

**Exeter College**  
**(UKPRN 10002730)**

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

**1. Assessment of Performance**

Exeter College is a further education college based in and around the city of Exeter in Devon. As one of the few remaining tertiary colleges it acts as the sixth form for the Exeter secondary schools, as well as providing a wide range of vocational provision for 16-18 year olds. In addition, the College has a thriving apprenticeship, adult and professional offer. The College has run higher education (HE) in partnership with universities and awarding bodies for over 25 years. Current provision is, however, small with 418 full and part time students on qualifying programmes as of June 2019, excluding part time programmes studied as part of a Higher Apprenticeships.

The following sections present a self-assessment of the Exeter College's performance in relation to the access, success (including non-continuation and attainment) and progression of students from underrepresented groups within HE. They primarily focus on the College's own HE student population, given that the majority of its students are drawn from Exeter and the wider county of Devon and that the majority progress on to employment or further HE study within the same areas. The College does, therefore, have limited impact on the national HE sector, but where appropriate to add context, comparisons are made.

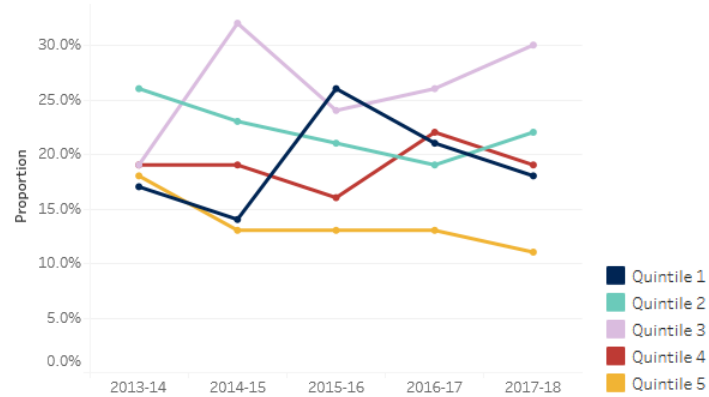
The self-assessment primarily uses the Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Dataset, together with quantitative data from the College's Management Information System (MIS) and qualitative information from staff and student feedback and experience. The College does not have the capacity to undertake academic research in this area, however, it is guided by relevant published research and the sharing of good practice within the HE sector. It should also be noted that after just two years of implementing an Access and Participation Plan (formally Access Agreement) the College's approach to monitoring and evaluation and thus the generation of data to aid self-assessment, is still evolving (see section 3.3 below).

**1.1 Higher Education Participation Status Students**

As a result of the local focus of its HE provision and also to align with other work undertaken as part of the South West National Collaborative Outreach Project (SWNCOP), this aspect of the self-assessment primarily utilises Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) Version 4 data. Consideration is, however, also given to the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in section 1.2 below. POLAR classification groups areas across the UK based on the proportion of the young population that participate in HE. It looks at how likely young people are to participate in HE across the UK and shows how this varies by area. POLAR classifies local areas into five groups, or 'Quintiles', based on the proportion of 18 year olds who enter HE. Quintile 1 shows the lowest rate of participation. Quintile 5 shows the highest rate of participation (OfS).

### 1.1.1 Access

**Figure 1: Proportion of full time HE students at Exeter College by POLAR Quintile showing gaps between each (OfS)**



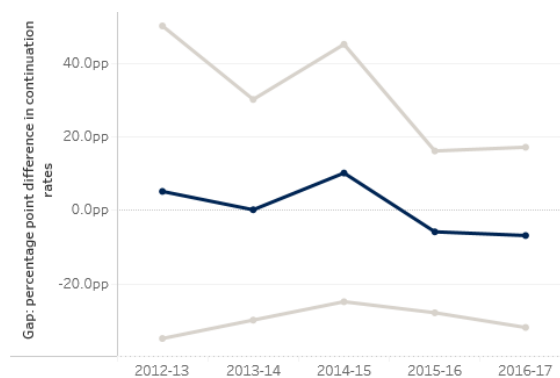
The data fluctuates from year to year because of the low student numbers, however, it is evident that that over time the number of students in Quintiles 1 and 2 combined has increased in relation to Quintile 5 resulting in there being a positive gap between the proportion of young people entering HE at the College between Quintiles 1 and 2 and Quintile 5 as of 2017/18. The most recent data show Quintiles 1 and 2 at 40% collectively and Quintile 5 at 11% This is very different to the HE sector nationally, where Quintiles 1 and 2 combined were 27.7% and Quintile 5 was at 30.5%, as of 2017/18.

The data provides evidence that the College is already contributing to the achievement of the OfS' National Key Performance Measure (KPM) for eliminating or reducing the gaps between the most and least represented groups in HE and is facilitating access to HE from local low participation areas. As a result, the suggested approach is one of monitoring and maintaining this level of access, rather than objective and target setting and active intervention. The College does not hold additional disaggregated data for the 18/19 student population in relation to POLAR 4. However, internal data capability will be developed over the duration of this plan to identify students from individual low progressing neighbourhoods for more targeted interventions (please see section 3.1.2 below). Please note there is currently insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

### 1.1.2 Success

- Non-continuation

**Figure 2: Comparative continuation rate for full time HE students at Exeter College showing gap between Quintiles 1 and 2 and Quintiles 3, 4 and 5 (OfS)**



Change in gap from 12-13 to 16-17: -15.0 Is this change statistically significant? No  
 Change in gap from 15-16 to 16-17: -2.0 Is this change statistically significant? No

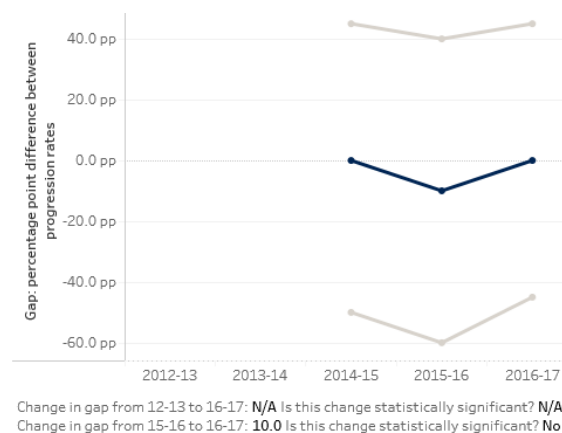
The data (blue line) fluctuates from year to year and the associated upper and lower confidence limits (grey lines) are wide because of the low student numbers. There has been a positive gap between the higher and lower quintiles in the past, suggesting a higher number of Quintile 1 and 2 students were not continuing with their studies when compared to Quintiles 3, 4 and 5, however, by 2016/17 this gap had not only closed, it had become negative indicating improved continuation rates of students in the lower Quintiles over the higher Quintiles. The College does not hold additional disaggregated data for later cohorts in relation to POLAR 4, however, please see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to this. As with access, this suggests an area for monitoring and maintenance, rather than a priority for action at present. Please note there is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

- **Attainment**

For the purposes of Access and Participation Plans, attainment is based on the achievement of a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 on completion of a Level 6, full honours degree programme. The majority of the College’s HE provision is at Levels 4 and 5 and in the form of Higher National Certificates and Diplomas and Foundation Degrees. It does have two Level 6 programmes for which a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 may be awarded, however, data is currently too small to be of statistical value and could risk identifying individual students. The College is, however, able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding its approach to this area of work. In addition, it has made a commitment to develop its capacity and ability to fill data gaps that would lead to a more complete self-assessment of performance in access and participation, including in relation to attainment (see section 3.1.2 below).

### 1.1.3 Progression to employment or further study

**Figure 3: Comparative progression rate for full time HE students at Exeter College showing gap between Quintiles 1 and 2 and Quintiles 3, 4 and 5 (OfS)**



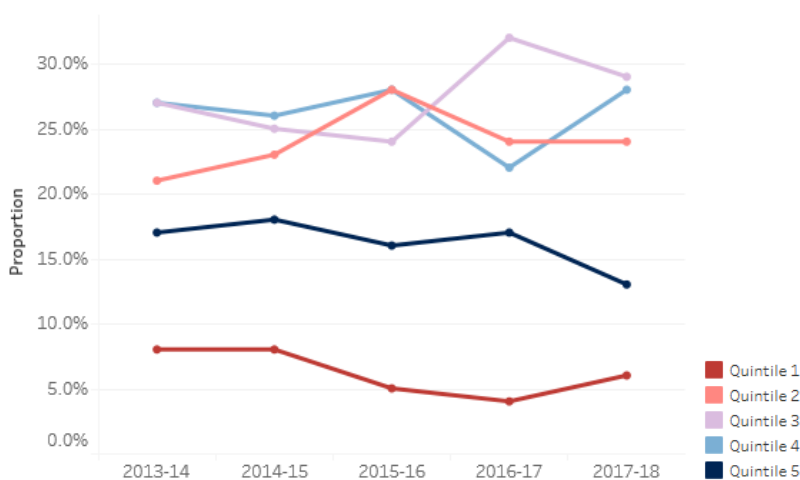
The data (blue line) fluctuates from year to year and the associated upper and lower confidence limits (grey lines) are wide because of the low student numbers. There has been a negative gap between the higher and lower quintiles in the past, suggesting a lower number of Quintile 1 and 2 students were progressing when compared to Quintiles 3, 4 and 5, however, as of 2016/17 this gap had reduced to zero. The College does not hold additional disaggregated data for later cohorts in relation to POLAR 4, however, please see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to this. As with access and continuation, this suggests an area for monitoring and maintenance to ensure equality of opportunity. Please note there is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

## 1.2 Socio-economic Status Students

The IMD is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas or neighbourhoods in England (DCLG, 2015). It ranks every area from 1 (most deprived) to 32,844 least deprived, using factors such as household income determined from receipt of benefits of tax credits. It is common to describe how relatively deprived a small area is by saying whether it falls within the deciles of quintiles used alongside the ranking. In the case of the IMD data presented by the OfS Access and Participation Dataset and used for the purposes of this self-assessment, quintiles are used with Quintile 1 representing the most deprived and Quintile 5 the least deprived areas from which the College's HE students are drawn.

### 1.2.1 Access

**Figure 4: Proportion of full time HE students at Exeter College by IMD Quintile showing gaps between each (OfS)**

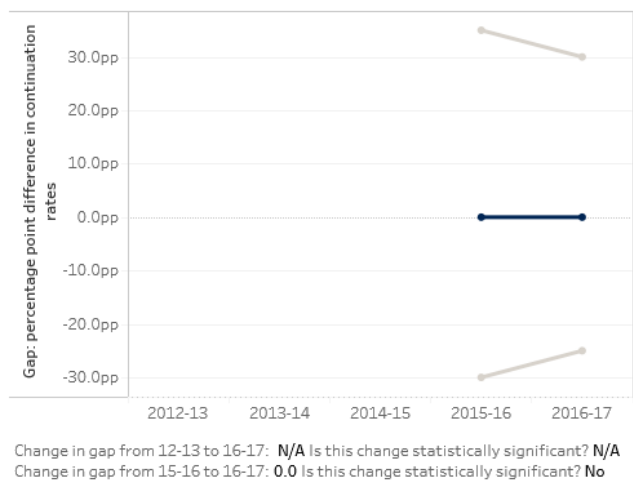


The data for Quintiles 2-4 fluctuates from year to year because of the low student numbers, however, all are above the average for the HE sector as a whole and this reflects the socio-economic status of the geographical area served by the College. The most recent trend has been a slight upturn in the proportion of Quintile 1 students to 6%, after a period of decline, with a corresponding downturn in Quintile 5 students to 13%. This has not, however, closed the positive gap between the two of 7%. The College does not hold additional disaggregated data for the 18/19 student population in relation to IMD. However, internal data capability will be developed over the duration of this plan to disaggregate the Quintile data and to identify individual students from low-income neighbourhoods for more targeted interventions (see section 3.1.2 below). Quintile 1 is considered a priority group for access at both national level and local level and objectives and targets have, therefore, been set. Data on part time students is incomplete in relation to Quintiles 1 and 5 and so has not been used to assess performance in this area.

## 1.2.2 Success

- **Non-continuation**

**Figure 5: Comparative Continuation Rate for full time students at Exeter College Showing Gap between Quintiles 5 and 1, 2, 3 and 4 (OfS)**



The data (blue line) and the associated upper and lower confidence limits (grey lines) are wide because of the low student numbers. For the years recorded, there is a zero gap between Quintile 5, the most deprived, and other Quintiles. The College does not hold additional disaggregated data for later cohorts in relation to IMD, however, please see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to this. As with access, this suggests an area for monitoring and maintenance to ensure equality of opportunity. There is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

- **Attainment**

Please see previous comments in section 1.1.2 above.

### 1.2.1 Progression to employment or further study

Neither the OfS Access and Participation Dataset or the College MIS are able to present data for full or part time students to assess the comparative progression of Quintile 5 students to other students. The College is, however, now collecting its own intended destination data for HE students and will be able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding approach to this area of work. Please also see section 3.1.2 below for further commitments in relation to data collection and analysis.

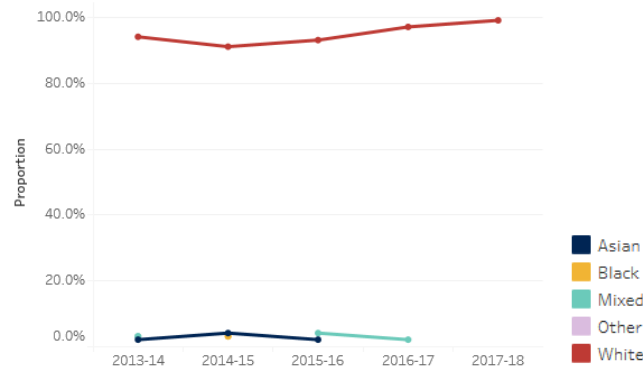
## 1.3 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students

The ethnicity of HE students at Exeter College is predominantly white (English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British) or white (other background), making up 95% of the 2018/19 student body (College MIS). This aligns with the outcomes of the 2011 Census for Devon, which identified that 94.0% of people in Devon were from a 'White: British' ethnic background, higher than England as a whole at 79.8%, and that the largest ethnic group identified was 'White: Other', which tended to be European in origin (ONS, DCC 2011). However, there is considerable ethnic diversity within the remaining 5% of students, including UK students, students who are resident within the UK but for whom English is not their first language, recent migrants and international students.

There is currently insufficient data for a consistent assessment of performance across all stages of the student lifecycle in relation to those from BAME backgrounds, however, internal data capability will be developed and research undertaken over the duration of this plan to develop knowledge and understanding of barriers and better target interventions (see sections 3.1.2 and 3.3 below).

### 1.3.1 Access

**Figure 6: Proportion of full time HE students at Exeter College by ethnicity showing gaps between groups (OfS)**



There is a significant gap between white and BAME students, showing as 99% versus 2% for full time students on the OfS Access and Participation Dataset. However, as identified in 1.3 above the College's own MIS data shows a marginally different gap, due to the exclusion of Higher Apprentices and a 2% positive change between 2017/18 and 2018/19 for all students on qualifying programmes, both full and part time. It should be noted that although the College collects data on ethnic backgrounds, disaggregation of data would risk identifying individual students due to the small student numbers overall. This position will be reviewed if student numbers increase, supplemented by relevant research data as outlined in sections 3.1.2 and 3.3 below.

BAME is priority group for access at both national and local level and objectives and targets have, therefore, been set. However, any intervention must be proportionate to the local demography and catchment area of the College. Action also needs to be responsive to the potential changes in ethnic diversity since the last census within Exeter and the greater Exeter area, especially with continuing economic development and population growth. The target set will be reviewed periodically to ensure this. Please note there is insufficient separate data on part time students to fully assess performance in this area.

### 1.3.2 Success

- **Non-continuation**

As a result of the very small student numbers neither the OfS Access and Participation Dataset or the College MIS are able to present data for full or part time students to assess the comparative continuation of BAME students to white students. The College is able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding its approach to this area of work. Please also see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to improving data collection and analysis in this area.

- **Attainment**

Please see previous comments in section 1.1.2 above.

### 1.3.3 Progression to employment or further study

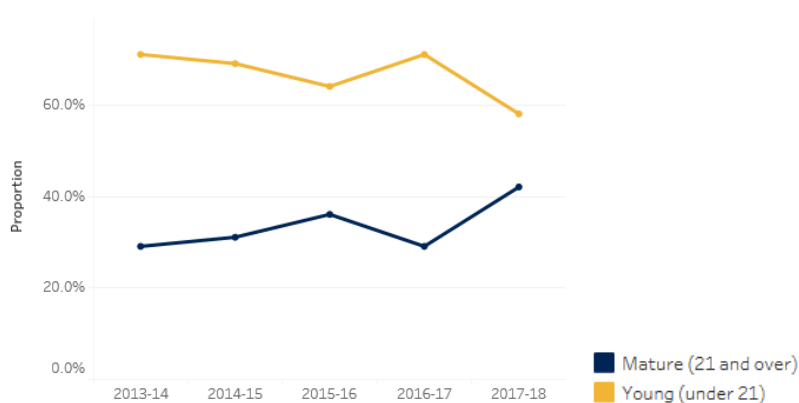
As a result of the very small student numbers neither the OfS Access and Participation Dataset or the College MIS are able to present data for full or part time students to assess the comparative progression of BAME students to white students. The College is able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding approach to this area of work. The College is, however, now collecting its own intended destination data for HE students and will be able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding its approach to this area of work. Please also see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to improving data collection analysis in this area.

## 1.4 Mature Students

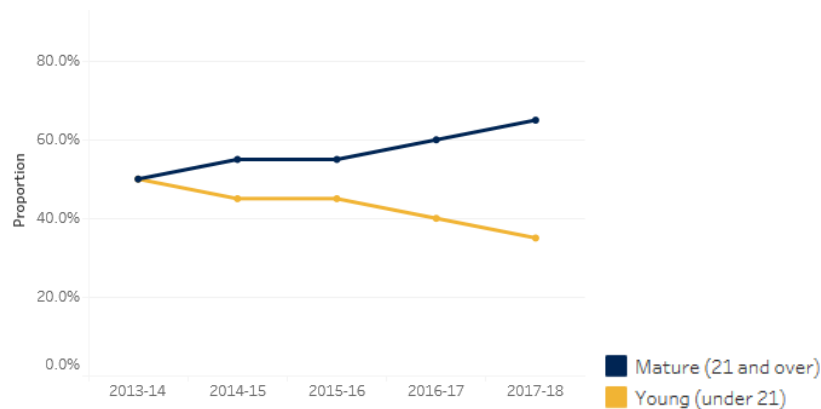
In the past, College-based HE has presented a feasible option for accessing HE by mature students. This group is defined as students commencing their studies at the age of 21+years, above what may be regarded as the traditional age for HE participation. However, Exeter College, like much of the HE sector, has experienced a decline in mature student numbers due to a range of factors such as prevailing economic conditions and perceived cost: benefits. As a result, the student body is predominantly young, with mature students making up 37.5%% of the 2018/19 cohort on qualifying programmes (College MIS). Within this priority group there is, however, a considerable spread of age groups from 21 to 64 years, which reflects multiple personal and professional reasons for students returning to study later in life. The College is unable to disaggregate this data by age as this would risk identifying individual students due to the small single number in most age groups post 21 years. This position will be revisited if student numbers increase.

### 1.4.1 Access

**Figure 7: Proportion of mature and young full time HE students at Exeter College showing gap between groups (OfS)**



**Figure 8: Proportion of mature and young part time HE students at Exeter College showing gap between groups (OfS)**



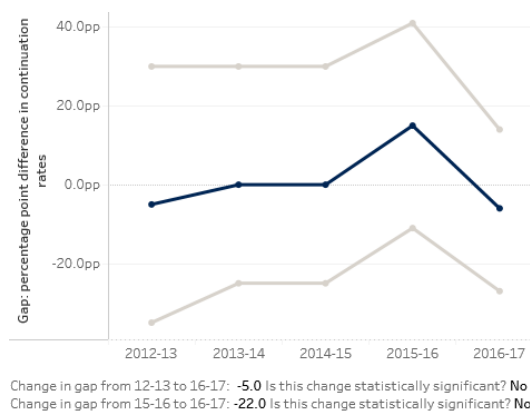
There has been a recent upturn in full time mature students compared to young students, to 42% versus 58% respectively in 2017/18. This re-establishes an earlier upward trend that saw a dip in 2016/17. However, a positive gap of circa 16% remains and more work needs to be done to raise awareness of the benefits of HE within the wider community to encourage mature students to take up the opportunities available locally. This is priority group for access at both national and local level and objectives and targets have, therefore, been set.

There is some difference between the OfS data presented on part time students and College MIS data in this area, as the former also includes students studying as part of a Higher Apprenticeships, which are not deemed to be qualifying programmes for the purpose of this plan. Such programmes have led to an increase in students 21+ already in employment returning to learn, particularly in technical and professional disciplines such as construction and engineering. This is a trend that is likely to continue driven by the Apprenticeship Levy and is considered to be outside of the scope of this plan.

#### 1.4.2 Success

- Non-continuation

**Figure 9: Comparative continuation rate for full time HE students at Exeter College showing gap between mature and young students (OfS)**





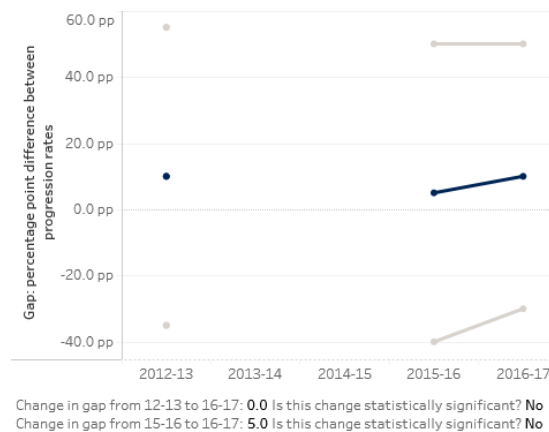
The data (blue line) fluctuates from year to year and the associated upper and lower confidence limits (grey lines) are wide because of the low student numbers. There had been a positive gap in the continuation rates, suggesting mature students were withdrawing from their studies at a higher rate to young students and this was an area of concern in previous iterations of this plan. However, the most recent data shows an improvement in the continuation of mature students (90%) opening a negative gap of 16% over young students (84%) by 2016/17. The College does not hold additional disaggregated data for later cohorts in relation to age, however, please see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to this. The change in relative continuation rates suggests an area for monitoring and maintenance to ensure recent improvements are sustained. Please note there is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

- **Attainment**

Please see previous comments in section 1.1.2 above.

### 1.4.3 Progression to employment or further study

**Figure 10: Comparative progression rate for full time HE students at Exeter College showing gap between mature and young students (OfS)**



Although the data (blue line) is limited preventing longer term trends being established and confidence limits wide (grey lines) due to small student numbers, the most recent data points show a circa 10% positive gap between mature and young students, with the rates being 60% and 69+% respectively. This indicates that mature students are doing less well in securing graduate level employment opportunities on completion of their studies. Whilst there may be underlying reasons for this, including mature students studying for personal rather than professional reasons, intervention is needed to help overcome barriers and ensure equality of opportunity. This is priority group for progression and objectives and targets have, therefore, been set.

## 1.5 Disabled Students

Exeter College has seen an increasing trend in the numbers and proportion of HE students declaring one or more disabilities, long term health conditions or additional learning needs on enrolment, some with complex needs. Within the 2018/19 student body, 28% disclosed one or more additional need (College MIS) with the most frequent disabilities or conditions disclosed being:

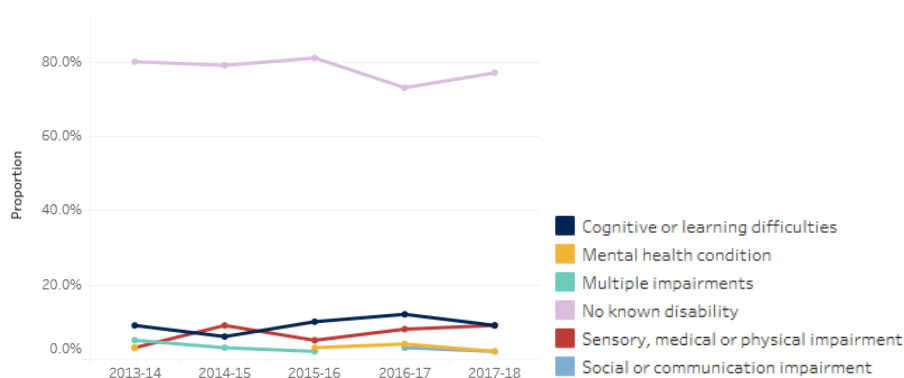
- Other medical condition (for example epilepsy, asthma, diabetes) (11%)
- Dyslexia (8%)
- Mental health difficulty (7%)
- Visual impairment (3%)
- Autistic spectrum disorder (2%)
- Social and emotional difficulties (2%)
- Other learning difficulties (2%)

Please note disclosures made by 5 or less students have been omitted due to the risk of individual students being identified.

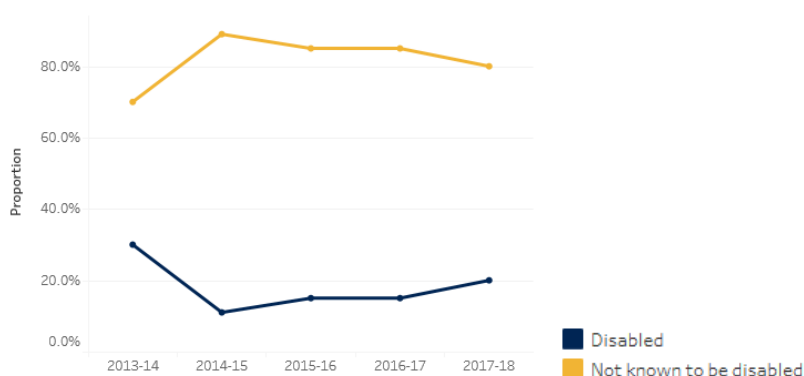
There is concern, however, based on staff and student experience, about the non-disclosure of needs or lack of assessment of needs prior to enrolment. This generates additional health, pastoral and academic support requirements once on programme. Mental health remains a particular concern and although only 7% disclosed a difficulty on enrolment in 2018/19 (up from 5% in 2017/18) other conditions and unforeseen events can affect a student's mental well-being over time and have a significant impact on their success and progression. There is currently insufficient data for a consistent assessment of performance across all stages of the student lifecycle in relation to students with disabilities, however, internal data capability will be developed over the duration of this plan to develop knowledge and understanding of barriers and better target interventions. Please see section 3.1.2 below for commitments in relation to this.

### 1.5.1 Access

**Figure 11: Proportion of full time HE students at Exeter College with and without known disabilities showing gaps between groups (OfS)**



**Figure 12: Proportion of part time HE students at Exeter College with and without known disabilities showing gaps between groups (OfS)**

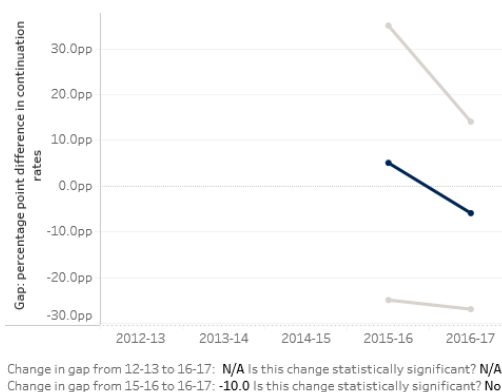


Although there is a significant gap between those with and without known disabilities, the overall proportion of full time students with known disabilities (based on OfS Access and Participation Dataset) was 23% in 2017/18, well above that for the HE sector nationally at 14.6%. The College’s own more recent figure is higher and encompasses both full and part time students, but nonetheless known barriers, including financial, remain and need to be addressed in the context of this plan. This is priority group for access at national and local level and objectives and targets have, therefore, been set. Please note that data by disability type is incomplete for part time students due to suppression of data where there are very small student numbers. Figure 10, therefore, presents this data as all known disabilities. If student numbers increase, this position will be reviewed.

### 1.5.2 Success

- Non-continuation

**Figure 13: Comparative continuation rate for full time HE students at Exeter College with and without known disabilities showing gaps between groups (OfS)**



Although the data (blue line) is limited preventing longer term trends being established and confidence limits (grey lines) wide due to small student numbers, the most recent data points show a 6% positive gap between those without and with known disabilities, with the rates being 84% and 90% respectively. This indicates that students with known disabilities are doing marginally better in respect of continuing on their programme of study. This may be attributable to the level of support received both at and outside of College, but it is considered that this data does not present a complete picture.

A quantitative analysis of HE students’ reasons for withdrawal from programme in 2017/18 using College MIS data, showed that the majority of students withdrew both within and between years for

personal and health reasons. Mental health was determined to be the most significant factor but one which had not always already been disclosed on enrolment. This trend continued into the first half of the 2018/19 academic year. This analysis, combined with qualitative feedback from student casework, such as appeals and applications for extenuating circumstances, indicated that continuation was in the order of 35% and could be significantly improved.

Mental health and other medical conditions, both of which can 'flare up' and pose considerable challenges in relation to a student's 'fitness to study', 'fitness to sit' or 'fitness to submit', need to be prioritised to ensure continuation and success for affected individuals. Although disabled students as a group do not warrant prioritisation, students within this grouping who have long term mental health conditions do. Objectives and targets have, therefore, been set for this sub-group, which will address the local priority, contribute to addressing national priorities for disabled groups and respond to cross-sector concerns about the mental well-being of HE students. There is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

- **Attainment**

Please see previous comments in section 1.1.2 above.

### **1.5.3 Progression to employment or further study**

As a result of the very small student numbers neither the OfS Access and Participation Dataset or the College MIS are able to present data for full or part time students to assess the comparative progression of students with and without known disabilities. The College is, however, now collecting its own intended destination data for HE students and will, therefore, be able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding its approach to this area of work. Please also see section 3.1.2 below for further commitments in relation to data collection and analysis.

## **1.6 Students who are Care leavers**

From 2018/19 the College has collected and processed data on care leavers within its HE student population following guidance issued by the OfS. Though estimates vary, it is known that the participation rate for care leavers in HE is considerably lower than for other socio-economically disadvantaged students and they are also significantly less likely continue on their programmes and attain good degrees putting them at a disadvantage in later life to (DoE, 2019). The conclusions of research undertaken by the 'By Degrees' research team (Institute of Education, University of London and the Frank Buttle Trust) , as presented in the report Going to University from Care (2015), that access to informed advice prior to starting HE, as well as personal support and additional financial means during their HE study were important factors. The report's recommendations for HEIs have, therefore, informed the College's approach including the introduction of a care leaver bursary.

In 2017, Devon County Council (DCC) reported that there were 675 care leavers aged 16-24 in Devon, of which 27 (4%) were at university. Devon has lower than the national rate of looked after children (47 and 60 per 10,000 respectively) but they are older than the national profile (DCC). In the absence of historical data, it is not possible to fully assess the position at the Exeter College, although this will be a priority for research and development within the first year of this plan and will include primary research with care leavers studying at Level 3 within the College (see section 1.5.1 below) as well as secondary research using published sources. As care leaver numbers within the HE student body increase, evaluation of their access, success and progression will be used to better inform and extend interventions, including financial support within the limits of overall investment.

### **1.6.1 Access**

Very small numbers of HE students self-identified themselves as recent care leavers on enrolment / re-enrolment in 2018/19, although others may have chosen not to declare and this is known to have happened in previous years. As a FE provider, the College does also have specific roles and responsibilities in relation to care leavers studying at Levels 1-3 and collates information on their success and progression, an approach from which lessons can be learnt for HE. In 2018/19, 82 looked after young people or care leavers enrolled at Levels 1-3, of which 64 were still active at the end of the academic year. In 2017/18, only five care leavers progressed into HE, at the College or elsewhere. This would suggest a need to use resources allocated under this plan to raise aspirations. Objectives and targets have, therefore, been set in order meet both national and local priorities.

### **1.6.2 Success**

- **Non-continuation**

There is currently no data available on the success, in terms of the non-continuation of care leavers within the HE student population. Whilst it is possible to track individual students' success anonymously using the College's MIS to establish their success, the very small numbers present a risk of individual students being identified if made public. If student numbers, increase this position will be reviewed. Care leavers are, however, already prioritised for the receipt of HE Hardship Funds to support their continuation on programme and it is proposed to extend such provision under this plan to encompass a specific care-leaver bursary. Please also see section 3.1.2 below for further commitments in relation to data collection and analysis.

- **Attainment**

Please see previous comments in section 1.1.2 above.

### **1.6.3 Progression to employment or further study**

As for success above, there is currently no data available on the progression of care leavers. The College is, however, now collecting its own intended destination data for HE students and will, therefore, be able to anonymously track students internally for the purpose of guiding its approach to this area of work. Please see sections 3.1.2 and 3.3.3 below for commitments in relation to developing data collection and undertaking research in this area respectively.

## **1.7 Students by Gender**

Although gender inequalities are not a national priority in relation to access and participation, at Exeter College there is an ongoing trend of male students outnumbering female students, although over the past three years there has been a gradual shift, from a ratio of 1:2 female to male in favour of female students, with 44% of all students, both full and part time, being female and 56% being male in 2018/19. The differential can be explained by high numbers of male students on programmes such as engineering, construction and computing, although the College is now seeing more female students enrolling on such programmes. To maintain this shift there is still a need for targeted interventions to inspire and support more women in these areas, which the College will address within the context of this plan. This is particularly important given the College's role as part of the recently approved South West Institute of Technology (SWIoT) and the planned expansion of engineering and digital programmes at Levels 4, 5 and 6. In addition, gender-related inequalities have been identified by both the OfS Access and Participation Dataset and College MIS Data at the success and progression stages of the student lifecycle, making this a local, College-level priority.

### **1.7.1 Access**

According to the OfS Access and Participation Data Set, the gap between male and female full time students had closed between 2014/15 and 2016/17 but has started to reopen and so requires close monitoring. Analysis of individual full time HE programmes, such as computing and aircraft engineering, presents a starker picture, although this is offset to some extent by more female dominated programmes. There is a more significant gap in relation to part time students, which has a more significant imbalance on the overall imbalance. The College has high number of part time students from local industry on Level 4 and 5 programmes in construction and engineering, primarily HNCs. The majority of these students are now studying as part of a Higher Apprenticeship, funded by the Apprenticeship Levy but are still accounted for within the OfS data presented above. Although these are not deemed to be qualifying programmes for the purposes of this plan, the College still considers enabling female students to access typically male dominated programmes of study to be important.

### **1.7.2 Success**

- **Non-continuation**

According to the OfS Access and Participation Dataset, since 2014/15 there has been a varying negative gap in continuation rates with female students being more likely to continue than their male counterparts. The rates in 2016/17 were 90% and 81% respectively, with female continuation being comparable to the national rate for the HE sector and male continuation now 7% below. College does not hold additional data for later cohorts in relation to gender. The change in relative continuation rates suggests an area for monitoring and maintenance to ensure recent improvements are sustained for female students, whilst exploring the negative change for male students. Staff and student experience suggest that undisclosed mental health challenges may be a factor in relation to the latter (see section 1.4.2 above). Please note there is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

- **Attainment**

Please see previous comments in section 1.1.2 above.

### **1.7.3 Progression to employment or further study**

According to the OfS Access and Participation Dataset, the most recent data points show a small positive gap with male students being more likely to progress than their female counterparts. The rates for 2016/17 were 69% and 63% respectively, with both being below the national rate for the HE sector, which is 72% for both male and female students, although the female progression rate more so. There could be many reasons for the lower performance overall. Including that most HE students leave Exeter College with a Level 4 or 5, rather than Level 6 qualification. However, additional intervention is needed with female students to aim to close the gap between the genders at the College. The college does not hold additional data for later cohorts in relation to gender. Please note there is insufficient data on part time students to assess performance in this area.

## 1.8 Intersections

An attempt has been made to utilise the OfS Access and Participation Dataset to establish whether there are any intersections of disadvantage in relation to the priority groups assessed above i.e. to establish whether there are any other factors which in combination would have a detrimental impact on students' access, success progression. However, due to the small size of the total HE student body at Exeter College, data that would enable this has either not been available or has been suppressed in order to remove the risk of identifying individual students. The College also considers that the relatively small amount of funding associated with this plan would become too diluted and bring benefit to too few students if broken down further to meet the needs of further subgroups. However, during its consultation with students and ongoing evaluation, qualitative methods will be used to establish a fuller picture of barriers experienced by the identified priority groups. In addition, as priority groups increase in number and quantitative data becomes available, the College will revisit this area of the self-assessment.

## 2. Strategic Aims and Objectives

Within its Strategic Plan (2016-2020), Exeter College has identified aims and objectives for all dimensions of its education and training activity, including HE under the banner of the Centre for University Level Studies. Within the aim and objectives for University Level Education, the College has made a commitment, "To facilitate social mobility by raising aspirations and maximising access" and to achieve this, "To increase participation in University Level study by identified priority groups, in accordance with the College's Access Agreement [now Access and Participation Plan]" (Exeter College, 2016).

### 2.1 Vision for Access and Participation in Higher Education

Exeter College's more specific vision for the access, success and progression of its HE students is as follows:

- **Widening access to HE**  
Aspirations are raised and barriers lowered amongst prospective HE students within the community served by the College, with gaps in access between identified priority groups and other students on HE programmes of study reduced or where possible closed.
- **Ensuring success within HE**  
HE students at the College receive the support they need to continue on their programme of study and attain their intended qualifications, with gaps in success between identified priority groups and other students on HE programmes of study reduced or where possible closed.
- **Facilitating progression from HE to graduate employment, self-employment or further academic study**  
On leaving the College, HE students have a secure foundation to realise their ambitions in relation to further academic study, graduate level employment or starting their own enterprise, with gaps in progression between identified priority groups and other students on HE programmes of study reduced or where possible closed.

## 2.2 Priority Groups

Based on the self-assessment of performance presented above, Table 1 below presents the priority groups, together with the relevant life cycle stages, to be addressed within the context of this plan. Where the self-assessment has identified insufficient data in order to establish the specific interventions required, but other nationally published data and information suggests this is an area for action, then this has been highlighted as an area for further local research and reassessment.

**Table 1: Priority student groups and life cycle stages at Exeter College**

Priority Student Group		Student Life Cycle Stage		
		Access	Success (expressed as continuation only)	Progression
Students from lower POLAR 4 Quintiles		Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation
Students from the lowest IMD Quintile		Priority for action	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation
BAME Students		Priority for action	Further research and assessment required within the context of this plan	Further research and assessment required within the context of this plan
Mature Students		Priority for action	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation	Priority for action
Disabled Students (Specifically those with disabilities related to mental health)		Priority for action	Priority for action	Further research and assessment required within the context of this plan
Students who are Care Leavers		Priority for action	Further research and assessment required within the context of this plan	Further research and assessment required within the context of this plan
Students by Gender	Female Students	Priority for action	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation	Priority for action
	Male Students	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation	Priority for action	Not a priority for action at time of plan preparation

## 2.3 Aims and Objectives

Exeter College's aims, objectives and five year targets for each of the priority groups identified in section 2.2 above are presented in Tables 2 to 7 below. Interim targets are presented in the Targets and Investment Plan. The targets are set both within the context of the scale and nature of the College's HE provision and the demographics of the local community it serves. In the event of their being any contextual changes over the duration of this plan, the College will review its targets and, where appropriate, set more ambitious ones. An example would be any demographic changes presented in the outcomes of the 2021 Census.



The aims and objectives are focused on significantly reducing or where practicable closing identified gaps in access, success and progression over the duration of this five year plan. However, it should be noted that some gaps, such as those for BAME, will not be closed even over the medium to longer term due to the location of the College and the nature of its locally focused provision. In addition, medium to longer term progress will depend on the future development of HE at the College. In a number of cases growth is need to close gaps and redress imbalances without having a detrimental impact on other student groupings, which will be challenging in the current highly competitive HE marketplace.

**Table 2: Aims, Objectives and Targets for Students from the lowest IMD Quintile**

Student Life Cycle Stage	Aim	Objective(s)	Targets 2024/15	
			From	To
Access	Reduce the gap in the proportion of IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 students commencing HE programmes of study	To progressively reduce and close the gap between full time IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 HE students	7pp	0pp

**Table 3: Aims, Objectives and Targets for BAME Students**

Student Life Cycle Stage	Aim	Objective(s)	Targets 2024/15	
			From	To
Access	Reduce the gap in the proportion of BAME and white students commencing HE programmes of study	To increase the proportion of full and part time BAME HE students so that it equals or exceeds the 6% of the population within Devon according to the 2011 Census	5%	7.5%

**Table 4: Aims, Objectives and Targets for Mature Students**

Student Life Cycle Stage	Aim	Objectives(s)	Targets 2024/15	
			From	To
Access	Reduce the gap in the proportion of mature (21+years) and young students commencing HE programmes of study	To increase the proportion of mature full time students by at least 10%	16%	26%
Progression	Reduce the gap in the progression rate of mature students on completion of an HE programme of study	To progressively reduce and close the progression gap for full time mature and young students	10pp	0pp

**Table 5: Aims, Objectives and Targets for Disabled Students (Including Disabilities Relating to Mental Health)**

Student Life Cycle Stage	Aim	Objective(s)	Targets 2024/15	
			From	To
Access	Reduce the gap in the proportion of students with and without known disabilities commencing HE programmes of study	To increase the proportion of disabled full time students by 10%	23%	33%
Success	Reduce the gap in the continuation rate of students with mental health related disabilities on HE programmes of study	To reduce the continuation gap between students with mental health related conditions and no known disability by at least 20pp	35pp	10pp

**Table 6: Aims, Objectives and Targets for Students who are Care Leavers**

Student Life Cycle Stage	Aim	Objective(s)	Targets 2024/15	
			From	To
Access	Reduce the gap in the proportion of students who are care leavers and non-care leavers commencing HE programmes of study	To increase the proportion of full and part HE students who are care leavers to at least 5%	0.5%	5%

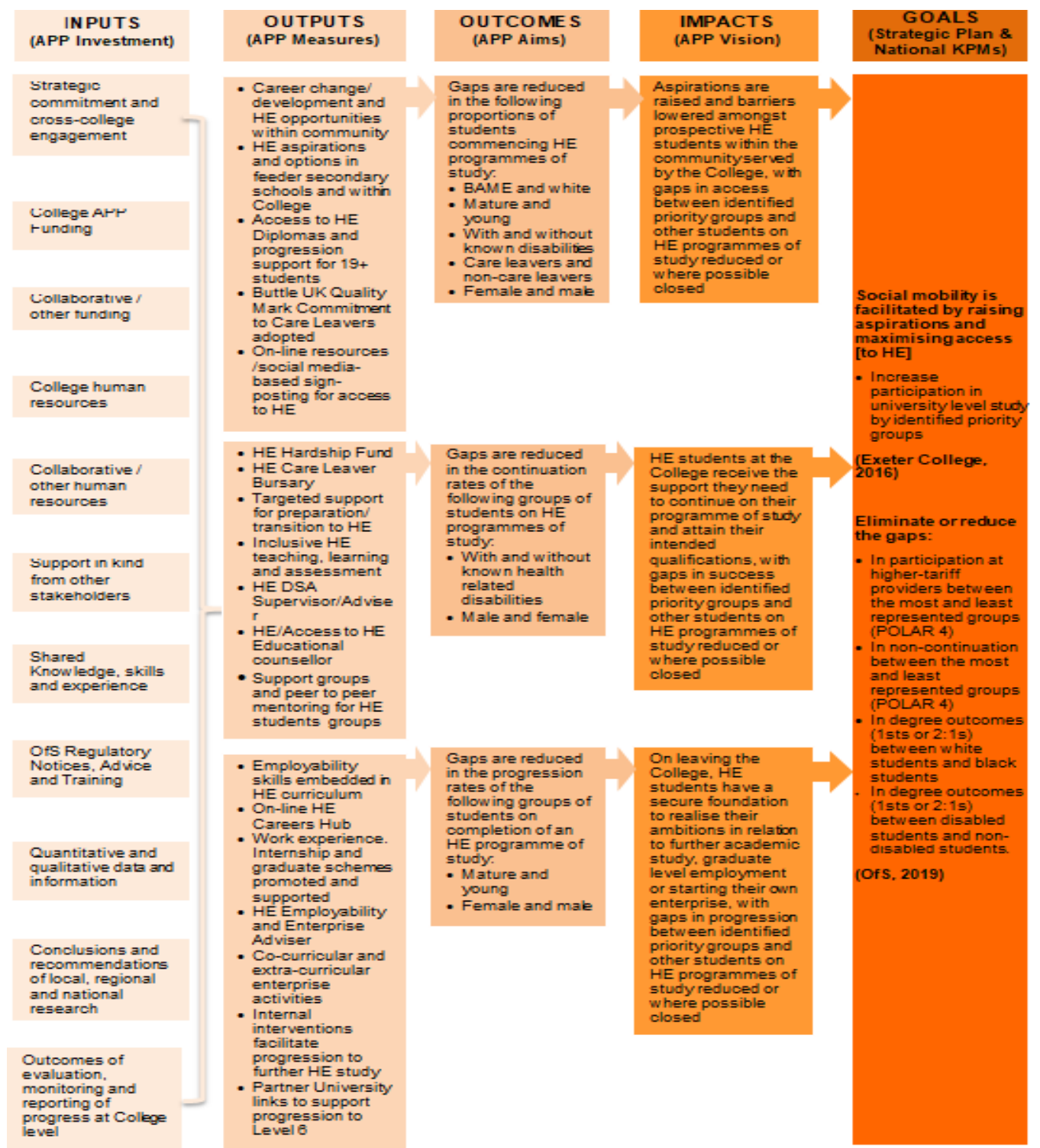
**Table 7: Aims, Objectives and Targets for Students by Gender**

Student Life Cycle Stage	Aim	Objective(s)	Targets 2024/15	
			From	To
Access	Reduce the gap in the proportion of female to male students commencing an HE programme of study	To increase the proportion of full and part time female HE students to achieve a 1:1 balance	44%	50%
Success	Reduce the gap in the continuation rate of male to female students on HE programmes of study	To increase continuation rates for male students by at least 9%	81%	90%
Progression	Reduce the gap in the progression rate of female students on completion of an HE programme of study	To increase the progression rate of female students by at least 7%	63%	70%

Please note that although gender is not a priority grouping nationally and, therefore, specific objectives and targets are not required in the Target and Investment Plan, addressing these imbalances is of strategic importance to the College.

### 3. Strategic measures

Figure 14: Representation of Organisation Level ‘Theory of Change’ in Relation to HE Access and Participation at Exeter College



### 3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Figure 14 above, articulates an Organisation Level 'Theory of Change' in Relation to HE Access and Participation at Exeter College. As already highlighted, a strategic objective in relation to this area of work is presented in the College's Strategic Plan (2016-2020) and this represents the overall goal or change to be made, which the inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts of this plan are leading towards. Recognition is also given to the OfS' National Key Performance Measures (KPMs) although it is recognised that those relating to higher-tariff providers and degree outcomes are not directly relevant to the HE provision at the College. Proportionate steps are being taken to raise awareness of the Access and Participation Plan, its associated targets and investment, and existing and planned measures at all levels across the College. This includes both Faculties and Business Support Departments, and staff and students, to secure the necessary buy in and avoid marginalisation, especially in an predominantly FE college with relatively small HE provision.

Steps being taken, or to be introduced, to ensure that access and participation remains on the College agenda include:

- **Board of the Corporation**
  - Inclusion in HE Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) by Head of HE, which forms the basis of an annual report to the Board of the Corporation to enable them to confirm academic standards and the quality of the student experience and complete the Annual Accountability Return for the OfS;
  - Assessment of impact on access and participation to be included in reports to and decisions made by Quality and Standards Committee on other HE matters during the academic year.
  
- **Senior and College Leadership Teams**
  - Inclusion in HE SAR and QIP by Head of HE, as scrutinised during by Senior Leadership Team during Quality and Resources Reviews;
  - Termly reports to Senior Resources Group and Senior Curriculum Groups;
  - Consideration of access and participation in relation to human resourcing and budgeting decisions by the Senior Leadership Team;
  - Assessment of impact on access and participation to be included in development of new and revised policies on other HE matters by Senior Leadership Team.
  - Provision of annual update to College Leadership Team;
  - Provision of annual update at HE Faculty Heads Meeting;
  
- **Faculty and Business Support Staff**
  - Engagement and provision of staff development for HE Department, Marketing and Communications Department, Management Information Systems Department, Adult Advice Team and Programme Managers; and
  - Consideration of access and participation matters in HE Annual Programme Monitoring and preparation of HE Programme Action Plans.
  
- **HE Students**
  - Engagement of and inclusion in training for HE Student Ambassadors and Student Representatives;
  - Standing agenda item at Programme Committee Meetings / Student Staff Consultative Committees; and
  - Consultation and feedback on access and participation matters during HE Student Voice Forum processes.

### 3.1.1 Alignment with other Strategies

The College's current Policy Statement for equality, diversity and access is as follows:

“Exeter College is committed to the principles of equality and diversity for all its staff and learners and actively challenges any unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, race, religion or belief or none, and sexual orientation. The values of equality and diversity underpin all our courses. We promote positive attitudes towards diversity, encourage all learners and staff to reach their full potential and take proactive steps to take account of the additional needs of those people who may experience the greatest barriers to fulfilling their potential.” (Exeter College)

This Policy Statement applies to all stages of the HE student life cycle and to all aspects of this Access and Participation Plan. The Policy makes specific reference to groups referred to in the context of this plan, ensuring equal and fair treatment and protection from discrimination by gender, age, ethnicity or disability, amongst other protected characteristics. Activity undertaken in connection with this policy and the College's legal obligations in relation to equality and diversity includes:

- Attitudes to and understanding of equality and diversity are tested at staff interview;
- All staff receive mandatory equality and diversity training;
- Opportunities to embed equality and diversity in teaching and learning are expected to be taken;
- Governors and leaders are expected to take account of equality and diversity in their decision-making;
- The Student Experience Departments take the lead on equality and diversity matters across the College, undertakes awareness raising and provides information, advice and guidance to staff and students;
- There is an Equality and Diversity Officer on the Student Union; and
- The Student Code of Conduct sets expectations in relation to equality and diversity for students.

The alignment of this plan with the College's Strategic Plan has already been outlined in Section 2 and Figure 14 above. The College does not currently have published strategy for teaching, learning and assessment preferring to guide these areas of work through specific policies, procedures and staff handbooks. However, inclusive teaching and learning and the application of reasonable adjustments for assessments and exam access arrangements are a core element of these. In relation to employability, this is strongly embedded throughout the College's HE provision, with its sole focus being technical, vocational and professional education. Its commitment to employability is evidenced within the College's strategic plan, which aims, “To provide a [university level] curriculum which is aligned with the knowledge and skills required by the community and employers,” and commits to the objective of, “At least 95% progression to graduate level employment or further study from university level programmes” (Exeter College, 2016).

As a result of its policies, strategies and approach the College has fostered an open, inclusive and supportive culture amongst both staff and students and provided a firm foundation for the introduction of strategic measures specifically aimed at supporting HE students from priority groups. Opportunities to dovetail work in access and participation with existing work in equality and diversity, inclusive teaching and learning and employability, will be reviewed and adopted in the context of this plan. In addition, the setting of a specific objective in relation to the continuation rates of students with mental health conditions will be supported by the College's recently adopted Mental Health Strategy and the prioritisation of this area of work across the College.

### 3.1.2 Strategic Measures

Exeter College's proposals for new measures and the maintenance of existing measures to deliver on its stated aims, objectives and targets are summarised in Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 below for Access, Success, Progression and Financial Support respectively. Measures are proportionate to the financial resources available for investment in this area of work, which in turn are linked to HE student numbers and the level of tuition fees. However, the proposals are considered to be appropriate for the priority groups and student life cycle stages identified and are informed by the College's own practice to date, good practice within the HE sector, including within the SWNCOP of which the College is part, and by staff and student consultation and feedback. Some measures are contingent on the development of capacity, in terms of staff time, knowledge and experience and so will be developed over the course of this plan. This particularly relates to the Access measures identified in Table 8 below, however, development work will be prioritised based on the self-assessment in section 1 above.

Alongside the proposals for new measures and the maintenance of existing measures below, the College has made a strategic commitment to developing its capacity and ability to collect and analyse data in relation to access and participation. At the time of preparation of this iteration of the plan, the College is only two years into its access and participation work and as a result of the scale of its HE provision and associated investment, has had limited human and financial resources to support monitoring and evaluation. However, the College has utilised the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool to identify appropriate and cost-effective ways in which it can start to collect the required quantitative data and qualitative information and this work is ongoing. The focus will not only be on evaluation and monitoring but in also endeavouring to fill data gaps that would lead to a more complete self-assessment of performance in access and participation. The approach to the latter, will include:

- **2020/21**
  - Review all existing data held by the College MIS to assess how it can be used, adapted or presented to support the self-assessment of performance in relation to the access, success and progression of priority groups; and
  - Create new data bases and/or reports from existing data held by the College MIS to provide more accurate and up to date data for both full and part time students from priority groups, specifically in relation to access, when compared to their peers.
- **2021/22**
  - Review and identify ways in which attainment data for Level 4 and 5 students, which is held on a different system in order to meet Partner University and Awarding Body requirements, can be correlated with data held by the College MIS to determine proportions of students from priority groups achieving Pass, Merit and Distinction, when compared to their peers; and
  - Consider how the conclusions and recommendations of the OfS' Learning Gain Project might be utilised to develop new and more appropriate measures of attainment by priority groups at sub-degree level than final grades alone.
- **2022/23**
  - Devise new approaches to recording student intended or actual destinations progression data to supplement that provided by the Graduate Outcomes Survey and account for the majority of students finishing their HE studies at Partner Universities; and
  - In doing so, identify ways in which such data can be disaggregated by priority groups through correlation with initial access data, to identify proportions progressing on to graduate level employment or further study, when compared to their peers.
- **2023/24 – 2024/25**
  - Evaluate and revisit above approaches to determine whether data gaps have been sufficiently filled and if not what additional measures are required.

**Table 8: Measures for widening access to HE**

Measure	Priority Group(s)	Benefit(s)	Timescale	Examples of Evidence Base
Actively promote and fund a Student Ambassador Scheme to support internal and external outreach activities	IMD 1 BAME Disabled Care leavers Mature Gender	Providing first hand insights into student life and role models for students from priority groups	This area of work has already commenced but will continue to be developed	College's own established practice  Established practice of Partner HEIs  SW National Collaborative Outreach Project
Actively promote the career change and development opportunities presented by HE within the local community and to local employers with targeted interventions for priority groups e.g. females returning to learn after career breaks	Mature Gender	Raising of aspirations and awareness of routes into HE and potential beneficial outcomes	New area of work to commence in 2020/21	College's own established successful practice in relation to Higher Apprenticeships  Good practice of other HEIs  OfS (2019) <i>Mature and Part Time Students Briefing</i> , Bristol, OfS
Work with feeder secondary schools to raise aspirations and present options for study at HE Level, with targeted interventions for priority groups e.g. opportunities for female students in digital, engineering and construction disciplines	IMD 1 BAME Disabled Care leavers Gender	Raising of aspirations and awareness of routes into HE and potential beneficial outcomes	New area of work to commence in 2021/22	College's own established successful practice in relation to <Level 4  SW National Collaborative Outreach Project  Gartland, C (2015) <i>STEM Strategies: Student Ambassadors and Quality in HE</i> , London, Trentham Books
Work with Level 3 students within the College, to raise aspirations and present options for study at HE Level, with targeted interventions for priority groups e.g. Disabled students requiring specialist support	IMD 1 BAME Disabled Care leavers Gender	Raising of aspirations and awareness and routes into HE and potential beneficial outcomes	New area of work to supplement existing careers and university advice commencing in 2021/22	College's own established successful practice in relation to <Level 4  SW National Collaborative Outreach Project  Taylor, M (2004) 'Widening Participation into

				Higher education for disabled students', <i>Education and Training</i> , Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 40-48.
Provide and continue to develop a range of Access to HE Diplomas for 19+ students and support their application for, and progression, into HE whether at the College or elsewhere	Mature	Providing specific pathways to enable mature students to prepare for and progress onto HE	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established successful practice  Good practice in College-based HE sector  OfS (2019) <i>Preparing for degree study: Analysis of Access to Higher Education Diplomas and integrated foundation year courses</i> , Bristol, OfS
Adopt the Buttle UK Quality Mark Commitment to Care Leavers, as developed out of the 'By Degrees: From Care to University' research project, to ensure joined up working and support for young people both within the College and externally	Care leavers	Providing framework for supporting those with limited support networks for realise their potential for progression to HE	New area of work to be implemented from 2020/21 to 2021/22	Good practice of other HEIs  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Institute of Education, University of London and the Frank Buttle Trust (2015) <i>Going to University from Care</i> London, Buttle UK
Develop additional on-line resources and appropriate social media-based sign-posting to provide readily accessible information, advice and guidance to hard to reach priority groups	IMD 1 BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Providing alternative methods for students to access IAG for whom conventional open events may prove impracticable or challenging	Small-scale trials have already been undertaken and this work will be developed further from 2020/21	College's own practice  OfS (2019) <i>Mature and Part Time Students Briefing</i> , Bristol, OfS  Jisc (2017) <i>Widening Participation</i> , available at <a href="https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/widening-participation">https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/widening-participation</a> (accessed 23 September 2019)



Please note that the measures proposed BAME and IMD 1 will represent a significant step change for the College, as these proportions have changed relatively little over the past five years. The proposed measures will involve a more targeted approach than previously adopted and are linked to more ambitious targets than in previous iterations of this plan.

**Table 9: Measures for ensuring success within HE**

Measure	Priority Group(s)	Benefit(s)	Timescale	Examples of Evidence Base
Provide targeted advice and support, including 1:1 support and mentoring where needed, for students from priority groups to aid their preparation for, and successful transition into, HE	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Enabling students to overcome barriers that may lead to early withdrawal and managed academic and personal challenges that might lead to later non-continuation	New area of work to commence in 2020/21 following further development of Student Ambassador Scheme	Good practice in other HEIs  Thornley, M (2010) <i>The Institutional Benefits of Mentoring, Compass: The Journal of Learning and Teaching at the University of Greenwich</i> Issue 2  Andrews, J and Clark, C (2011) <i>Peer Mentoring Works! How Peer Mentoring Enhances Student Success in Higher Education</i> , Birmingham, Aston University
Provide inclusive teaching, learning and assessment with appropriate differentiation including reasonable adjustments to coursework and practical assessment methodology and access arrangements for examinations	Disabled	Ensuring that the continuation of, and outcomes for, students who would have previously been covered by DSA Bands 1 and 2 matches that of students without disclosed additional needs	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established practice  Disabled Student Sector Leadership Group (2017) <i>Inclusive teaching and learning in HE as a route to excellence</i> London, Department for Education  May, H and Thomas, E (2010) <i>Inclusive learning and teaching in HE</i> , York, Higher Education Academy [now Advance HE]

Contribute funding for a dedicated HE DSA Supervisor/ Advisor to provide specialist advice for HE students, supervision for staff providing HE learning support services and guidance for academic staff on inclusive practice	Disabled	Ensuring eligible students receive timely and accurate IAG on DSA and that required support and/or assistive technologies are in place for the commencement of their programme of study	Work in this area has already commenced	Good practice of other HEIs  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Government advice to students (gov.uk)
Contribute funding for a dedicated Educational Counsellor for HE students to enable them to access timely on-site support.	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Ensuring that timely on-campus support is available to complement adult services in the community and to help student 'at risk' of non-continuation due to mental health challenges	Work in this area has already commenced	Good practice of other HEIs  Universities UK (2015) <i>Student mental wellbeing in higher education: Good practice guide</i> , London, Universities UK  Student Minds (2017) <i>Grand Challenges in Student Mental Health</i> , Oxford, Student Minds
Contribute funding for staff and student training in order to establish support groups and peer to peer mentoring for students with disabilities related to their mental health	Disabled	Ensuring that all students, especially those that have chosen not to disclose a mental health challenge, have alternative opportunities to receive support within the College community	New area of work to commence in 2020/21 following further development of Student Ambassador Scheme	Good practice of other HEIs  Student Minds (2017) <i>Peer Support for Student Mental Health</i> , Oxford, Student Minds  Student Minds (2016) <i>Looking after a Mate</i> , Oxford, Student Minds

**Table 10: Measures for Facilitating progression from HE to graduate employment, self-employment or further academic study**

Measure	Priority Group(s)	Benefit(s)	Timescale	Examples of Evidence Base
Provide CPD for teaching and support staff to enable them to fully embed opportunities for developing employability skills within the HE curriculum	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Providing a consistent approach and to fill any gaps in embedded provision making it readily accessible to those with most need	Work in this area has already commenced	Yorke, M and Knight, P (2006) <i>Embedding Employability into the Curriculum</i> , York, Higher Education Academy [now Advance HE]  Higher Education Academy [now Advance HE] (2015) <i>Framework for Embedding Employability</i> , York, Higher Education Academy [now Advance HE]  Blackmore, P et al (2016) <i>Employability in higher education: A review of practice and strategies around the world</i> , London Pearson
Contribute funding for a dedicated on-line HE Careers Hub integrated into the College's Moodle-based VLE with readily accessible information and resources	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Providing a free and readily accessible solution for those less familiar with, or less able to access careers IAG in person	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established practice  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Abintegro (2017) <i>On-line Employability Index 2016</i> , London, Abintegro Ltd
Promote and provide information and support to facilitate the application for, and take-up of, student work experience opportunities, internships and graduate	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Raising awareness and aspirations in relation to graduate level employment opportunities and supporting the development of confidence in those with limited support networks	Work in this area has already commenced	Outcome trials in College's Faculty of Business and IT  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Good practice in other HEIs

employment schemes, with a focus on mature and/or female students				
Contribute funding for a dedicated HE Employability and Enterprise Adviser with the knowledge, skills and qualifications to provide graduate-level careers advice and to provide targeted interventions for mature and/or female students	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Providing face to face group-based IAG at an appropriate level to ensure students are aiming for employment and self-employment opportunities that reflect their higher level knowledge and skills	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established practice  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Williamson, N et al (2013) <i>Enterprise education: impact in higher and further education</i> , [Former] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Work with employers and Partners Universities to develop co-curricular and extra-curricular enterprise activities to enhance student aspirations and skills, for example, enterprise competitions and entrepreneurs as guest speakers	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Providing opportunities for the increasing number of students, especially mature students, who wish to become self-employed to help them realise their ambition	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established practice  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Williamson, N et al (2013) <i>Enterprise education: impact in higher and further education</i> , [Former] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Provide internal interventions and support for students to facilitate their progression to further HE study at the College, such as from Foundation Degree to Honours Degree and HNC to HND	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Raising aspirations and ensuring the effective preparation and smooth transition of students to their next HE programme of study at the College	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established practice  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Smith, S et al (2015) <i>Progression of College Students in England into HE</i> , London, [Former] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Maintain close and effective links with admissions and academic staff at Partner or other Universities in relation to the progression of students to Level 6 programmes based at their campuses	BAME Mature Disabled Care leavers Gender	Raising aspirations and ensuring the effective preparation and smooth transition of students , including facilitating arrangements for learning and other support	Work in this area has already commenced	College's own established practice  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Smith, S et al (2015) <i>Progression of College Students in England into HE</i> , London, [Former] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
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**Table 11: Financial Support Measures for Success**

Measure	Priority Group(s)	Benefit(s)	Timescale	Examples of Evidence Base
Provide a means-tested Hardship Fund to provide non-refundable grants of up to £500 per annum for students at risk of withdrawing from their programme of study due to financial challenges, with priority given to groups known to be at risk of non-continuation	All, except care leavers	To contribute towards the additional costs of HE study where these exceed student income and minimise the risk of non-continuation for financial reasons	Work in this area has already commenced	Good practice of other HEIs  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Government advice to students (gov.uk)
Provide an annual, non-means tested and non-refundable Care Leaver Bursary of £500 per annum for 18-24 year old care leavers to cover additional costs of HE study not covered by maintenance loans	Care leavers	To contribute towards the additional costs of HE study, that may have otherwise been met by parents or guardians and minimise the risk of non-continuation for financial reasons	To be implemented from 2020/12 with provision in Target and Investment Plan to increase over time as student numbers increase and they progress through their studies	Good practice of other HEIs  Established practice of Partner HEIs  Institute of Education, University of London and the Frank Buttle Trust (2015) <i>Going to University from Care</i> London, Buttle UK

The College has had a hardship fund in place for a number of years, initially funded by Partner Universities' 'Access to Learning' fund and more recently from Access Agreement and now Access and Participation Plan investment. It has, therefore, experience of the benefit of such provision. Take-up has not, however, been as high as it could have been and therefore a more proactive approach to raising awareness of this form of financial support will be undertaken in the context of this plan. Students will be able to apply for up to £500 in every year of study, subject to a means testing process based on the balance between income and essential expenditure. Eligibility takes account of:

- Residency;
- Other sources of funding including student finance;
- Attendance and effort; and
- Intensity of study (for part time students).

Priority groups include:

- Students with dependent children;
- Mature undergraduates;
- Final year students;
- Disabled students; and
- Students from low income families.

Up until 2020/21 care leavers have also been considered a priority group in relation to the hardship fund, however, in the context of this plan a separate care leavers' bursary will be introduced. This decision is based on best practice in the sector, including within Partner Universities and is also informed by the recommendations of the Institute of Education, University of London and the Frank Buttle Trust, as presented in the report Going to University from Care (2015). Students will be able to apply for a non-means tested bursary of £500 in every year of study. Students will be considered eligible if:

- They have taken out the full student finance package available to them; and
- They have been given care leaver status by Student Finance England (SFE).

With regard to the latter, a care leaver is a young person who:

- Has been in the care of, or been given accommodation by, their Local Authority (LA) for a period of at least 13 weeks before the age of 16; and
- Has not reconciled with their parents between leaving care and starting their course.

Students will not be classed as care leavers if they:

- Have been looked after by family members or legal guardians (without the involvement of their LA);
- Have a residency order; or
- Have been given accommodation or supported housing by a charity.

### 3.1.3 Strategic approach to collaboration

It is the intention of the College to seek to enhance progress through building positive working relationships with other stakeholders. This is especially important given the small numbers of HE students, lower tuition fees than many HE providers and thus relatively small Higher Fee Income (HFI) available for access, success and progression measures. Working relationships in this area of work have already been established with regional collaborations such as SWNCOP and SWIoT, feeder secondary schools, and employers in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, skills and expertise to improve evidence-based practice and pave the way for local people of all ages and backgrounds to progress into HE and achieve their personal and professional ambitions.

As a core member of the Next Steps South West (NSSW) the regional NCOP, Exeter College is collaborating both strategically and operationally with other HE providers in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. The NCOP Outreach Hub expansion in Phase 2 will facilitate relationship-building with a broader range of regional stakeholders, employers and third sector organisations, such as the Heart of the South West (HotSW), Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (CioS) Careers Hubs, the Enterprise Advisor Network and local Education Authorities (LEAs), which will enable the College to capitalise on NSSW-forged relationships to develop broader, partner-led WP activity. Advances in the development of outreach evaluation theory and practice, established through NSSW and shared with the consortium, will promote and support the College's progress in access and outreach.

Phase 2 of NSSW provides a flexible operational model offering partners the opportunity to match fund NCOP partner-led projects with institutional APP funding. This will support widening participation outreach delivery beyond the immediate remit of NSSW, encompassing some of the priority groups identified within the context of the College's plan.

The benefits to the College in the implementation of its plan will include:

- opportunities to achieve maximum benefit from the limited College funds available to access work
- access to NSSW staff with expertise and experience in WP outreach work
- access to Outreach Hub funding to build economies of scale and increase viability of jointly delivered outreach projects
- opportunities to deliver activities initiated and fine-tuned by NSSW, to a wider WP audience
- evaluation of activities by the NSSW Evaluation Team, enhancing capacity and current expertise at [partner institution]
- opportunities to capture best practice for outreach, communications and evaluation, and implement institutionally

Each partner-led project proposal will be subject to NSSW procedures, which require explicit identification of which barriers to HE will be addressed, SMART targets, a finance profile, project collaborators, shared aims, and rigorous evaluation of impact, through outcomes-based evidence.

### 3.2 Student Consultation

The College consults with students in relation to plans for enhancing access, success and progression using existing communication and feedback channels and, in particular, the system of University Level (HE) Student Representatives. The process for Student Representative development and engagement and feedback throughout the academic year, as of the time of preparation of this plan, is summarised below:

- The nomination and election of a HE Student Governor;
- The nomination and election of a University Level Officer to the Student Union (established for the 2019/20 academic year onwards)
- The nomination and appointment of Student Representatives for all HE programmes of study;
- The provision of Student Representative training and development workshops, which also cover the management and governance of the College;

- The attendance of Student Representatives at two HE Programme Committee Meetings (different nomenclature may be used depending on the respective Partner University or Awarding body);
  - Feedback is recorded in the meeting minutes and contributes to the development of the programme action plan;
- The attendance of Student Representatives at two cross-College HE Student Voice Forums;
  - Feedback is recorded and disseminated, including to senior management, the Lead Governor for HE and the HE Student Governor and responses provided on a 'You said, we did' basis; and
- The presentation of a summary of cross-college HE Student Voice feedback in the annual HE Self-Assessment Review, which is presented to the Quality and Standards Committee and to the full Board.

The main body with which consultation takes place in relation to the Access and Participation Plan is the 'University Level Student Voice Forum'. Student feedback is particularly valuable in helping the College understand the student journey into, through and out of HE, including barriers to access, factors affecting success and support required for progression to employment or further study. The main outcomes of consultation is that access issues are of relatively limited concern when compared to support for success and progression to further HE study or graduate level employment or self-employment.

Feedback particularly highlighted the need for wellbeing support, disability guidance and employability development. This feedback has already led to the funding associated with previous iterations of this Access and Participation Plan being used for human resources to provide new support services and interventions. Subsequent consultation is enabling these to be reviewed and refined. It has also influenced the re-profiling of the proportion of funding allocated to access, success and progression measures leading to a greater proportion being spent on supporting students to continue on their programmes of study and progress into graduate level employment or further HE study over access interventions.

The timing of plan development is not wholly conducive to student consultation and so feedback obtained via the methods outlined above has been used to inform decision-making rather than direct consultation. However, as identified in Section 9, current HE students have been invited to participate in a HE Student Focus Group to review and evaluate measures introduced across the student life cycle and help plan new or modified measures. Invitations to participate were specifically targeted towards members of priority groups, such as BAME, student with disabilities and care leavers. However, due to the small numbers involved this had to be handled with a high degree of sensitivity and relied on self-identification and voluntary engagement. Where the Access and Participation Plan funding is being used to provide targeted support services to aid the success and progression of priority groups, then users are invited on an ongoing basis to provide feedback individually or collectively.

From the 2019/20 academic year onwards the College will have a Student Union, with a wider range of roles and responsibilities, albeit without the paid and/or sabbatical positions associated with larger Colleges and Universities. Through the Student Union it will be possible to engage more actively with both HE and FE representatives, including those representing specific groups in order to gain new perspectives on access and participation which will inform the implementation of this plan going forward.



### 3.3 Research and Evaluation Strategy

Exeter College is in the process of developing its capacity – including the required knowledge, skills and experience – in order to meet the requirements for research and evaluation to support the implementation of this plan and the achievement of its aims, objectives and targets. It proposes to appoint a dedicated Access and Participation Officer to work with the Head of Higher Education (HE), with research and evaluation to be a key area of responsibility. This is reflected in the allocation of funding to research and evaluation within the Targets and Investment Plan, which will be wholly invested in human resources, rather than the procurement of external services.

In addition, in response to the use of the OfS Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool, the Head of Higher Education is ‘cascading down’ training, development and research on evaluation provided by the OfS, Partner Universities and NCOPs. The aim is to establish an ‘evaluation culture’ amongst staff, based in the Departments of Higher Education, Student Experience and Foundation Learning and Support, who are contributing to the provision of measures to deliver on the College’s stated aims, objectives and targets. The aim is to support them in actively engaging with evaluation processes and embedding them into the delivery of their services and support for priority groups. Regular reviews have been initiated as part of the management of the plan to support evaluation and consider outcomes.

Members of the College’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have also been informed of the OfS requirements in relation to evaluation during the process of preparing this plan and of the critical role evaluation plays in meeting Condition A1 ii of the College’s registration as an Approved (Fee Cap) HE Provider, that is to, “Take all reasonable steps to comply with the provisions of the plan” (OfS, 2018). There is commitment to making strategic decisions that are informed by the outcomes of evaluation activities, as part of the organisational approach to monitoring against delivery of the plan as outlined in section 3.4 below.

Based on the self-assessment of performance presented above, the priority groups and life cycle stages that will be the primary focus for research are as follows:

- BAME Students – Success and Progression;
- Disabled Students – Progression;
- Students who are Care Leavers – Success and Progression; and
- Intersections of Characteristics – Additional barriers to Access, Success and Progression.

In addition, the College intends to undertake research to help identify attainment rates amongst the small numbers of students from priority groups who are completing Level 6, full honours degree programmes of study at the College. This will be linked to work to establish an approach to assessing Learning Gain and will be informed by the outcomes of OfS commissioned research projects in this area.

Formal research plans will be prepared for these areas with defined aims, objectives, rationales, methodologies, research tools and ethical approvals. A mix of primary and secondary data and information, qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used, including reviews of published research and focus groups with current students to establish ways of assessing performance during these life cycle stages. Perceived and actual barriers to success and progression and the strategic measures that may be implemented to address them will also be investigated. The conclusions and recommendations of the research will be used to inform future iterations of this plan and to guide work in this area.

At the time of the preparation of this plan, the College has currently adopted a Type 1 or Narrative evaluation strategy for its current access, success and participation measures. This is considered to be proportionate to its access and participation work. Such a strategy enables the College to provide a clear and coherent explanation of what measures are needed, why they are needed and how they contribute to the required change in performance (OfS and University of Exeter, 2019). Evaluation approaches used include:

- Establishment of a HE Student Focus Group to review and evaluate measures introduced across the student life cycle and help plan new or modified measures;
- Collation and analysis of data on levels of individual participation in access, success and progression events and activities or use of targeted services and support;
- Creation of reports and undertaking of analysis of College MIS data in relation to HE student enrolments, retentions (continuation) and success (attainment) to monitor;
- Collation and analysis of data from the College MIS on intended destinations of HE students whilst still at the College, to complement that provided by the DLHE (now Graduate Outcomes Survey);
- Utilisation of published research, data and information to establish benchmarks and best practice in relation to access, success and progression measures for priority groups; and
- Participation in academic discourse and in practitioner events to inform implementation and evaluation.

As the College's capacity to undertake evaluation develops and in preparation for the implementation of this iteration of its plan, there will be a move to a Type 2 or Empirical evaluation strategy to enable it to more accurately evaluate whether existing and proposed measures are delivering beneficial results for priority groups. Additional evaluation approaches will include:

- Development of qualitative and quantitative data and information methodologies and tools;
- Validation of methodologies and tools through testing and piloting;
- Recognition of limitations of methodologies and tools, including small sample size considerations;
- Review of ethical considerations, including informed consent, especially due to small sample sizes and risk of identification of individual students;
- Establishment of baseline data for students within priority groups through use of College MIS or provided by the student during consenting process;
- Pre- and post-event, activity, service or support individual questionnaires or other forms of feedback to establish two data and information points;
- Anonymous internal tracking of students within priority groups to establish their success and progression following take-up of services and support or participation in events and activities; and
- Preparation of regular evaluation reports for both individual measures and by student life cycle stage.

Specific examples of evaluation methods being utilised for strategic measures already being implemented include:

- **Access: Contribute funding for a dedicated HE DSA Supervisor/ Advisor to provide specialist advice for HE students**
  - On completion of the first year of this services, which includes outreach and advice to prospective HE students, as well as those already on programmes of study, it has been possible to collate data on the number of students accessing the service and on, the number of students successfully completing DSA applications and securing the support they need. An increase in the number of DSA supported students accessing HE has already been recorded, however, further work is needed to ascertain how this translates into continuation rates. Qualitative information has also been gathered via service user surveys and focus groups and used to refine the way in which the service is delivered.

- **Success: Contribute funding for a dedicated Educational Counsellor for HE students**
  - The numbers of students accessing the service, the number of times individual students access the service and the time in the academic year they access the service are all recorded. This is enabling the service to be adapted to better meet students' needs and the impact the service makes on the continuation of students to be evaluated. Further work is required to enable other factors which affect continuation rates to be considered and relative contributions to be evaluated.
- **Progression: Contribute funding for a dedicated on-line HE Careers Hub**
  - After the first year of use, the College has been able to access data on the number of students that access the hub, when they access the hub during the academic year and the specific applications they utilise. This provides an indication of the contribution made to supporting progression to graduate level employment. Further work is required to better interrogate the available data in order examine any correlations between specific programmes of study and priority groups of students, their use of the hub and progression rates.

There are no areas of exceptionally high spending on strategic measures. Investment is primarily made in human resources to deliver targeted support and interventions. However, to ensure that there is a link between the objectives and targets of this plan and spending on human resources, associated annual objectives will be set within the context of the College's Personal Performance Review (PPR) process.

Financial support will be separately evaluated and going forward this will be undertaken utilising the OfS Financial Support Toolkit for consistency and transparency. The provision of Hardship Funds is currently evaluated and reported in at the end of the academic year to inform future funding allocations. This includes take-up and whether the funding has enabled the student to continue with their programme of study. Application forms are being revised to enable more data to be collected and to establish the allocation to students from priority groups. A similar approach will be taken to the award of Care Leaver Bursaries from 2020/21 onwards, enabling the contribution to their success on programme to be evaluated.

The outcomes from research and the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of evaluation activity will not only feed into the process for monitoring progress (see section 3.4 below) but also to enable those involved in the delivery of support services and interventions to engage in professional reflection and learning to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their work. Furthermore, the outcomes will enable support services and interventions to be reviewed and decisions to be made on whether they should continue as is, be revised or discontinued and replaced with alternative measures. The Head of HE, who has oversight of HE staff development as well as access and participation, will oversee this learning and development process on an annual basis.

### **3.4 Monitoring Progress against Delivery of the Plan**

The Head of HE, with the support of key staff within the Higher Education Department, will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress against the delivery of the plan, to both internal and external stakeholders. To facilitate monitoring the following will be utilised:

- The quantitative and qualitative outcomes of evaluation activity;
- Group and individual student data on access, success and progression available for the College MIS; and
- External data and information which may add additional insights or context, for example from strategic and collaborative partners.

Monitoring will be integrated into the existing College process of producing an annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for HE. The SAR and QIP are scrutinised twice per year by the Senior Leadership Team enabling them to maintain oversight of progress. Interim reports on the implementation of strategic measures and the use of allocated

investment will also be presented to the Senior Curriculum Group and Senior Resources Group respectively, so that any organisational level challenges with implementation can be readily addressed.

The SAR and QIP, also form the basis of an annual report to the Quality and Standards Committee and subsequently to the full Board of the Corporation to enable them to confirm academic standards and the quality of the student experience and for the Accounting Officer to sign the Annual Accountability Return for the OfS. As a result, the Board will have the ultimate oversight and responsibility for progress and will be able to make decisions and require action if progress is not as predicted or indeed gaps and rates for priority groups worsen. This would take the form of a targeted action plan and more regularly reporting and, if necessary, the review, revision and resubmission to the OfS of the overall plan.

Members of staff across the College, for example in the Departments of Student Experience and Foundation Learning and Support, who are contributing to the provision of measures to deliver on its stated aims, objectives and targets will be actively engaged in the monitoring process, in terms of contributing data and information, reviewing outcomes and making changes. HE Student Representatives and Student Union Officers will also be invited to contribute a 'Student Voice' to the process. The outcomes of the monitoring process will be made available to current and prospective students alongside this plan on the University Level (HE) Pages of the College Website and via University Level (HE) pages of the College Moodle-based VLE.

### **3.5 Provision of Information to Students**

Information for prospective students both on the content of this Access and Participation Plan, and on the planned tuition fees, funding and student support provided in order to meet key targets and milestones, will be provided by a number of means. These will include provision of information:

- Via the University Level (HE) Pages of the College Website;
- In the University Level (HE) Prospectus;
- Through communications from the Adult Advisors (prior to enrolment);
- In the enrolment and welcome information provided to students (prior to and at enrolment);
- During induction activities and events for new students;
- Via University Level (HE) pages of the College Moodle-based VLE;
- Through communications from the HE Department and HE Student Engagement Officer (post-enrolment); and
- Through 1:1 information, advice and guidance at all stages of the HE student life cycle.

All HE students will be made aware of the outcomes of monitoring, evaluation and review processes and of progress made towards the key targets and milestones through HE Student Voice activities (see Section 3.2 above).

The College also undertakes to provide timely and accurate information to UCAS and Student Finance England (SFE) to allow them to populate their databases with the most up to date information for potential applicants.

**Prepared and submitted to the Office for Students by the Head of Higher Education  
Approved by the Accounting Officer and Strategic Leadership Team with the  
delegated authority of the Board of the Corporation of Exeter College  
June 2019**

## **5. Appendix**

To be added following completion of assessment by the OfS.

**Access and participation plan  
Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: Exeter College

Provider UKPRN: 10002370

**Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees**

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

The College reserves the right to make annual increases in the tuition fees of new entrants to HE in 2020/21, in line with inflation and with reference to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The aim of such increases, if made, will be to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and learning or on the student experience from increases in the cost of delivery beyond its control.

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£7,495
Foundation degree		£7,495
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£7,495
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£7,745
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	Kingston University 10003678 - Engineering: Includes additional resources and qualifications	£7,745
Foundation degree	University of St Mark & St John 10037449 - Sport: Includes additional resources and qualifications	£7,995
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree		£4,997
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£3,748
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT		£3,748
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

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

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

Provider name: Exeter College

Provider UKPRN: 10002370

## Investment summary

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

### Note about the data:

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

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£22,750.00	£27,000.00	£28,000.00	£28,000.00	£28,000.00
Access (pre-16)	£5,000.00	£7,500.00	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	£8,000.00
Access (post-16)	£7,750.00	£9,500.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Access (adults and the community)	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£7,500.00	£9,500.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£7,500.00	£9,000.00	£9,500.00	£9,500.00	£9,500.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HF1)</b>	£363,460.00	£429,460.00	£445,460.00	£445,460.00	£445,460.00
<b>Access investment</b>	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%	6.3%
<b>Financial support</b>	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%
<b>Total investment (as %HF1)</b>	10.4%	10.6%	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%

