policy in Higher Education and how this fits in with the institution’s strategic direction.

Lifelong learning and addressing social inclusion by providing progression for the whole community is central to the vision of government policy in the Further Education Means Success strategy, Higher Education Graduation to Success and the widening participation in higher education strategy Access to Success. It is also central to the Programme for Government with population outcomes aspiring to a more equal society and giving our children and young people the best start in life. SERC’s commitment to addressing these strategies and widening access and participation is embedded within the College Development Plan (CDP) 2021/22 with a detailed analysis of the needs of our community and reflects a revised approach to widening access introduced in 2017/18.

In 2017/18 SERC adapted a more structured approach to engaging with economically inactive individuals and community engagement generally, in keeping with its commitments under Widening Participation. It is acknowledged engagement processes are labour intensive and take time to grow the numbers of those re-entering education but the potential short and long-term impact on individuals can be significant and life-altering. The below table offers a snapshot of some of the issues within the SERC catchment area.



It is also acknowledged that barriers to individuals entering education could not be overcome by SERC alone and that flexibility in delivery was of essence if any initiative were to succeed.

SERC approaches widening access through a series of Community Based initiatives and a supportive Curriculum Planning process. While the overall direction is maintained the approach has been refocused to meet the demands of post-covid widening access and delivery. The new tools developed and the approach taken are considered as part of the 2019/20 review of activities.

1 Strategic approach to Community Planning

As an active participant within new Community Planning Partnerships and their subgroups, we were able to work with our partners on a wider statutory, economic and community basis to address barriers and to enhance understanding of further education and our social inclusion agenda and further promote the offering available for individuals in deprived communities and increase awareness of education opportunity. Moreover, we applied to join various interagency fora, attended community events met with community leaders, identified gatekeepers, altered opening times of satellite campuses to accommodate and facilitate community volunteers. SERC has invested extensively in this programme allocating significant staff time to developing and embedding this approach. During 2019/20 much of the activity continued remotely and this helped to maintain contact. This process is continuing despite the fall in overall HE additional fee levels.

These approaches have resulted in a strong Access approach with a suite of programmes from restarting education through to university access provision.

The majority of SERC's work in widening access is through opening routes towards HE. These routes start at Level 1/2 with Restart and Restart plus leading to Access. This provides a measured and managed individual development route the majority of whom have no qualification. The appetite for this progression remains strong and Restart programmes in 2019/2020 restart programmes were delivered 3 out centres including Atlas Women's Centre, Westwind's Primary School, Conway Mill as well as satellite campuses of Ballynahinch and Newcastle. The impact of COVID-19 and move to online learning affected these learners adversely and additional IT support was required to ensure outcomes and retention levels were retained at previous levels.

In June 2020, the Community Foundation Civic Innovation Programme provided Newry, Mourne and Down Community Planning Partnership a budget of £5,000 to complete a prototype exercise to examine the needs of hard-to-reach unemployed men. SERC, as a member of the community planning partnership board, contributed to this civic engagement project. The results from the findings highlighted the need for male only training along with training to comprise a combination of IT skills, English, CV writing, interview preparation and careers support. Going forward; these findings will form the evidence base required to support strategic planning discussions and funding proposals for future projects targeting males.

The lessons learned through COVID-19 lockdown were utilised in planning for Steps to Education project for 2021/22. The Pathfinders drop-in facility which had been launched pre-covid as a keeping in touch initiative for prospective students moved online and a virtual community engagement project grew, as detailed in table below. It is hoped that the use of online and social media will provide further avenues of possible connections with hard-to-reach groups.

'Returning to Education' Webinars

A series of webinars were held for members of the public who were considering returning to education. The adult education team in conjunction with community engagement and careers, delivered these live webinars over a number of months using the online platform

of Microsoft Teams. Groups in areas of deprivation were targeted and encouraged to join upcoming webinars.

The 'Returning to Education' webinars provided an effective method of engagement with the public during COVID-19. Online webinars will continue to be used as a tool for engagement in promoting adult education.

Newcastle Engagement

With the opening of 'Little SERC' in October 2020 contact was made with voluntary, statutory and community organisations in the area promoting our newly built creche facility and the adult returner courses on offer at SERC Newcastle. As face-to-face engagement was not possible during this period engagement moved online. A virtual event was held for key stakeholders in the area and in attendance were organisations who work in areas of deprivation supporting under-represented groups.

2 Supportive Curriculum Planning process

The strong community-based widening access approach is reflected in the 2022/23 Curriculum Plan with a focus on returners to education a key theme. The Curriculum Plan inevitably works within the current economic climate and the challenges that this brings but STEM and priority skills are prioritised and demonstrates a continued commitment to upskill, develop and provide progression for under-represented groups and particularly those in areas designated as deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 within the SERC catchment area. SERC also seeks to expand STEAM areas (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) to extend the employability and academic opportunities available. Significant investment has been made in extending flexibility particularly with the use of technology enhanced learning. In March 2020, ETI noted of the science provision:

The outstanding practice in planning for learning is predicated on a comprehensive knowledge of the students' levels of prior attainment and experience. (See Evidence 1A)

Delivering remotely was significantly enhanced during the pandemic when online delivery supported by innovative use of learning technology was enhanced and quickly became a strength. (See Evidence 1B)

1.2 What is your view of the success record of your institution in relation to recruitment, retention and progression for Widening Participation students?

For the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 SERC aimed to:

- Provide appropriate support for those within the SERC catchment who fall within the Access to Success target groups to progress in the long-term towards higher education;
- Respond to the changing needs of the target groups through review and evaluation of strategies and data; and
- Continue to promote suitable progression routes towards higher education

Between 2022/23 and 2024/25 SERC aim to meet the four-year average trend as provided by DfE below (section 1.3a) and enrol in higher education:

9% or 134 enrolments from MDM Quintile 1

40% or 664 enrolments from adult returners

9% or 100 enrolments from students with a disability

22 students in receipt of DSA
15 enrolments from students who have a Care Experience
26 young male students in MDM Quintile 1
The position for the year 2019/20 is:

9% or 142 enrolments from MDM Quintile 1
51% or 815 enrolments from adult returners
5% or 79 enrolments from students with a disability
19 enrolments from students who have a Care Experience
23 young male students in MDM Q1

Recruitment, Retention and Progression within the Target Groups

The position for 2019/20 reflects SERC's catchment for the target groups as measured within the most recent census and is expressed as a percentage.

Recruitment three-year average from 2017-2020 for deprivation areas Q1 and Q2 has stayed stable at 26.3%. The SERC approach to WAPP through the development of Access and Restart opportunities for adult returners has shown a significant increase in PT HE recruitment of 28% 2017. The total number of adult returners growing from 613 to 815 during the period. The number of FT HE adult returners remained stable at 3% of total. The demand for PT HE study for adult returners is reflected in curriculum planning to suit this group of learners particularly within key STEM areas including engineering, science and health and social care.

Retention of these groups was strong with retention of 95% and achievement of 92%.

Recruitment of those claiming DSA and self-declaring declined to 4.9% in 2019-20 compared to 7.5% in 2018-19. Encouraging students to declare continues to be a focus within admission and learning support processes. Pre-entry advice and guidance sessions as well as online and face-to-face events emphasise the importance of self-declaration to assist in gaining positive learning outcomes. The processes have been reviewed with early intervention and signposting services and the co-ordination of admissions and pastoral care and support with tutors and students has produced a more streamlined and timely approach. The effectiveness of the support has been acknowledged by ETI in recent review activity (ETI June 2020). Retention reflected the College benchmarks. Ensuring that students are supported with continue to be a specific focus and close monitoring by the College.

The recruitment, retention and support of students with Care Experience (CE) onto HE programmes has continued to grow. In 2017/18 ten CE students were recruited and 9 retained all of whom were successful and progressing to further study or employment. This has grown again to a recruitment of 19 CE students and with again high retention and progression rates of 90%. This aspect of provision is closely aligned to the CDP with careful tracking mechanisms and close agency links to provide support.

Of note is the impact of bursaries on retention of target groups. SERC provided a 10% fee bursary to 131 students in 2019/20. The feedback from students was that they valued this payment and while it may seem small to the College it was of importance. In light of this SERC will continue to offer bursaries to this economically challenged group. The bursary increased in importance with the financial uncertainties faced by students during the COVID restrictions.

Progression from the target groups remains strong for WAPP groups on HE programmes. The results of the graduate outcomes survey should provide clearer evidence but HE student satisfaction rates remain at 95%.

The majority of SERC's work in widening access is through opening routes towards HE. These routes start at Level 1/2 with Restart and Restart plus leading to Access. This provides a measured and managed individual development route the majority of whom have no qualification. The appetite for this progression remains strong and Restart programmes in 2019/20 continued to be held across the SERC catchment with engagement from Glenward, Ards, Redburn Loughview, Clanrye and Sally Gardens. Outcomes continued to improve with achievement rates in Restart of 95% from retention of 82%. Within the full Access suite of programmes the progression to QUB, Ulster University and SERC within the competitive programme areas of Social Work, Nursing, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Health and Care continues to be strong. In 2019/20 retention in Access provision was 97% with achievement of 100%.

In 2020/21 the Access provision with QUB was revalidated with the aim of further alignment to health, science, care and legal pathways. The validation of the provision by QUB is important to aspiring Access students.

The recruitment and retention of Young Males from Q1 remains a challenge. The Steps to Education (see Appendix A Part 2) initiative is focused on developing partnerships with hard-to-reach community leaderships. Community outreach is focused on Q1 and Q2 postcodes within Ards, Lisburn and Down District catchment. The engagement of adult returners and Young Females is strong but Young Males continue to be difficult to attract. The community engagement strategy has, however, been extended and digitised due to pandemic restrictions and links are strong. (See Community engagement reports at **Evidence 1C**)

The College will continue to invest in this area with a focus on developing relevant communication and support. The lessons learned through COVID-19 lockdown will be utilised in planning for Steps to Education project for 2021/22. A Pathfinders drop-in facility was launched in January 2020 as a keeping in touch initiative for prospective students. In March 2020 with lockdown the provision was moved online and a virtual community engagement project grew. The recent promotion of Restart Lite resulted in the commencement of 2 classes, one in Lisburn and the other in Downpatrick. Engagement work is still ongoing and planning meetings with the Adult Education Team will help direct engagement activity for September 2021 recruitment. The promotional video has been completed and is being sent to all applicants and also to community partners and enquiries. There are currently 247 applications with a definite uptake in younger applicants, re-evaluating their options due to redundancy & furlough. With so many applications for Lisburn (78) an Award has been developed in Ballynahinch following interest from Restart and Restart Plus students. Any students from the Ballynahinch & hinterland will be offered a place in Ballynahinch to relieve the pressure for space in Lisburn as well as raise the profile of SERC in Ballynahinch.

1.3 Please outline the Widening Participation aims, objectives and targets for the next 3 years for your institution.

You will need to provide details on key target groups within Access to Success, anticipated expenditure and the measures of success – your response should include a description of your approach to targeting, as well as the areas targeted for improvement over the next 3 years. You may wish to add to the projection tables below to report on your own institution's specified target groups if not already included in Access to Success.

For the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 SERC aims to:

- Provide appropriate support for those within the SERC catchment area who fall within the Access to Success target groups to progress in the long-term towards higher education;
- Respond to the changing needs of the target groups through review and evaluation of strategies and data; and
- Continue to promote suitable progression routes towards higher education.

Approach to Targeting

Targets are based on the sector information pre-populated on this plan by DfE showing the four-year trend. They form the basis of the targets going forward. SERC does not believe that the current restrictions arising from COVID-19 will impact significantly on targets going forward as contingency measures have been put in place including development of greater use of social media for outreach.

The overall numbers of Higher Education enrolments both part and full-time is continuing to decline and the MaSN but the College will continue to meet the four-year trend data and monitor the percentages within the target groups.

Targets

Between 2022/23 and 2023/24 SERC will aim to enrol in higher education:

- 9% or 134 enrolments from MDM Quintile 1
- 40% or 684 enrolments from adult returners
- 9% or 88 enrolments from students with a disability
- 22 students in receipt of DSA
- 15 enrolments from students who have a Care Experience
- 26 young male students in MDM Quintile 1

1.3 (a) TARGETS

You will note that the tables numbered (i) to (vi) below have been prepopulated with your institution's average enrolment for the last 3 years. You are now required to insert numerical targets for each of the groups identified across the **3 years 2022/23 – 2024/25**. These groups are regarded as being underrepresented in Access to Success.

- (i) Group: **MDM Quintile 1**
Outcome: **To increase participation of those from NI MDM Q1**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
134			134	134

- (ii) Group: **Students with a Disability**
Outcome: **To increase the number of students who declare a disability**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
88			100	100

- (iii) Group: **Students with a Disability**

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Outcome: **To increase the number of students in receipt of DSA**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
XX			22	22

(iv) Group: **Young Males from Quintile 1**

Outcome: **To increase participation² of young males from NI MDM Quintile 1**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
26			26	26

(v) Group: **Adult Learners**

Outcome: **To increase the number of adult learners participating in HE**

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2017- 2020)	Targets/Outcome			
4 Year Average	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
684			684	684

As HESA data is largely incomplete for the following area, the figure that you provided in a previous WAPP for 2016/17 has been inserted as a base line.

(vi) Group: **Number of Care Experienced enrolments**

Outcome: **To increase the number of enrolments for those from a care background**

BASE YEAR	Targets/Outcome			
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		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Not available	Number	15	15	15

1.3(b) The following tables have been provided for you to now insert any other ‘**specific**’ institutional targets. These may be different to those groups identified in 1.3(a) or may relate to targets other than enrolments. In all cases you will need to identify the group and highlight what the target outcome will be e.g., outreach, retention etc.

- (i)

Group:	
Outcome:	

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Number			
	Percentage			

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(ii)

Group:	
Outcome:	

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Number			
	Percentage			

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(iii)

Group:
Outcome:

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	Number			
	Percentage			

Please now outline the estimated 'direct' expenditure required to meet the identified objectives in the table below. You may wish to refer to Part 2 of the guidance notes in "How to Complete your Widening Access and Participation Plan" for a definition of direct spend. Whilst we appreciate that figures for later years are only indicative, we do require estimations inserted in each of the categories.

Activity	Estimated Spend 2022/23 (£)	Estimated Spend 2023/24 (£)	Estimated Spend 2024/25 (£)

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Bursaries	36237	36237	36237
Scholarships	--	--	-
Other financial Support	--	--	-
Outreach	76199	76199	76199
Retention	1500	1500	1500
Research Activity	--	--	-
Staffing/ Administration	5500	5500	5500
TOTAL	119436	119436	119436

1.4 List below the key programmes/projects financed from additional student fees that will contribute towards your institution's performance.

(Please refer to the appropriate section of the guidance notes before completing.)

Outreach activity

1. Returning Adults - pre-entry Access and Restart plus

The University Access provision has been very successful. The retention and achievement figures and student feedback are strong (Restart retention 82% achievement 95%; Access retention 97% achievement 95%). The provision is delivered in hard-to-reach areas such as Westwinds, Conway and Newcastle. The programme was rewritten and rebranded in 2015 with the aim of providing the key skills in literacy, numeracy, science, social science and study skills necessary for progression. It was particularly useful in attracting women returners who have proven difficult to enrol on a STEM heavy HE curriculum. The success has helped to increase the number of returning adults into HE.

It has been more challenging to attract males into the programmes. The aim is to continue to extend and embed the provision to increase the level of male participants especially in Q1 and Q2 and provide further support for progression. An enhanced engagement strategy began in 2018/19 through the Community Planning Partnerships in the SERC area and has continued to develop. The recent restriction of face-to-face activity refocused the Community Hub initiative where activities moved on-line using a range of platforms. This initiative will continue along with continued planning for joint engagement activities aimed at increasing the level of male participants especially in Q1. The Restart Plus programme will continue to be developed to meet the needs of this group.

The additional fee money will be used to support and enhance the learning experience of these groups with relevant activities including visits and guest speakers.

A new initiative is the provision of a creche in Newcastle to provide childcare support for learners. This opened in October 2019 and despite the restrictions has proven to be a valuable addition to reducing barriers to education. While additional fee money will not be used in its support it illustrates the continued enhancement of facilities for adult returners.

2. Steps to Education

Analysis of the participation of adult returners, those with Q1 and Q2 postcodes and young males from Q1 has indicated enrolments largely in line with the HE sector slightly lower than would be expected within Ards, Lisburn and Down District catchment.

SERC introduced an initiative in 2014/15 to raise awareness and maintain enrolments within higher education. The building of awareness through enrolment on entry to Access and Access has developed greater involvement from hard-to-reach communities.

SERC holds or participate in a range community-based activities along with continuous community contact throughout the year. A number of these activities are led by Community Planning Partners such as the Councils, Health Trusts and Community Voluntary Sector organisations. These will target adult returners and young men in the catchment areas. They highlight range of educational opportunities and financial support available to the target groups. It includes information on the comprehensive range of support services that SERC can offer and provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and obtain further information and for those who decide to progress to prepare individual development plans. It will be supported by targeted marketing to Q1 and Q2 postcodes within the SERC catchment area including the enhanced use of social media.

Continuity is provided through the support of Community Development Officers. During lockdown the approach continued on-line and while this ensured that contact remained with our colleagues in the community the impact was less tangible. A record of activities can be found in **Evidence 1C**. SERC will continue to develop this work within the opportunities provided during the current restrictions.

Research

The well-established self-evaluation review, student survey, market intelligence and GIS systems will continue to provide the information which can be used to populate the Kirkpatrick Model.

Retention

1. Getting the Edge – development of employability and enterprise skills

The project aims to introduce students to and develop competence in soft skills necessary to gain employment. Employers regularly report that graduates do not have the employability skills necessary within the workplace. Students within the WAPP groups tend to be at the greatest disadvantage. Research through the Curriculum Directorate has shown that many of the skills displayed by our students are

entrepreneurial. The employability skill opportunities have been added to this retention initiative.

As part of induction all full-time students undertake a competence-based employability award. Students complete either a City and Guilds Level 2 Employability or ILM Level 3 Leadership and Management award. The awards are delivered using a competence framework and activities are both practical and academic. Skills are developed through team building including presentations using media technology and by individual preparation which focuses on skills valuable in interviews and support preparing employment applications.

The entrepreneurial stream provides opportunities to develop business ideas and skills using project-based learning as the catalyst. Mentoring is provided through dedicated enterprise staff and industry mentors.

The project is reviewed annually and in addition to a dedicated two weeks to assist in embedding skills, a calendar of events is scheduled throughout the year to share best practice and provide skill reinforcement. This pedagogical strategy of project-based learning targets wider-skills highlighted in the NI Skills Barometer as lacking in graduates. The additional fees help to support the practical nature of the initiative and the development of learning materials and providing extra-curricular opportunities to implement newly acquired skills in a safe environment e.g., competitions and students cross-college sharing at such events as CAST, an interdisciplinary sharing of student project research and mentoring by industry.

2. Support of those with a Care Experience

Students with Care Experience have been identified as having multiple barriers to entering and continuing in education. The College identified that 4% of FT and PT students in FE are from a care background but very few progress to higher education. The College has continued to grow the numbers of students who do progress and aims to engage and support students to progress to higher education and those who are engaged in level 4-7 study.

In addition to the support already in place for children from a care background or former Looked After Children, the College works closely with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. This project has several elements which introduce both Care Experienced, their carers, social work team and other supporters to the educational pathways available in the College and the wider pastoral care and support available. The project commenced in 2018 with the 14-15 age group with a view to encouraging them continue with their education. There was a significant increase in 2019/20 of care experienced enrolments rising from 12 in 2018-19 to 19. This area has shown a steady increase in enrolments from this sector and the College will continue to work closely with local agencies to provide support and signposting.

1.5 Please provide a short summary of how your activities link to the key actions within Access to Success.

The activities listed target those groups which may be under-represented within the SERC catchment area and assist learners to progress ultimately to higher education. The support and guidance provided by the College are long-term measures to reduce barriers and raise aspiration and success across the target groups as defined by *Access to Success*. The projects have evolved over a number of years and provide greater development opportunities for progression to higher education but it may take many years for the target groups to reach this goal especially as the strategy is currently focusing on the hardest to reach. There has been a modest improvement particularly in recruitment for MDM Q1 and a sustained development in the number of adult learners. The activities aim to keep learners within the education process and support them as they progress through the system in a way that meets individual learner needs.

1.6 How do you plan to communicate information on the availability of financial and other assistance to students?

Student Finance Officers are on every campus and are the nominated source of information and advice for students on higher education fees and support mechanisms.

At application stage all students are informed as part of a finance briefing about bursaries and support. This is reinforced through subsequent parents' evenings in the year prior to the student commencing their course. All materials have been included in new online information sessions, including web-chats and webinars to supplement face-to-face activity as necessary.

At enrolment Student Finance Officers support students and encourage sharing of information through the SLC portal. Academic tutors are briefed on support mechanisms and encourage students to share information.

The College website and student handbook includes information about financial support and this is highlighted during induction and at key points in the year.

Information on bursaries and support is updated regularly and current and prospective students are reminded about financial support through regular finance clinics and at pastoral tutorials.

The Students' Union are briefed on fees and bursaries as they are set.

All students who share financial information and meet the set criteria automatically receive a bursary.

1.7 How do you plan to monitor progress against the targets and the achievement of outcomes?

The Governing Body through the Education Committee review quality and performance targets twice a year. The Annual Report for the Department for the Economy provides further oversight. The Engagement Update Reports and the College development Plan progress reports provide further detail. They are available at **Evidence 1C, D**.

1.8 Please provide an additional evaluation on how you think your institution is performing or provide us with relevant documents in line with section 1.8 of the guidance document.

(Full details on how to complete this section are in the guidance notes)

In order to ensure consistency across institutions we would ask that you use the Kirkpatrick Model for this exercise. The concept is that individual institutions will learn from this self-evaluation and obtain evidence to influence future widening participation activity and plans. You may evaluate the institution's widening participation activity as a whole or evaluate individual projects.

The following subheadings should help focus your response. The Department expects that most institutions will be able to evaluate widening participation activity to at least Level 3 (as below).

Level 1 Evaluation – Reactions

What participants thought and felt about the programme

The feedback from those students who have been involved in Restart, pre-Access and Access is overwhelmingly positive. There was a satisfaction level in excess of 90% for the majority of cohorts. (One cohort registered 89%) This has been consistent for three years since the introduction of the measurement. The reasons for this remain the support provided by staff, the flexibility of the programme and the achievement felt by participants.

The early support provided for adult returners and care experienced students is highly valued by these groups which brings achievement early in the programmes. The students firmly believe that they are treated equally, and this increases confidence and self-esteem.

Tracking the change in perceptions during the programme remains significant particularly in terms of feeling of belonging to the student body. The small group teaching and ease of access to the individual allocated personal tutor is valued throughout the programme but soon it is belonging to the larger student body that is valued.

The Student Governor acknowledges the approach taken within the Widening Access and Participation Plan. The Student Union continues to embrace with WAPP ethos through its contribution to the development and implementation of the 'Developing Well-Being and Resilience Framework' which provides targeted support.

Level 2 Evaluation - Learning

The resulting increase in knowledge or capability

89% of Access and restart students believe that they are learning skills that are of value in real life and 92% enjoy and are satisfied with the course. Student report that they feel confidence in progressing to next steps with 97% believing that tutors have helped them progress to the best of their ability. A significant proportion of students feel that they have currently reached their limit and want to take some time to absorb the skills. Others feel that they have achieved the skills they need for employment. Women with children still find the benefit system challenging in terms of progression especially to higher education. Appreciating the qualification as 'stand-alone' and economically relevant was strongest for those completing Foundation Degrees and they had the clearest route to employment.

The tracking of the Q1 and Q2 student attitudes are more challenging but the overall trends within the College show a high level of satisfaction and enjoyment across the programmes at 93% and 91% respectively. **See Evidence 1E 2019 20 DfE Big 14 student survey attached.**

Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer

Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application

Confidence was the word most used by participants when they evaluated their experience. The focus on gaining tangible skills as well as putting to rest fears over old academic areas such as Maths and English was valued. Gaining Maths and English was perceived as opening doors to employment as well as new programme routes. Resilience and time management were by-products of the programmes. More central was the development of digital skills and the support given was appreciated by students. The flexible support provided by tutors who were available through a range of mediums and times was felt to be key by students. The issue of age in transfer and progression to use skills was an issue for students at the beginning of study. There was concern that they were 'just too old' to learn and that no-one would take them seriously. The role of the tutors in providing guidance for progression overcame these concerns and by the end of the programme they ceased to be an issue.

Level 4 Evaluation- Results

Results- the effects resulting from performance

Progression rates for WAPP students were high. The University Access provision has been very successful. The retention and achievement figures and student feedback are strong (Restart retention 82% achievement 95%; Access retention 91% achievement 95%). Successful progression to competitive programmes such as nursing and allied health progression remains strong. The Access programme completed a successful revalidation with QUB to secure the provision.

The development of strong community links has led to the growth in Adult Returners and Care Experienced entrants. The overall satisfaction levels and the RAS figures point to the contribution made by the WAPP strategy.

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The challenges, particularly around attracting young males, remains central to the CDP. Development of resilience skills across the WAPP groups also remains a resourced strategy within the CDP.