



St Helens College



University Centre
St Helens

Access and Participation Plan 2019 - 2020



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1. Introduction

St Helens College merged with Knowsley Community College in December 2017 and is currently trading as SK College Group. University Centre St Helens is the branding name used to cover the higher education provision at both campuses.

Based in the heart of the Northwest, UCSH is in an ideal location with strong transport links and just 20–30 minutes from both Liverpool and Manchester city centres. The merger with Knowsley Community College, brings with it increased opportunities for local progression to higher education, along with increased specialist resources and staff expertise.

This commitment to the continued development of HE in St Helens and the growth of HE opportunities in Knowsley was identified as a key feature of the merger and welcomed by both the local and business communities to raise aspirations and levels of skill in each borough.

The College Group's Higher Education Strategy takes account of national policies relating to Widening Participation and articulates the College Group's plans for stimulating demand in HE, in what is a more student-led market, and to meet regional and local workforce development needs through a more innovative curriculum and a revised marketing approach. The Strategy also sets out a plan for maintaining the current success and satisfaction rates and increasing the emphasis on progression and employability.

The College Group's HE Access and Participation Plan is informed by its mission, which is to "transform lives through excellence in education and training." This relies on seamless progression opportunities being available to students who enter or return to education at any level to improve their life skills and employability prospects. The College Group works closely with employers and Universities to ensure currency and quality of its HE provision. This specifically includes close collaboration with the University of Chester, UCLan and Liverpool John Moores as validating Universities.

The (College Group's) Senior Leadership Team is fully committed to delivering and developing a responsive higher education portfolio to meet the needs of students and employers. The College Group has a long history of delivering high quality provision, evidenced in high student satisfaction, employer feedback, validating partners and QAA Review outcomes.

The Provision

The College Group Group's HE offer is primarily based at St Helens, with a small group of course at the Knowsley campus. The provision includes HNCs/ HNDs, Foundation Degrees and full BA Honours degrees, as well as a range of professional courses such as AAT.

Current Higher Education provision at the College Group consists of:

- 4 BA (Hons) degrees
- 6 FdA
- 5 FdSc
- 7 HNC/ D
- 2 BA (Hons) top-up
- 1 PGCE/ Cert Ed
- 3 HNC

The long term strategy for the College Group is to continue to grow its higher education provision and to manage this growth through a systematic review of the curriculum offer, through the identification of new opportunities aligned to skills gaps/ local skills needs and through a continued commitment to the concept and practice of widening participation.

Widening Participation

The College Group is committed to the concept and practice of widening participation. In this context, the priority of the College Group is to improve access and progression opportunities and to raise aspirations in such a way that anyone with the potential to benefit from participation in higher education, has the opportunity to do so.

Table 1 shows that around 50% of our HE intake comes from disadvantaged postcode areas. The College Group's local recruitment area includes elements of social and economic deprivation with participation in HE, numbers of graduates and HE cultural heritage lower than national averages. To address these situations, the College Group charges comparatively low tuition fees for all HE programmes, provides comprehensive academic and pastoral support, seamless progression from FE, flexible delivery and additional tuition in academic skills. The College Group also follows the principles of the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark to support Care Leavers into HE.

Table 1

17-18			% WP
		ALL LEARNERS (DISTINCT)	WIDENING PARTICIPATION ONLY
HEFC FUNDED		700	364
			52%
16-17			% WP
		ALL LEARNERS (DISTINCT)	WIDENING PARTICIPATION ONLY
HEFC FUNDED		764	371
			49%
15-16			% WP
		ALL LEARNERS (DISTINCT)	WIDENING PARTICIPATION ONLY
HEFC FUNDED		807	382
			47%

The College Group delivers its HE provision within a supportive student-centred environment which can be more appropriate to those students who might not

respond well to a larger university environment. These can be students from a more vocational education background who lack the academic confidence for traditional higher education, from backgrounds with no history of HE, adults returning to education and those in employment needing to balance study with work and other commitments.

The Widening Participation Group currently monitors the strategies put in place to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and makes recommendations to the HE Strategy Committee and Pricing Group based on its findings. From September 2018, a new committee, the 'Marketing, Recruitment & Widening Participation Working Group' will be convened to provide more detailed evaluation of the strategies employed. The Group will consider:

- long term impact and immediate goals
- activities and direct results
- focus of change
- who will be affected and how
- resource implications
- indicators to measure progress
- data collection
- potential barriers.

2. Financial support for students

All new full-time students entering higher education with the College Group in September 2019 will receive support towards study resources to the value of £400 to support the early phases of their studies. Dependent on subject area, this non-repayable bursary will take different forms. For example:

- Course-specific trips/ visits eg. Graphic Design; Theatre & Performance; Business
- Professional accreditation eg. Social Policy, Health & Housing
- Free access to courses to improve employability eg. Exercise, Health & Fitness
- Gaming laptops eg. Game Art Design

The usefulness of the enhancement grant is evaluated via the Induction Survey where 50% of new students in 2017/18 said that it influenced their decision to enroll on the degree programme.

HE students who face considerable financial difficulties can apply for support from the College Group's Access to Learning Fund. This is budgeted from the Student Opportunity Fund and is administered by the Student Finance, Welfare & Guidance Manager.

3. Access and student success measures

Recruitment

The College Group operates under the 'principles of fair admission', in relation to recruitment, selection and admission. Admissions:

- are transparent;
- enable the selection of students who are able to complete the programme as judged by their achievements and their potential;
- use assessment methods that are reliable and valid;
- minimise barriers for applicants;
- are carried out professionally in every respect and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes.

Students who progress from further education provision at the College Group remain a crucial target market for HE at UCSH. Work is underway to encourage and support Level 3 students to consider all HE opportunities and be fully aware of the Level 4 opportunities available at the College Group and beyond. The College Group recognises the need to provide comprehensive information and widen curriculum choices in order to encourage greater internal progression for students at Level 3 as currently many students choose to progress externally into HE or employment. In 2015/16, 10% of our Level 3 students progressed internally onto our HE provision; this increased to 11% 2016/17 and 20% in 2017/18. The College Group ambition for internal progression of Level 3 completers is 30%.

The Marketing department continually review their spend on activities aimed at increasing internal progression to higher education and make recommendations to the HE Strategy Group regarding the future direction of this area of work.

The College Group expects that the additional funding from the higher level fees will strengthen our work on progression and recruitment by improving the quality of information, resources and experience at Open Days and Information Events; increase involvement at North-West recruitment events and exhibitions; reimbursement for Student Ambassadors; and provision of Taster/ Discovery Days (eg. promotional materials, academic and administrative staff time and on facilities for events).

Table 2: HE enrolments by age group and mode of study

2015/16	Young (18 - 20yrs)	Mature (21 - 30yrs)	Very Mature (31+)
FULL TIME	167	140	54
PART TIME	132	234	107
2016/17	Young (18 - 20yrs)	Mature (21 - 30yrs)	Very Mature (31+)
FULL TIME	165	121	59
PART TIME	118	199	103
2017/18	Young (18 - 20yrs)	Mature (21 - 30yrs)	Very Mature (31+)
FULL TIME	229	106	61
PART TIME	109	163	99

Care Leavers

The College Group is committed to providing education opportunities to young people in care and care leavers. We aim to provide students with a safe and secure learning environment with outstanding facilities to help students to achieve their goals and aspirations. We recognise the importance of creating a solid network of support for students and our Pastoral Leaders (PALs) work with Personal and Academic Tutors to support Care Leavers throughout their time at the College Group. The PAL works with the young person's Tutor, Social Worker and Connexions PA to make sure they get the most out of their course. The Financial Adviser in Student Services also goes through a checklist of support to ensure individuals receive the maximum financial support that they are entitled to. Transition and progression support is also offered to students who are Care Leavers.

Disability and race

In the 2017/18 academic year, 8% of St Helens College Group's HE students indicated that they had a disability/ learning difficulty. However, according to HEFCE data (<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/coldspots/lq/>), only 1% of HE students in the

Liverpool City Region are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance. Similarly, 3% of the College Group's HE students indicated that they are of black or minority ethnic origin, and according to HEFCE data, 2% of HE students in the Liverpool City Region have indicated BME. As the College is in line with benchmarks, this is not an area specifically targeted for further investment from the higher level fees.

Mature and part-time students

The College Group is committed to attracting mature students either in employment, those choosing to look for a new career or returning to work after a period of absence. Our data shows that recruitment of students aged 21+ is buoyant and the College Group hopes to maintain this as fees increase, by delivering a targeted campaign to communities and employers within the region highlighting the benefits of higher education, and financial support available. This will be evaluated via the HE Data Working Group.

Collaborative outreach

The College Group is part of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The network is led by the University of Liverpool and includes a group of HEIs and FECs which provide HE level courses. The programme aims to support the Government's goals to:

- double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education (HE) by 2020
- increase by 20 per cent the number of students in HE from ethnic minority groups
- address the under-representation of young men from disadvantaged backgrounds in HE.

'Shaping Futures' is Merseyside's consortium for the OfS funded National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP). The programme has been established to raise student HE aspirations and progression rates within 25 targeted electoral wards in Liverpool City Region, where progression to HE is lower than expected given historic GCSE attainment patterns.

'Shaping Futures' provides impartial HE related activities and progression advice to target learners in 43 priority secondary schools and across partner FE / 6th Form Colleges. This is aligned to Liverpool City Region's Local Enterprise Partnership / Combined Authority economic priorities and is designed to complement and add value to the existing widening participation offers of the 12 'Shaping Futures' partner institutions.

For example, two 'Shaping Futures' projects which are adding value locally are: 'Through the Eyes of Boys', an intensive outreach project working to raise HE aspirations amongst young males from lower socio-economic groups; and a pilot programme of attendance at local community events to deliver HE aspiration messages (thereby expanding the scope of local HE outreach, by working together collectively as institutions under the umbrella of 'Shaping Futures').

The SK College Group expects that with the additional funding from the higher level fees, we will be able to complement the work of the network at a local level. This will include development of resources and activities in schools; identifying and responding to any gaps in engagement; and ensuring that schools and pupils are receiving the support and information they need to progress onto higher education.

The work delivered through the NCOP will complement the work being delivered through the access plan in ensuring that under-represented groups in need of support are included. Geographical areas not identified by the consortium and age ranges beyond those targeted through NCOP activities will be specifically targeted as follows:

- The production of a dedicated undergraduate prospectus aimed at schools and Colleges around the Northwest region. With the natural demographic of St Helens being deprived, under-represented groups will be reached. We have a distribution agreement with HEcom.
- The UCSH Marketing team attend a variety of local events such as Business Fairs and ComiCon to reach target groups.
- Examples of marketing campaigns based on current student progression success stories are available on the website.

Raising attainment

In order to support the raising of attainment of local students from under-represented groups, the following have been put in place, and will continue to be enhanced:

- All students who enrol with the College Group and do not have a GCSE in English or Maths at Grade C or above, are supported and funded in achieving this target (in line with ESFA conditions of funding).

In 2017/18, 582 students completed Maths GCSE at the St Helens campus (161 at the Knowsley campus) and 588 completed GCSE English (179 at the Knowsley campus).

- 14-16 Academy – the St Helens campus offers an opportunity for students currently in Year 9, to join full-time to complete Years 10 and 11. With a unique curriculum of GCSEs, industry sector pathways and valuable work experience, students gain comprehensive preparation for the world of work.

The second set of 14-16 Academy GCSE results in 2017 showed a 100% overall pass rate in vocational programmes including construction, engineering, health and social care and childcare. Performance in English GCSEs showed a 98% overall pass rate for English literature and English language (national average 71.9% and 65.7% respectively).

- A Level Academy - the A Level Academy at the St Helens campus offers over 19 A level subjects and three bespoke Professional Skills Programmes,

designed to maximise students' potential to enable them to progress to higher education.

- Annual Creative Arts taster sessions are coordinated by the UCSH Marketing team and are aimed at Level 3 students from other local Colleges, as well as our own. The Knowsley area has been specifically targeted from 2017 due to its high levels of deprivation, low attainment levels and lack of higher education progression opportunities (input target covered in RP).
- UCSH became a member of SCART last year (secondary school arts teachers network) in order to offer workshops and improve collaborative work between local teachers of secondary school-age pupils and our Degree Programme Leaders. This will take the form of UCSH offering campus visits and workshops to local teachers/ pupils and the display of degree-level student work on the SCART website.

Attainment raising outcome targets

Corporate Priorities and Targets for the College Group include:

- improve the attendance rate to 90% overall, including 85% attendance to English and maths classes;
- improve English and maths Basic Skills overall provision qualification achievement rates to 70% and ensure that all student groups are making "good or better" progress;
- improve overall GCSE English Language and maths 9-4 achievement rates to 30% and 25% respectively (16-18) and 55% and 54% respectively (19+);
- ensure that the A Level Academy provision has qualification achievement rates and value added scores above sector averages;
- ensure that the 14-16 Academy provision exceeds national averages in respect of progress measures.

Retention and success

At an individual level, the delivery of the HE provision reflects the type of student which the College Group attracts. In many cases, the students come from a more vocationally-oriented background and often lack the academic confidence to benefit fully from a more traditional university experience.

Retention (continuation and progression) at the St Helens campus has been consistently above 90% for the last three years (see Figure 1 below). However, at the Knowsley campus, retention shows a spiky profile based on a low student number count. For the current academic year, retention is currently at 97% at Knowsley and 96% at St Helens (March 2018).

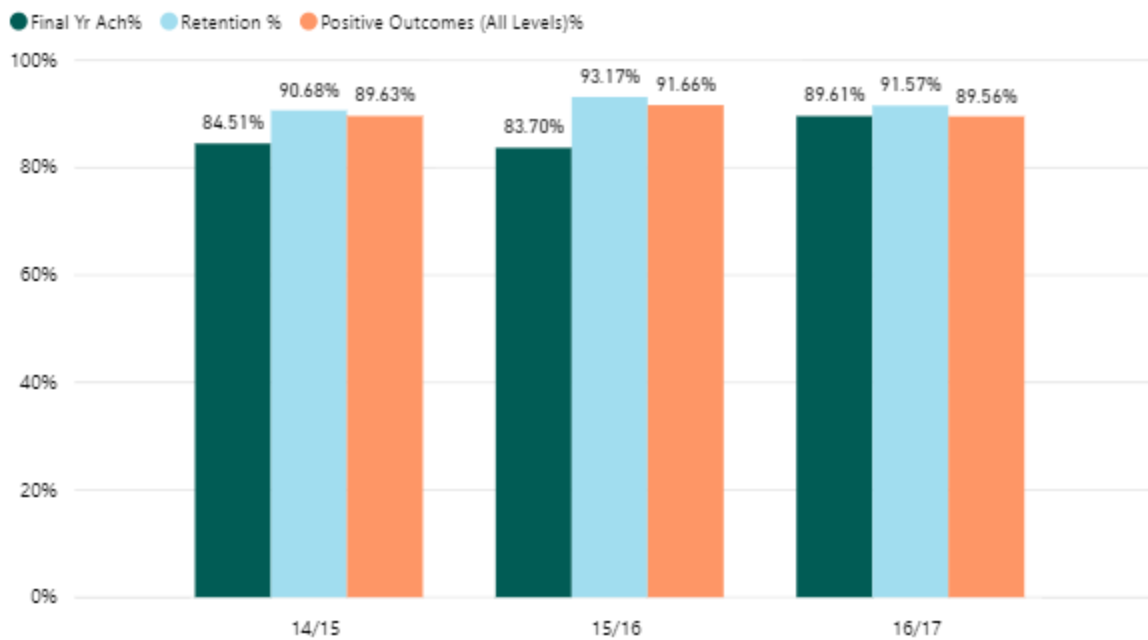


Figure 1 showing retention trends of St Helens campus HE students across the last 3 years. Final year achievement rates and positive outcomes* levels also shown.

* achieved, partially achieved or progressed to the next level

Data Table

AcYr	HEFCE Students in ILR	Positive Outcome	Leavers	Achieved	Final Yr Ach %	Ret %	Positive Outcome (All Levels) %
14/15	858	769	426	360	84.51%	90.68%	89.63%
15/16	791	725	405	339	83.70%	93.17%	91.66%
16/17	747	669	385	345	89.61%	91.57%	89.56%

Table 3 showing numbers of students included in the retention and achievement trends.

Final year achievements at St Helens were 85% and 84% in 14/15 and 15/16 respectively, but improved to 90% in 16/17. This is due to the impact of the previous three years focus on enhancing academic standards, opportunities for students, improvements in the HE culture and rigorous use of data management to inform decisions.

At the Knowsley campus, the three-year achievement trend is 96% (14/15), 100% (15/16) and 66% (16/17). The lower achievement rate at Knowsley in 2016/17 compared to St Helens is emphasised by the small cohort size of 37 students. Improving achievement rates at the Knowsley campus is a target in the merger action plan and aligned policies and procedures from the recruitment stage will ensure progressive positive impact on future student cohorts.

In terms of achievements, Table 4 shows that an increasing percentage of students from disadvantaged backgrounds are achieving their qualification. However, as this remains slightly below the percentage of students achieving overall, further work is targeted at supporting students as described below.

Table 4

ACADEMIC YEAR	OVERALL ACHIEVED	DISADVANTAGED POSTCODE AREA ACHIEVEMENTS
2014/15	82.33%	76.17%
2015/16	81.62%	77.78%
2016/17	85.32%	82.49%

To address this, the College Group has:

- Adopted a delivery model based around relatively small class sizes. The average class size for undergraduate study is 12, and this enables the tutor to differentiate the learning experience in accordance with the needs of the student;
- Provided extensive academic and pastoral tutorial support for all students. This support takes a number of forms but embraces all aspects of the learning experience as well as financial information and personal/ pastoral support.

In terms of achievements by students with a learning difficulty or disability, Table 5 shows a year-on-year reducing gap compared to the percentage of students not reporting a difficulty/ disability (15% to 6% to 2%).

Table 5

FUNDING YEAR	Difficulty/ Disability	Number in Planned End Year	ACH%
2014-15	N	427	82%
2014-15	Y	3	67%
2015-16	N	393	81%
2015-16	Y	15	87%
2016-17	N	371	85%
2016-17	Y	24	83%

To further develop this work, the College Group has:

- Invested in a learning support team and resources to assist students with specific needs. A wide range of support services exist within the College Group to provide both advice & guidance and specialist support to individuals and classes of students.

From 2018/19 the College Group plans to offer further academic study skills support in the form of a centralised module for degree students. This will also provide an aspirational experience for Level 3 students looking towards HE study and useful support for students working at Level 4 and above.

Additional learning support for students on Higher Education courses

The College Group is committed to supporting all its students including those on HE courses who have a learning difficulty and /or disability. The support is provided in line with the Student Finance England guidelines and the established values within Higher Education institutions across the country.

All HE students, including those with a disability and/ or learning difficulty can access the College Group-wide services ie. Learner Support, Finance & Welfare support, Health & Wellbeing support and Counselling. Additional Learning Support is, however, only available to students who have an assessment by a qualified specialist through the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). The College Group has set aside funds to support students with Dyslexia to undertake a Dyslexia Assessment with an educational psychologist (arranged by the College). This is to ensure that students with Dyslexia are able to access appropriate support.

Race

In the 2017/18 academic year, 3% of the College Group's HE students indicated that they are of black or minority ethnic origin. An analysis of the achievement data has

not revealed any significant findings due to the very small cohort size in each category.

Mature students

The College Group is successful in recruiting and supporting mature students to both part-time and full-time study. An achievement rate of 58% was recorded in 2016/17 and a specific analysis of the 2017/18 outcomes across the subject areas is to be undertaken by the HE Data Working Group early in the autumn of 2018.

Celebrating success

The College Group recognises the importance and value of the graduation ceremony experience for students and will be utilising some of the additional income from higher fees to expand the UCSH Graduation Ceremony commemorations. This will take the form of providing a post-awards event for families and friends to enjoy with the successful graduates, along with artwork gifts for all graduates.

Students from under-represented groups can apply for support with the costs of attending the ceremony at UCSH or the appropriate HEI.

Progression

The College Group is committed to ensuring that graduates are prepared for, and able to contribute to, the economy and society. We recognise the challenges presented by the great diversity of aspirations of individual students, including those already in employment, but the development of graduates with relevant attributes, skills and knowledge has placed graduate employability at the centre of the HE agenda.

Programme tutors promote extra-curricular activities and volunteering opportunities for students which develop skills and experiences that are both valued by employers and relevant more broadly after they have completed their programme of study. Involvement in student representative bodies and the local community are encouraged to help to maximise the opportunities available to students.

The College Group expects that with the additional funding from higher level fees, we will be able to further promote extra-curricular activities for our HE students, and ways of enabling our students to develop enterprise and entrepreneurship skills in ways relevant to a variety of future career paths. We offer financial support for students from under-represented groups to form networks of peer support, by covering any room access/ refreshments/ staff support as needed.

Careers education provision and student employability are embedded across all programmes of study and are specific to each subject area. This includes supporting programme tutors with access to careers and employability specialists, employers,

professional bodies, and graduates, including former students. Guest speakers are routinely incorporated into HE delivery but the planned framework from 2018/19 involves a whole College Group approach and the collation of a 'presentation offer' which will be promoted to all HE students across the various faculties to ensure that all students entering higher education at the College Group have access to presentations from high profile/ international guest speakers relevant to their subject area.

The College Group also expects that with the additional funding from higher level fees, we will be able to ensure professional accreditation for relevant courses eg. Certificate in Policing for Criminal Justice students; and the addition of industry-specific courses eg. AAT for Business Students, both of which will make a significant impact on student progression into employment.

Finally, in terms of raising aspirations for postgraduate study, we plan to collaborate with other North-West College Groups and spend additional income on the development of an annual Student Conference in the longer term, with associated awards for research and scholarly activity and students from under-represented groups who have been successful.

Indication of spend

In order to support the future development and improvement of areas of access, student success and progression, investment from the higher fee income is estimated as:

- Access £30,000
- Student success £25,000
- Progression £20,000.

In terms of financial support for students, £10,000 will be available as a Hardship Fund and £140,000 will be available for Enhancement Grants.

Other aspects of access, success and progression investment which is not countable from the additional income from higher fees includes:

- Outreach work with schools/ young people
- Outreach work with communities/ adults
- Strategic work with schools
- WP Admin staffing costs (finance/ careers)
- Support for current students, including learner support posts
- Support for disabled students (materials/additional support)
- Support for progression from HE.

4. Targets and milestones

In line with the proposed additional levels of support, Senior Leadership Team will continue to set targets and monitor:

- the level of student applications and number of accepted places;
- levels of internal progression;
- levels of recruitment from deprived areas;
- continuation, progression and attainment of students - via the HE Data Working Group;
- students' level of satisfaction with the support available - monitored via the NSS survey (87% overall satisfaction in 2017/18; 4% above national average), and student focus groups feedback. "Student views in relation to the quality of the learning experience are responded to effectively, and students value the support from tutors, at both class and individual level, to support their learning and pastoral requirements" (Quality Review Visit, May 2018).

Specific targets and milestones for monitoring as described above are:

Target area	Baseline	2018/19	2019/20	Comment
Internal progression	15%	28%	30%	Level 3 students progressing onto HE provision form only a small proportion of the HE cohort. The College Group is committed to increase internal progression by targeting students who would meet the HE entry criteria but do not currently apply to progress onto HE
Achievement level of mature students	58%	63%	65%	Our current level of achievement for mature students is below the rate of students under the age of 30. Support is to be put in place to improve success rates with close monitoring of the progress of mature students.
Maintaining the number of students from WP areas	49%	52%	53%	Currently around half of our HE students come from disadvantaged postcodes and we would look to maintain this level
Increase number of HE Open Days/ tasters/ events	70 attendees	150	175	We aim to increase the number of events we hold to offer advice & guidance opportunities regarding HE for external applicants. This will include Open Days/ Evenings and Tasters.
Raising attainment levels	10 attendees	25	30	Increase the number of students from the Knowsley borough visiting UCSH to support their L3 learning and attainment

5 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Each Faculty monitors the effectiveness of the bursary gift via feedback from Student Reps at Staff/ Student Liaison Committees, and via Induction Evaluations, to ascertain the impact of the financial support on recruitment. The Marketing Department will monitor the value of the support as a recruitment tool quantitatively via a query on the enrolment form.

Currently the effect of financial support on retention is anecdotal eg. Game Art students' express high levels of satisfaction with industry-standard laptops, but the College Group will seek to develop a richer understanding of the impact of financial support by adding additional survey questions to the End of Semester surveys ('closing the gap' model).

The HE Student Finance Officer monitors effective use of the Hardship Fund by following supported students through the lifecycle of their studies, and reporting back to the Director for Marketing & Customer Relations. This type of student retention feedback is then relayed to the Vice Principal/ SLT via the annual self-assessment process and the various committees and working groups detailed below. This level of cross-college communication allows for the sharing of best practice across faculties and between courses.

The implementation of the Access and Participation Plan will be monitored and evaluated by the HE Strategy Group which is informed by the HE Student Forum; the HE Marketing, Recruitment & Widening Participation Working Group; the Pricing Policy Group; the HE Data Working Group and the Academic Standards and Student Enhancement Committee – the activities of which all impact on the success of this plan. Student representation is invited onto all HE working groups/ committees.

The HE Data Working Group

This working group was established last year in order to create a distinct separation from Further Education data monitoring methods, through the development of a HE Data Dashboard and Action Tracker to support academic managers with ensuring continuous improvement through evaluation.

The main areas covered by the group are as follows:

- Student recruitment;
- Student groups eg. proportions from areas of low higher education participation; low household income and/or low socioeconomic status backgrounds; students of particular ethnicities; mature students; disabled students; care leavers;
- Continuation, progression and attainment of students;
- Student completions and HEIFES requirements;
- Student surveys eg. NSS and DLHE;
- Sharing best practice between faculties and other institutions with higher education provision;
- Responding to the specific requirements of our HEI partners;

- Reflecting on lessons from previous activities to improve future ones;
- Developing plans to improve practice in the collection and analysis of data, and reporting timelines eg. for the Governing Body.

Financial support for students has historically been monitored and evaluated via the Widening Participation Working Group (to be replaced by the Marketing, Recruitment & Widening Participation Working Group from September 2018).

The Merseyside Network for Collaborative Outreach partnership between the Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges located in Greater Merseyside uses a range of evaluative measures. This is coordinated by the Collaborative Network Manager, based at The University of Liverpool. St Helens College provides all information, data and evidence as requested to support the MNCO monitoring process.

6 Equality and diversity

The main emphasis of this plan is to encourage participation in higher education from vocational students from a background where HE is not the expected progression route. The College Group has a well-established Equality & Diversity Strategy, Action Plan and Committee structure which encourages inclusiveness and eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

This means that the College Group:

- Ensures that all students and those who work and visit there have the opportunity to participate fully and achieve their full potential;
- Takes positive steps to eliminate physical, social and economic barriers to access;
- Maintains a welcoming and supportive college environment;
- Ensures that all staff, students and visitors accept their responsibility to uphold equality and show respect to others;
- Reduces any form of unlawful and/or unacceptable behaviour;
- Continues the drive to increase levels of under-represented groups;
- Promotes equality in student admissions and their experiences whilst at the college.

7 Provision of information to prospective students

The College Group is committed to providing full financial information, including current fee details to students in the following publications:

- HE Prospectus – this contains details on: tuition fees, loans, grants and guidance on how to apply and who to contact. Details of what is provided by the Student Services team including advice and guidance, study support and additional support is also included.
- College Group Websites – this includes the tuition fee and loan/ grant information in addition to signposts to external bursaries and details of College Group services.
- HE Open Days/ Evenings – Student Support and Academic Staff give information and advice to prospective students and their families at Open Days and can be contacted by phone and email.
- Relevant HE external exhibitions and events.
- UCAS and SLC – timely, accurate information is provided to UCAS and the Student Loans Company so they can populate their course databases in good time to inform applications.

8 Consultation with students

The College Group engages with students throughout the academic year. Students are active participants in Board of Study meetings and there is a HE Student Forum which meets termly. Representatives across all HE courses are invited to attend the Forum and action-tracker emails are circulated to those who are not able to attend. HE student feedback is taken to Senior Leadership Team meetings, and reported through the HE Committee structure. These discussions/ consultations have recently included the College Group's HE Strategy and developments to facilities and resources impacting HE study.

The HE Administrator/ Student Liaison Officer ensures that the student body is diverse and includes representation from under-represented groups. A Lead Student Rep post was also piloted in 2017/18 to further reach out to students and provide additional opportunity for consultation.

From 2018/19, the HE Student Forum will include specific consultation on the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan.



University Centre
St Helens

Updated: 28th August 2018