

Access agreement for 2018/19

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### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 Strategy

City College Norwich (CCN) is a large mixed economy college in Norwich. The College has in excess of 9,000 students of which over 1,000 are studying higher education across a wide range of vocational and academic programmes, including growing numbers of higher apprentices.

The College's strategy for higher education is to;

- Reflect the ambitions and aspirations of our students, address the needs of the local and national economy and provide high quality HE teaching and learning
- Provide high quality HE experience for all our students, recruiting both locally and nationally across the age ranges
- Ensure all our HE programmes have great accommodation, appropriate equipment and that we have the infrastructure in place support students to have a full HE experience

Higher education students continue to be drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds and education experiences. The College is committed to;

- providing access to higher education for non-traditional students; typically those who are in work, are not school or college leavers and wish to return to work or education
- providing opportunities from those groups who are historically underrepresented in higher education; by providing clear and relevant progression routes from school and from level 3 programmes within the College.
- providing flexible routes for those in work or with other commitments that mitigate against full time participation
- providing a balanced curriculum which is informed by and provides the education, training and skills development required by local, regional and national employers.

It is important to note that this Access Agreement contains a coherent plan for the delivery of activity to encourage recruitment, effective attainment and good progression for all the College's HE students. For 2018/19, this plan has been constructed as far as is possible for anticipate the impact of two significant developments; the creation of the Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (NEACO) as part of HEFCEs Networks for Collaboration Outreach Project (NCOP) and the identification that Norwich is a Social Opportunity Area by the Government. Both these important initiatives are very much at the planning stage when writing this plan but are likely to be fully operational by 18/19, meaning that it is challenging to anticipate the impact of these initiatives on the Colleges priorities as set out in this plan at this stage.

#### 1.2. Context

1.2.1 The Colleges HE student numbers and nature of the provision have stayed stable in size and scope over recent years, with small changes to the programmes being delivered.

In the academic year 2015/16 City College Norwich delivered Higher Education courses to around 1317 students with all but 6 studying full time programmes. In 2015/16 around 90% of students were enrolled on provision that is prescribed undergraduate and foundation degrees and Diplomas of Higher Education validated by the University of East Anglia with the remaining 10% enrolled on non-prescribed HE mainly in the form of Pearson Higher National Certificates and Diplomas. Since commencing Higher Apprenticeship delivery in 2014/15, this provision has grown significantly and

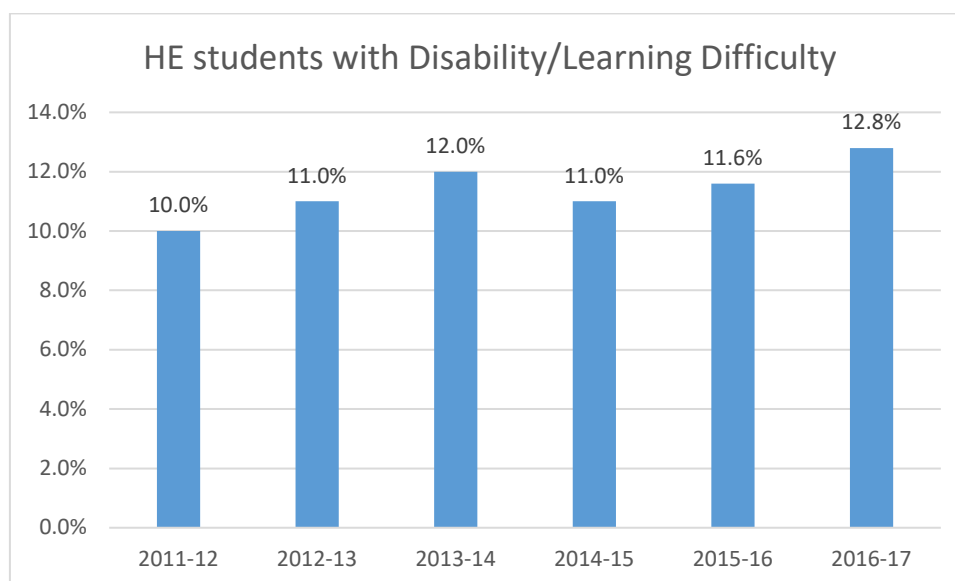
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in 2015/16 accounted for 202 students (15% of total HE cohort). These Higher Apprentices studied a Foundation Degree as their core qualification and work full time alongside their study of 120 HE credits per academic year.

We believe that we have a very strong level of widening participation on most measures, although comparison the National Data and benchmarks sets is difficult given that Colleges are excluded from data such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) widening participation performance indicators. A significant majority (61%) of our 2015/16 HE students were mature students aged over 21 with a majority of our students working either full-time or part-time alongside their full time undergraduate and foundation degree studies. The student body is local to the College with 98% of the students enrolled in 2015/16 from Norfolk and Suffolk; these two counties both have very low HE participation rates compared to other parts of the country. Given this local recruitment pattern, the College therefore does not offer accommodation and the vast majority of students attend the College to study on a day by day basis before returning to their permanent place of residence.

In 2015/16 279 students (24% of the cohort) came from wards identified by HEFCE as HE “coldspots” under the new Network for Collaborative Outreach Projects. This clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to widening participation in areas of targeted need.

The number of HE students who disclose a disability/learning difficulty increased by 1.2% during 2016/17 and is significantly above comparable sector data.



The College’s HE offer is broadly a higher vocational and technical offer, with a majority of courses being developed with local employer groups to meet specific skills demands of the region. There are a high number of “employer sponsored” students (i.e. students where their fees are paid by their employer) accounting for around 23% of the 2015/16 cohort. Courses commence at 2 points in the academic year, September and February to reflect employer demand.

The College has transitioned over a 5 year period from being 100% indirectly funded for its HE via the University of East Anglia to a situation in 2016/17 where all but a handful of intercalating students are now 100% directly funded to CCN by HEFCE.

1.2.2 The College is a member of the Transforming Education in Norfolk (TEN) Group and working within this context is committed to supporting the overarching ambition to enable students to progress seamlessly from one member organisation to another. The TEN Group contains high school and primary academies as well as a University Technical

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College and the college is working alongside those institutions on a number of areas relating to promoting post 16 and subsequently HE progression. Whilst the College is not a formal sponsor of these institutions, this structure provides a long-term strategic relationship between the College and a number of local schools, some of which serve communities with low levels of HE progression as identified by NEACO. We are committed to working with a number of the TEN group academies to continue to support them raising the attainment of their students and to promote HE progression.

### 1.4 Higher Education delivery at College

Whilst the College currently has two dedicated buildings in the centre of Norwich and all the College's higher education provision, this will have changed by 2018/19. The college is vacating one of its current HE buildings and focusing delivery on the remaining, Norfolk House. In addition the recently completed government commissioned Area Review for Norfolk and Suffolk, has developed a recommendation that the College pursue the co-location of it's HE with a partner College Easton and Otley College and these plans are in the early stages of development. It is impossible to predict the exact scope and nature of this co-location but it is possible that the accommodation for the College's students will have changed considerable by 2018/19.

The HE delivery at CCN is supported by the HE Administration Office and all operations are managed by the Head of School. The School has over 50 academic staff on a range of full and part time contracts who teach only higher education. Additional specialist teaching is provided by sessional staff and staff who remain in the other schools in the College.

In delivering higher education through a discrete School within the College we are able to;

- Raise aspirations for the whole community and especially for those who are unfamiliar or have been previously reluctant to consider higher education
- Help to create an HE ethos in the School which will benefit both staff and students
- Create an aspirational progression route for our FE students
- Provide a significant enhancement to the student experience
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of the student voice to which this development is, in large part, a response.

## 2 Admissions, fees and financial support

### 2.1 Admissions

Admissions procedures at the College are designed to offer equal access to all applicants. The College is fully committed to considering applications from prospective students in a consistent manner and without prejudice. The College will ensure effective support is in place to allow prospective students to make an informed decision on their choice of programme.

The majority of our programmes recruit via UCAS, and the College regularly reviews and updates our published information to ensure it is an accurate representation of the College's provision to enable prospective students to make informed choices. The course information on UCAS also includes a direct link through to the specific course page on the College website.

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In 2016/17 through an internal restructure of the School of Higher Education a **new Academic Leader role focussing on the Admissions aspects of the work of the College was created to further enhance our focus on this area of work and the access related issues associated. Action 1**

### 2.2 Fees

Our higher education fees for 2018/19 are outlined in the table below:

Fee type	2018/19 fees	% fee change from 2017/18
Higher Education fees ( <i>except BSc Aviation Engineering</i> )	£7,500 (FT 120 credits)	0
	£625 (PT per 10 credits)	0
BSc Aviation Engineering	£9,000 (FT 120 credits)	0
	£750 (PT per 10 credits)	0
HNC/HND fees	£4,500 (FT 120 credits)	2+%

Information regarding our course fees is published on both the College website along with details of any additional financial support that is available to Higher Education students. Additionally, all students receive written notification of their tuition fees when they are sent details about the arrangements for enrolment each year. We also publish fee information in our Higher Education prospectus and on the UCAS website.

The majority of our students take out Student Loans and the College therefore updates the SLC Course Database annually to ensure that the correct fee information is available when students apply for their loans.

### 2.3 Financial support package

The College offers a short term emergency loan facility which is designed to assist students who are having difficulties with their SLC applications, often because they lack the support available to school and college students during the application period – particularly if they have applied late.

The College also operates a hardship fund (Student Opportunity Fund), which will continue to run in 18/19 for students facing financial hardship that is proving to be a barrier to accessing their education and link awards to successful achievement at key stages. **We will operate hardship funding through our well established Student Opportunity Fund. Action 6**

## 3 Access

Our primary commitment is to increase the progression rates for Level 3 and Access students enrolled on programmes at CCN.

In 2015/16, approximately 4% of Level 3 students progress on to HE within the College. We want to raise this to 30%. Around 12% of Access students progressed on to HE within the College and we want to increase this to a minimum of 50%.

### 3.1 Collaborative outreach

3.1.1 The College works within a federation of schools, colleges and academies which are

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committed to achieving this ambition within the Group. This ethos is reflected in the detail of our Access agreement.

*'One of the first targets set by the TEN Group at inception was to join up an education system that allows students to progress seamlessly from one member to the other. If you start school within the Group, and work hard, succeeding at each stage, you should be able to move through the key stages one to four, on to further education, higher education and even postgraduate study – all without leaving the federation.'*

<http://www.tengroup.org.uk/purpose>

Whilst some of these schools serve wards identified as NEACO target wards, other schools do not serve these wards but nevertheless are part of the broader Norfolk picture of relatively low levels of HE progression.

3.1.2 Outside of the TEN Group, the College attends local high schools open days and our tutors deliver taster days for level 3 college students. **We will continue to run subject specific outreach sessions in 18/19 at local targeted High Schools (outside of NEACO priority areas) in order to encourage progression to HE.** **Action 2**

3.1.3 The College holds the Buttle UK Quality Mark in recognition of its commitment to supporting young people in and leaving care. The College is continuing to build on its links with local Children In Need (CIN) teams in order to ensure that family support workers, social workers and Guidance Advisers across Norfolk are informed about the support that we offer to young people. Currently much of the focus of this work is on the transition at post-16 into further education. **We will continue a programme for prospective HE students from social care backgrounds in 18/19.** **Action 3**

### 3.2 Information, advice and guidance

3.2.1 We recognise and appreciate that good quality, impartial and timely information, advice and guidance is key to ensuring that our students enrol on the right course. Effective careers guidance inspires prospective students and helps them to explore appropriate choices and to think about their onward progression in to work or further learning.

- The College provides both specialist and general information, advice and guidance services through the Advice Shop. Support is available on a range of areas including; HE curriculum offer, entry requirements, applications and expectations
- Student finance including loans, maintenance grants, bursaries, hardship funds and general financial advice
- Information and referral to our Specialist Adviser team who ensure that students requiring specialist support for their studies can access it
- Careers advice and guidance

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3.2.2 We know that some of the best advice prospective students receive about a course is from our current students. Mentoring can provide valuable insight for potential students and is a mutual way of learning that helps to develop transferable skills and assist with decision making as part of an advice and guidance process. The College has a wealth of experience in setting up student ambassador and mentoring schemes and **we will employ student ambassadors via our “student crew” function to support open days and outreach events in areas outside of NEACO target wards.** **Action 4**

3.2.3 Each year the College host an Annual Adviser Day. The day is for careers staff in schools and sixth forms and anyone supporting young people to make their choices post-16 and post-18. The event is also promoted to social workers and family support workers. **We will continue to run the Annual Adviser Day to increase knowledge and understanding about our HE offer to professionals in the local careers and IAG community.**

**Action 5**

## 4 Retention and student success

### 4.1 Engaging with student voice

We engage with student voice through our active Student’s Union, HE Student Forum and Chair. We also have an HE Student Governor who attends Corporation meetings to provide an HE perspective at senior level within the organisation.

### 4.2 Wrap around support at the College includes;

- Counselling and wellbeing services
- Specialist Advisers
- Financial, International, Careers, Employability
- Students’ Union
- Safeguarding



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In response to feedback from students and the increased referrals we have seen for additional support from wellbeing and counselling services at the College. **A dedicated HE Welfare Officer (PAL) supports students who are facing personal barriers that are affecting their attendance and retention. A Wellbeing Team Leader that coordinates our support service and both positions will continue to provide dedicated HE student support during 18/19.**

### Action 7

#### 4.3 Academic support

4.3.1 The College delivers a Higher Learning Skills module which was designed to support mature students returning to education and students with non-standard entry qualifications in their first year. This provision has proved extremely successful and will continue.

The College provides each FT learner with 3 hrs p.a. individual tutorial support to monitor progress, set targets using the e-ILP and provide academic and motivational guidance and support for all students, but especially those in our WP target groups.

4.3.2 The College's Information Store provides specialist advice and sessions to groups or individual higher education learners to support higher education studies, including:

- Accessing resources including books, e-resources and journals, including from offsite
- Accessing the UEA online resources
- Referencing and higher education study skills
- Dissertation or assignment research
- Access to online tutorials and helpsheets via Blackboard.

A dedicated HE library at Norfolk House provides specifically chosen resources, access to pcs and printing as well as the opportunity to book a specialist advice or group session.

4.3.3 The College has strong levels of retention of students currently with data indicating that our retention rates as assessed by HEFCE for the Annual Provider Review process are higher than benchmark for both full time and part time students.



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### 5 Progression

#### 5.1 Employability skills

Within our core modules we include work skills and through work experience and placement we provide students with opportunities to develop appropriate transferable skills for their future employment.

During 2015/16 we worked toward setting up an alumni mentoring scheme on three of our programmes Health, Social Work and Childhood Studies. On our Business programmes we have created a LinkedIn group for students, employers and alumni to network and support each other.

#### 5.2 Understanding local employment patterns

We run a conference programme every year for students which focusses on employability and looking at local workforce needs. Topics have included dementia care, end of life care, learning disabilities, social work and **we will continue to expand this programme to give our students an insight into these employment sectors. We have held a series of successful Careers Fairs and Sector Specific Conferences which have led to student employment and we will continue to hold these during 18/19.** **Action 10**

**We will invest in improving our use of Local Market Intelligence software to inform advice and guidance about careers progression and inform the development of new programmes to heighten progress to employment.** **Action 9**

#### 5.3 Information, advice and guidance

The College provides both specialist and general information advice and guidance through its Advice Shop. Support is available on a range of topics but specifically:

- HE curriculum offer, entry requirements, applications and expectations
- Student finance including Student loans, maintenance grants bursaries the hardship fund and general financial advice
- Accommodation
- A counselling service
- International Student Advisor
- Referrals to our Special Learning Difficulties (SpLD) team
- Specialist HE careers advice

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6 Actions and planned activities

Action no:	Activity planned	Cost (£)
Access	1 We will continue to support the Academic Lead role for Admissions to focus on access related issues	£21,064
	2 We will continue to run subject specific outreach sessions in 18/19 at local targeted High Schools (outside of NEACO priority areas) in order to encourage progression to HE.	£44,000
	3 We will continue a programme for prospective HE students from social care backgrounds in 18/19.	£35,000
	4 We will employ student ambassadors via our “student crew” function to support open days and outreach events in areas outside of NEACO target wards..	£12,525
	5 We will continue to run the Annual Adviser Day to increase knowledge and understanding about our HE offer to professionals in the local careers and IAG community.	£10,000
	6 We will operate hardship funding through our well established Student Opportunity Fund.	£50,000
Retention and student success	7 We will continue to provide a dedicated HE Welfare Officer and the additional post of Wellbeing Team Leader to support students who are facing personal barriers that are affecting their attendance and retention.	£127,601
	8 We will invest in improving our use of Local Market Intelligence software to inform advice and guidance about careers progression and inform the development of new programmes to heighten progress to employment.	£10,000
Progression	10 We will continue to expand the employability programme to give our students an insight into these employment sectors. We have held a series of successful Careers Fairs and Sector Specific Conferences which have led to student employment and we will continue to hold these during 18/19.	£23,500

7 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

We shall monitor and evaluate the success and impact of this Access agreement using a variety of indicators:

- NSS scores
- Internal student surveys and questionnaires
- Recruitment, retention and achievement analysis
- DLHE data
- HE Student Forum and focus groups

We are committed to setting a target that measures the outcome of all activities in time for the 2019-20 access agreement process.

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#### 8 Consulting with students

City College Norwich is committed to ensuring that the student voice is at the heart of everything we do. We will not only consult students on their views but actively involve and collaborate with students to shape college decisions. Our aim is to encourage students who are active participators and co-producers, not just passive receivers of initiatives or requests for information but putting themselves forward to make a positive contribution to their learning and to college life.

#### 9 Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity

The College is actively promoting a culture of equality inclusivity and diversity through an extensive programme of staff development and review of all protocols, policies regulations and procedures. The College has committed itself fully to 'Ways of Working' which are entirely focused on embedding its robust policies on equality and diversity in every aspect of college activity and are threaded through the College's Strategic Framework.

Due to the success of implementing the College's 'Ways of Working' to staff, interest shown from students and the success of our students delivering equality and diversity sessions to staff, the 'Ways of Working' are now introduced to all students during their induction.

Both staff and students now have a unifying tool to help build positive lines of communication and agree ways of working between themselves and each other.

As part of our strategy for embedding the fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs) we have reviewed how these relate to our 'Ways of Working'; this has highlighted that the College is already actively promoting these values. For example to be Respectful and Fair, tolerant and supportive of others regardless of their background.