Fee & Access Plan
2019 / 20

2019/20 Fee and access plan: focus and contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The over-arching aim of NPTC Group of Colleges (the Group) 2019/20 fee and access plan is to continue to invest income strategically into activities and interventions to meet the Group's strategic objectives and to encourage participation in higher education from under-represented groups. NPTC Group of Colleges is fully committed to encouraging participation from under-represented groups and to promoting higher education. This plan will continue the positive work that the Group has already completed to ensure equality of opportunity throughout Wales and the regions in which the Colleges are situated. In addressing the equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education the Group is committing 14.3% of the income it will generate in 2019/20 student fees equating to £107,000. The Group's fee and access plan targets have been aligned with the key performance indicators in the Group's Higher Education 2016-2021 Strategy which are organised under three categories; Student Transitions, Standards and Performance and the Student Experience. The 2019/20 fee and access plan for NPTC Group of Colleges builds on the 2018/19 fee and access plan supporting the Group's mission statement 'Inspiring Learning, Enriching Lives, Delivering Success'. The Group's mission statement is underpinned by the Group's vision which states that by 2019 the Group will be:

- A key partner in strategic networks;
- A college delivering excellent teaching and learning;
- An enterprising and entrepreneurial college;
- A college that successfully prepares students for positive progression;
- A recognised lead in using technology;
- An employer of choice;
- The employers choice for learning and engagement;
- A college that is helping to tackle poverty by improving economic prosperity;
- A college that promotes Welsh-medium and bilingual learning.

The strategic and operational activities of the Group are governed by a core set of values which support the equality of opportunity and the promotion of Higher Education to groups under-represented in higher education. The Group's value statements commit us to being:

- Student and learning centred in our actions;
- Caring and inclusive in our attitudes;

- Responsible and respectful in our behaviour;
- Bound by equality and diversity as our guiding principles;
- Professional and corporate in our conduct;
- Enterprising and innovative in our outlook;
- Tolerant and supportive in our responses.

The setting of targets and delivery of activities, events and interventions to support the achievement of the 2019/20 Fee and access plan is a result of the learning and the evaluation of the success of previous fee plan targets and feedback from a number of mechanisms including those from staff, students, surveys, data reports, internal quality assurance, external examiners, external quality review etc. The focus and content of the fee and access plan is based on activities and initiatives to attract and support all students, and especially those from under-represented groups to study higher education and to successfully complete and progress from their programme of study.

THE STUDENT VOICE

A Student Union was created in May 2017 and representatives of the Student Union meet regularly with staff both formally and informally. The Student Union represents the Group's student body, including H.E. students, providing a student voice throughout the organisation from programme level to the Board of Governors.

Students are placed at the heart of the learning experience and their views are regularly considered and are highly valued. Both staff and students have roles and responsibilities to maintain and enhance the student experience. The Higher Education Student Charter was created by the Group to encourage the commitment of all staff and students to the principle of partnership and to make clear the basis on which that partnership rests.

The Group's Student Involvement Strategy focuses on student involvement under four strands:-
- Individual Applicants and Students,
- Student Representatives,
- Bursary, Scholarship and Ambassador Programmes and
- Student Union.

The Group operates a Student Representation system, with higher education Students Representatives elected and trained each year to represent all H E programmes. These representatives are vital to shaping the student experience and they act as the link between their peers, the academic school and the senior management team.

The Student Governor is an elected member of the Group's governing body and provides insight into the experience of being a student. The Student Governor has the opportunity to comment on Group policies and plans to improve the student experience and outcomes. Students are represented on the Group's programme review processes and provide feedback through survey responses which all contribute to set the direction for enhancement. Students are involved in identifying

themes and projects for enhancement with students actively participating in module reviews, annual monitoring reports, Programme Committees and the online student feedback system Vocal Eyes.

There is representation by students on the Governing Board and the Group is currently reviewing how to improve student representation throughout the Group. However, in a small Institution which is located over numerous sites gaining representative student involvement for all students is challenging. A proposal to include a co-opted student advisor to the board has been approved by the Chairs' Committee and is due to be discussed by the Governing Body and the Board are also considering paid sabbatical positions.

All provision at NPTC Group of Colleges is designed to be accessible to all and to be flexible to suit the learners' needs. The modes of delivery vary and there are opportunities for those who need to fit their study in and around their working or caring responsibilities. Through the Student Involvement Strategy the Group is making the transition to students becoming active participants reflecting the core principle of the Wise Wales Statement on Partnership for Higher Education. The Group is committed to overcoming the barriers outlined in the "Breaking Down the Barriers to Student Opportunities and Youth Social Action report". Through a variety of mechanisms, including the offering of bursaries and a Higher Education Hardship Fund, timetabling to fit around family and parenting commitments, these are also designed to accommodate those who need to work and those that wish to volunteer alongside their studies. Access and referral to advice and support is made as easy as possible, including finance, careers, counselling, mental health, enterprise and study skill support. Traditionally HE in FE enjoy smaller group sizes and informal as well as formal contact with lecturers and a personal tutor provides individual pastoral care and support.

The student body are engaged in regular communication with their Higher Education Coordinators who meet termly to share student views with the other Higher Education Coordinators and relevant staff. There is an Annual Student Conference and this helped to shape the fee and action plan with additional activities for supporting students from under-representatives groups being suggested by the student representatives. Final engagement of the student body with the fee and access plan is undertaken when the fee and access plan is discussed at the Governing Board.

The Group website contains detailed information on Higher Education Fees and Financial Support alongside the Group's Fee Policy and its terms and conditions to enable students to be clear on their responsibilities and the total cost of their higher education programme. This complies with the Competition and Markets Authority regulations for H E providers. The Group Admissions team communicate fees and funding information directly to applicants at the offer stage. The tuition fee includes all essential costs including mandatory trips and visits. The tuition fees for 2019/20 are proposed at £7500 and are the same as 2018/19 and the tuition fee on entry is the same continuing fee for the duration of the course. The Group strives to minimise additional costs but details of any additional costs are published in the prospectus and individual programme profiles on the Group website.

The Group hosts a number of Higher Education information events including student finance talks and provides clear information for parents and students. Fee levels, bursaries and the Higher Education Hardship Fund are widely advertised through open events and through publications and online information.

MAKING THE CASE FOR THE FOCUS AND CONTENTS, INCLUDING THE STRATEGIC APPROACH, OF PLANS.

The Group has a good track record of attracting individuals from under-represented groups across its portfolio of provision. Many of our students are mature learners returning to study. The Group's approach to supporting equality of opportunity and the promotion of HE is aligned with its mission. NPTC Group of College's mission statement is "Inspiring Learning, Enriching Lives and Delivering Success'. There are 10 strategic aims with 39 strategic objectives. The strategic objectives that link to the Fee and access plan aims are (the numbering relates to the Group's Strategic priorities):

1.1 Attract students from all sectors of the community and promote high aspirations and excellence, insisting on the achievement of the highest possible standards of performance from staff and students;

3.1 Develop a Group culture whereby all teachers aspire and have confidence to deliver excellent lessons and all students enjoy the best possible learning experience;

3.2 Utilise sector leading teaching, learning and assessment strategies that support students in taking responsibility for their own learning and enhance their independent learning skills;

3.3 Promote excellent student engagement by providing effective communication channels for 'the learner voice' and appropriate representation of students on decision making groups and committees at all levels within the organisation;

3.4 Use ILT to enrich and to support teaching and learning and increase the use of blended and e-learning to improve access and flexibility of provision for students;

5.1 Provide a curriculum that allows positive progression and appropriate opportunities for students to move on to HE, employment or further learning;

7.2 Invest in staff by planning and providing high quality continuous professional development (CPD) that provides opportunities for professional growth;

8.1 Improve employer engagement and establish effective partnership, networking and collaborative arrangements that provide a good understanding of their current and future training needs;

8.2 Work in partnership with employers to develop workforce skills by providing education and training that will help individuals improve their skills and support improvements in business profitability;

8.4 Ensure provision is flexible to meet employer needs including programme content, mode of delivery, timing and location;

9.1 Target non-traditional and under-represented students in order to increase participation, reduce the number of people classified as NEET and increase the skills and knowledge of those already in employment;

9.2 Work in partnership with other local and national providers of adult and community based learning to provide and encourage access to formal and informal learning opportunities which engage learners, particularly those from disadvantaged communities;

9.4 Engage positively with the regional agenda for the provision of higher education, working with HE and FE partners to increase participation rates in Higher Education in NPT and Powys;

9.5 Identify students most at risk of failure and provide effective tracking and support for all students to progress through the system successfully;

10.1 Increase incrementally the amount of Welsh-medium/bilingual learning in support of the Welsh Government Welsh-medium education strategy;

10.3 Develop the capacity and skills of academic staff to deliver planned increases in Welsh-medium and bilingual curriculum.

The Group's 2016-2021 Higher Education Strategy is aligned and committed to achieving the values, visions and objectives in the Group's 2015-19 Strategic Plan. The fee and access plan will support all of the objectives of the Higher Education Strategy and in particular to further enhance the successful outreach and school liaison work to continue to widen participation in higher education and build aspiration and ambition amongst potential students. The objectives of the Higher Education Strategy are:

- To actively encourage students to develop a lifelong relationship with the Group from pre-entry, to undergraduate and alumni;

- To further enhance the successful outreach and school liaison work to continue to widen participation in higher education and build aspiration and ambition amongst potential students;

- To provide clear advice, guidance and information to enable informed choice, and curriculum which meets student needs and adds genuine value;

- To promote internal progression to higher education from Level 3 to Level 4 and from Level 5 to Top Ups;

- To support our staff to be professional and pro-active in their pursuit of current knowledge and skills and confident to respond quickly and effectively to future challenges through continuous professional development;

- To deliver engaging and inspiring teaching and learning approaches to raise student aspirations and provide a stimulating learning experience;

- To develop a higher education community in partnership with our students and staff. To understand student needs, learn from their experiences and work to continually enhance their experience, helping to secure future levels of recruitment and maximising student retention and achievement rates across the higher education provision;

- To provide an excellent experience for all higher education students which is motivating, rewarding and both challenges and inspires within a supportive environment.

- To continue to proactively engage with a wide range of employers and organisations striving to address the skills needed by local and regional industries, and provide clear information on progression pathways between skills levels to facilitate planned growth. Alongside in-depth subject knowledge, we will equip our graduates for life and work beyond the Group and enable them to thrive, helping to ensure their success.

The Group's Strategic Equality Plan 2016 responds to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. As a listed public body the Group has responsibilities under this act to comply with the public sector equality duty, known as the general duty. The three elements or 'aims' as they are usually referred to are;

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the act;
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Applying the general duties to the work of the Group will aim to ensure we minimise disadvantage, try to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people, and encourage people to participate in public life where they are under-represented. Fostering good relations requires us to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between all people. Staff are aware of the role equality and diversity plays through the recruitment and selection process, during their induction, through an online training module and role specific training.

Students address equality and diversity throughout the induction process and during the tutorial programme to ensure understanding. Tutorial content and delivery is reviewed annually and the Group gathers student feedback on the relevance and effectiveness of the tutorials. We seek to maximise all opportunities to mainstream diversity within existing Group events and also to attempt innovative ideas wherever possible. We believe that equality of opportunity is at the heart of all we do and is central to achieving our mission and promoting success for all our students. NPTC Group of Colleges is an inclusive organisation and believes it is essential that all members of the community feel valued and able to fulfil their potential. An important element of this vision is that equality and diversity are not separate or additional concerns but central to our life and work. The fee and access plan objectives and spend and provision under Equality of Opportunity support the Strategic Equality Plan objectives. The Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016 sets out the following objectives:

- Embed the principles of Equality & Diversity across key decision making and policy within NPTC Group of Colleges

- Expand the quantity and quality of data pertaining to protected characteristics on staff and students so that we can measure the impact of SEP;

- Improve enrolment, retention & attainment for all and in particular for students from any under-represented protected characteristic group;

- Improve enrolment, retention & attainment for all and in particular for students from any under-represented protected characteristic group;

- Ensure access to learning opportunities and employment by improving facilities and services for all, regardless of their protected characteristics;

- Consolidate equality & diversity related awareness raising and training for all the NPTC Group of Colleges.

- Continue to foster effective working relationships with community groups, partners and public bodies.

The Group is an active member of the South West Wales and the Mid/North Wales Reaching Wider Partnerships. The Reaching Wider Programme is a Wales-wide HEFCW strategy, established as an initiative in 2002, to widen participation and access to HE, supporting social inclusion and upskilling. It aims to increase participation in HE from groups and communities in Wales (in particular those from Communities First areas), where participation is low, by creating a wide range of study opportunities and learning pathways to higher education. The Group will continue to contribute the projects that are designed to encourage:

- participation at HE level for groups in Communities First areas and the lower quintile areas of the region;
- ways of raising the education and vocational aspirations of children and the parents, carers, families;

- aspiration raising activities for young people and adults not yet at the point of transition to HE;
- collaboration with Further Education (FE) and other stakeholders to improve FE to HE progression routes and information, advice and guidance on HE related issues;
- activities that support the education and skills of looked after children, care leavers and their carers.

The Group is highly committed to widening access and improving equality of opportunity for all and has recently appointed a Widening Access Coordinator with responsibility for this area. This new role will be critical to the achievement of the 2019/20 Fee and access plan targets and will aim to:

- develop and deliver a widening access programme which aims to facilitate the entrance of people from less represented backgrounds into FE and HE;
- work closely with primary and secondary schools and partner universities across the geography of the Group.
- meet the relevant widening access and other identified targets in the Group's annual HEFCW fee and access plan and those set for further education;
- work in association with the North and Mid Wales Reaching Widening Partnership and the South West Wales Reaching Wider Partnership to develop and deliver new and existing activities.

The objectives in the Higher Education Strategy align with the requirements of the fee and access plan: to promote equality of opportunity to support under-represented groups in higher education and to promote higher education. The over-arching aim of the 2019/20 fee and access plan is to invest income strategically into activities and interventions to meet the strategic objectives outlined below and encourage participation of groups that are under-represented in Higher Education.

The setting of targets and delivery of activities, events and interventions to support the achievement of the 2019/20 fee and access plan is a result of the evaluation of the success of previous fee plan targets. An overview of the progress against areas identified in the 2016/17 Fee Plan is provided below.

- **Strategic outcome 1: A bursary programme designed to target those domiciled in the bottom quintile of Lower Super Output Areas in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or in Communities First cluster areas and progression to Level 6. Strategic aim 1a: To recruit 12 students into year 1 who are domiciled in the bottom quintile of Lower Super Output Areas in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation or in Communities First cluster areas.**

  NPTC Group currently offer 3 categories of bursary for directly funded student who meet the following criteria: International Fee paying student, looked after child/care leaver or who are resident in a postcode area that is in the bottom quintile of Lower Super Output Areas in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, or is in a Communities First area. There are currently no international students studying on our direct funded courses. 3 students in

total applied for the looked after child bursary including one student on a directly funded course, but did not produce any evidence to support their claim, so did not receive a bursary. 22 direct funded students applied for the "postcode" bursary, but only 6 students lived in the qualifying postcode areas.

- **Strategic outcome 2: Development of a 5 credit module of Welsh-medium provision relevant to the HND in Computing and Systems Development students. Strategic aim 2a: To deliver a five credit Welsh-medium/bilingual module to 10 students.**

In 2016/17 one module was taught bilingually on the first year of the HND in Computing and Systems Development. In 2017/18 NPTC Group offered a module in the HND C&SD, and also HNC CBE (Construction), HNC CBE (Civil Engineering) and also HND CBE (Civil Engineering). However, no students selected this option. Discussions are ongoing with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to working towards improving the uptake in future years.

- **Strategic outcome 3: To improve the retention of full-time undergraduate students. Strategic 3a: To meet a retention target of 90% for the HND Computing and Systems Development year 1 cohort.**

Weekly tutorial sessions were introduced aimed at improving study skills, literacy and numeracy skills. During the early stages of the academic year students were signposted to the intensive support services provided by Student Services. Staff undertook 'fitness to study' training and mental health training. Retention rates for the HND Computing and Systems Development in 2016/17 were 93% with 15 enrolments, one transfer and one withdrawal.

- **Strategic outcome 4: To improve the employability of our graduates. Strategic aim 4a: To incorporate employability skills into tutorial activities and to explore international opportunities for student placements and Strategic aim 4b: To put on two events in 2016/17 with a focus on employability and creating aspiration in our HE students.**

An HE tutorial scheme of work has been developed and programme action plan has incorporated actions regarding employability for 2016/17. This was supported by numerous activities to promote employability and to inspire HE students into employment/further study. Examples of events that students participated in included an employability fair where students had the chance to discuss recruitment processes, the skills required from the employers point of view and opportunities available. Some employers were also offering part time paid employment and/or voluntary positions. As a direct result of the event 6 students were offered work – two remain in part-time employment. Real life scenarios were created for students to undertake mock interviews. Students were given a job description beforehand and are put through a 'real life' job interview. They are asked to dress appropriately and to bring a CV. Students were asked a series of interview questions and received feedback on their interview and CV at the end of the sessions

Progression events were held at Neath and Afan Campuses where students with additional learning needs and their parents/guardians were invited in to speak to various support providers about the options available to their child/ward after they have finished their education. The students was pleased with the event and we will look to do this annually, engaging more businesses and support providers as the event progresses. USW ran a session with Level 5 and 6 students on opportunities at Level 7 alongside an Employment Fair on Neath Campus. The Group were heavily involved in the Careers festival at RWAS Builth.

The 2014/15 DLHE survey reported that 53% of graduates were undertaking full-time study, 27% were in full-time work, 7% in part-time work and 13% undertaking work and study. 93% in total were in employment or further study. In the 2015/16 DLHE 25 graduates from directly funded courses were eligible to take the survey. 22 responded, one was deceased, and two did not take the survey. This resulted in a response rate of 88%. Of the students who responded 54% are in work, 27% have returned to full-time study, 14% are working and studying, 5% are doing something different.

60% of the students who have found full-time employment have remained in Neath Port Talbot/Swansea, and no student has found employment outside Wales. 60% of students have found employment in Construction or Engineering trades, including all students who are working and studying part-time. The remainder of students have either obtained full-time employment in other sectors, or are carrying out voluntary work.

There have been slow improvements in the overall non-continuation statistics over the last few years. With this in mind, the Group has commissioned and invested in two Enhancement projects in 2016/17 with a number of recommendations introduced in 2017/18. These are focused on the quality of teaching and learning and on improving academic skills in Higher Education and seek to improve non-continuation. The Group has also purchased a new pastoral module for full implementation in 2017/18 designed to increase attendance and retention and help students to remain motivated and focused on learning, keep student achievement on track by enabling them to take responsibility for their learning, with access to key information such as attendance and punctuality and to maximise outcomes and provide a quality learner experience.

The 2019/20 Fee and Action Plan continues to invest in supporting and increasing retention, progression and completion, particularly in individuals from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers. The investment directed to 'provide high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education' has also been increased.

- **Strategic outcome 5: Strengthening of student voice mechanisms: Strategic aim 5a: To support Student Services in ensuring effective HE**

student engagement and capturing of the student voice. Stretegic aim 5b: To maintain or improve the NSS overall satisfaction rate of 92% from 2013/14.

The Student Union project continued with HE student representatives being nominated for 2016/17: The Student Union constitution was approved by the Group Senior Management Team. A revised student involvement strategy has been implemented for the Group. This clearly articulates the framework of student involvement activity to support the student journey. The framework is composed of four strands. Each strand articulates the groupings and types of involvement, the range of activities and associated reporting and feedback mechanisms. The strategy addresses all students and modes of attendance. Student Involvement activity is overseen by the Student Involvement Working Group and now includes student representation from all types of provision, including HE. A calendar of Student Involvement Activities is produced on an annual basis and placed on Moodle for students and SharePoint for staff. The Framework for Student Involvement strands are:

Strand One - Individual Students Activities for HE Students this includes - Developing/creating an ILP, Participating in Surveys (induction, national student survey and at the point of exit), articulating view using VocalEyes, access to social media and participation in enrichment, citizenship, sporting and cultural activities. All surveys can be analysed by course, type of provision, by academic school and campus.

Strand Two - Student Representatives – Each course year has student representation. The representatives have received training from the Neath CBC Children Rights Unit. Student representatives attend course team meetings and reviews, Group Senedd meetings, the Annual Student Conference. They have representation on relevant Group committees, strategy and working groups, involvement in confirmation of SAR judgements, internal inspections and evaluation of services and promote the use of the VocalEyes platform. All consultative activities can be analysed by course, type of provision, by academic school and by campus.

Strand Three - Ambassador Programme – HE students are eligible to apply for a Group Ambassadorship. In this capacity they support academic schools at open events and parent evenings, the admission team at interview evenings, taster events, high school presentations and enrolment and offer to provide peer mentoring support through the promotion of student support services.

Strand Four - Student Union – the Student Union is in its infancy and has HE/FE Sections. Throughout the next academic year the Union will develop a range of Clubs and Societies, general interest groups, social ethical and religious groups and activities and events like a Ball, Fresher's Fayre and Rag week

The overall NSS satisfaction score for 2014 was 92%, in 2015 84% and in 2016 was 90%. In 2017 the overall satisfaction was 100%. The survey also reported that scores were generally higher than previous years with "Teaching on my Course" being rated at 94%.

- **Strategic outcome 6: To begin to attract international students and to encourage staff and students to take advantage of international study and development opportunities. Strategic aim 6a: To support a study trip or staff member/student to undertake an international visit, study or development.**

  Staff and students within the Group have benefited from opportunities to work/travel abroad. Several opportunities have been made available to staff and students including opportunities in China and India. The Assistant Principal (Worldwide Operations) travels extensively in pursuit of developing these opportunities and has also been active in promoting the Group's educational programmes overseas. Several international students have enrolled on FE programmes but the Group is yet to successfully recruit any international HE students.

- **Strategic outcome 7: To enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Strategic aim 7a: To introduce a scholarly active staff development scheme at the Group.**

  NPTC Group of Colleges introduced a process which enables teaching practitioners to improve their academic and professional skills through self-reflection and collaboration. The primary purpose is to support individuals in making the most of their personal and professional learning by a process of self -assessment in which they can reflect and identify developmental aspects of their practice. Guidance throughout the process enables practitioners to understand the benefits of self-reflection, complete relevant documentation, identify and prioritise learning and development needs including scholarly activities such as accessing and using personal research and reflecting on new theories to improve knowledge and professional practices. Practitioners will not be required to share the results of their self-reflection, only their emerging development needs as this is part of the current appraisal programme.

GROUPS' UNDER-REPRESENTED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 8 provides an overview of the characteristics of the directly funded students. The groups regarded by applicants as under-represented in HE will be supported by 2019/20 fee and access plans. There has been a steady increase in student numbers but the number of male students remains significantly higher than females; the nature of the provision may be an influencing factor. The greater proportion of students from POLAR 1 and 2 postcodes reflects the regions where the campuses are based but also reinforces the success of the Group in recruiting under-

represented groups. The absence of Welsh speakers underpins the reason for the lack of uptake in the Group's Welsh medium provision. All underrepresented groups will be supported through the fee and access plan and other College funding. However, specific groups that will be supported are females, students from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers. These groups were selected as there are more male students than female students within the Group and some of the regions where the Group is located are situated in low participation areas.

Table 8. The characteristics of the direct funded students active at the 1 December census point.

| | | Full Time | | | | Part Time | | | | Total |
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total 2016/17
Level of Study	First Degree	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Other UG	21	30	43	50	38	32	57	57	107
Age	Under 21	16	26	32	25	10	9	6	4	29
	21 to 30	2	2	9	18	16	14	29	34	52
	Over 30	3	2	2	7	12	9	22	19	26
Ethnicity	White	17	30	35	46	15	27	40	51	97
	Black	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Asian	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Other	0	0	8	0	3	5	17	0	0
	Unknown	4	0	0	2	20	0	0	6	8
Sex	Male	19	26	39	45	35	30	51	44	89
	Female	2	4	4	5	3	2	6	13	18
	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability	Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No	21	30	43	50	38	32	57	57	107
Domicile	UK	21	30	43	50	38	32	57	57	107
	Other EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Non EU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
POLAR	1	8	8	11	11	5	5	9	12	23
	2	5	12	15	19	13	12	21	22	41
	3	4	5	8	9	9	5	10	13	22
	4	4	5	6	8	10	9	13	7	15
	5	0	0	2	5	0	1	3	2	7
	Non-polar	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2
Welsh Communities First	Yes	10	13	20	20	13	11	18	18	38
	No	11	17	23	30	25	21	39	39	69
Welsh Medium	Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No	21	30	43	50	38	32	57	57	107

Tables 9, 10 and 11 provide data for student outcomes related to under-represented groups. Analysis of the student outcomes relating to POLAR and gender demonstrated that:

- 81% of all students achieved a merit/distinction with 8% achieving a distinction.
- Males outperformed females achieving 84% merit/distinction profiles.
- Only students from Non-Communities First Areas received distinction awards.
- The percentage of students achieving a distinction or merit profile is 87% in LPN1, 80% in LPN2, 80% in LPN3, 82% in LPN4 and 75% in LPN5.

Table 9. Student outcome by gender for 2016/17

	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Total
Female	2 (33%)	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	6
Male	7 (16%)	33 (77%)	3 (7%)	43
All	9 (19%)	36 (73%)	4 (8%)	49

Table 10. Student outcome by Communities First Areas

	Pass	Merit	Distinction	Total
Not Communities First	7 (19%)	25 (69%)	4 (12%)	36
Communities First	2 (15%	11 (85%)	0 (0%)	13

Table 11. Student outcome by POLAR

POLAR	1	2	3	4	5
Distinction	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)
Merit	7 (87%)	12 (80%)	6 (60%)	8 (73%)	3 (75%)
Pass	1(13%)	3 (20%)	2 (20%)	2 (18%)	1 (25%)

The Group's fee and access plan objectives have been aligned with the key performance indicators in the Group's Higher Education 2016-2021 Strategy. The objectives are shown under Equality of Opportunity and promotion of higher education and organised under the three categories linked to the 2018/19 fee and access plan objectives: Student Transitions, Standards and Performance and Student Experience from the Group's Higher Education Strategy.

The 2019/20 fee and action Plan objectives are identified below with the corresponding category of expenditure.

- Student Transitions: Participation of under-represented groups - UK domiciled mature (>30 years) full-time students **- A2** attract and retain students and potential students from under-represented groups;

- Student Transitions: Participation of under-represented groups - UK domiciled female full-time students - **A2** attract and retain students and potential students from under-represented groups;

- Student Transitions: Participation of under-represented groups - full-time domiciled in low participation neighbourhoods 1-3 - **A2** attract and retain students and potential students from under-represented groups;

- Student Transitions: Promotional higher education activities and events delivered internally and externally including widening access initiatives - **B6** raise awareness of the value of higher education to potential students.

- Student Transitions: Percentage of graduates in employment, studying or both - **B3** strengthen the employability of Welsh graduates;

- Student Transitions: Progression from level 3 to higher education (as determined by the number of UCAS applications) - **B6** raise awareness of the value of higher education to potential students.

- Standards and Performance: Non-continuation following year of entry, the percentage of UK domiciled full-time students - **A4** support and increase retention, progression and completion, particularly people from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers;

- Standards and Performance: Non-continuation following year of entry, the percentage of UK domiciled full-time students from low participation neighbourhoods 1-3 - **A4** support and increase retention, progression and completion, particularly people from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers;

- Standards and Performance: Non-continuation following year of entry, full-time students in receipt of academic and welfare support - **A7** provide high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education;

- Standards and Performance: Achievement of distinction profile - **B2** improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience;

- Standards and Performance: Achievement of distinction profile, for those in receipt of academic and welfare support - **A7** provide high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education;

- Standards and Performance: Number of full-time students supported through bursary and hardship funds - **A7** provide high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education;

- Standards and Performance: Retention of programmes in year 2 of 2 - **A4** support and increase retention, progression and completion, particularly people from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers;

- Student Experience/Involvement: Increase the number of students actively participating in Student Union projects and activities - **B1** deliver more effective engagement with private, public or voluntary bodies and communities in Wales;

- Student Experience: Experience the delivery of a bilingual module per programme and year group - **B3** strengthen the employability of Welsh graduates;

- Student Experience: Number of HE delivery staff with HEA Associate Fellowship or fellowship status - **B2** improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience;

- Student Experience: Quality of teaching and learning - in top quartile for FECs as reported in the National Student Survey - **B2** improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience;

- Student Experience: Overall satisfaction - in top quartile for FECs as reported in the National Student Survey - **B2** improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience;

PROVISION

Having reviewed the success of previous fee plan targets the student characteristics and outcome data, the total amount of funding that will be invested to meet the strategic objectives, including the allocation of bursaries totals £107,000. This will be allocated as outlined below.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY MEASURES WHICH SUPPORT GROUPS UNDER-REPRESENTED IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

The percentage forecast for equality is 67.3% of the proposed £107,000 and expenditure for the equality of opportunities by category of expenditure is presented in Table 12. Activities are reported by categories of expenditure but the Group will also support other activities from the student fee income.

Table 12 Proposed expenditure by category of expenditure for equality of opportunity

a) Equality of opportunity	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
Categories of expenditure to support individuals under represented in HE to:		
1. promote and safeguard fair access to higher education, including identifying individuals with the greatest potential from under-represented groups		9,100
2. attract and retain students and potential students from under-represented groups	39,000	20,200
3. raise the educational aspirations and skills of people from under-represented groups to support success in higher education		0
4. support and increase retention, progression and completion, particularly people from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers	12,000	9,484
5. improve the higher education experience for groups under-represented in higher education		0
6. provide to under-represented groups effective information, before and during their studies		0
7. provide high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education	19,762	20,000
8. support the progress to employment or further study of groups under-represented in higher education		0
9. contribute to Reaching Wider Partnerships	1,238	0
10. other, for example fee and access plan evaluation		0
Total	**72,000**	**58,784**
Percentage of forecast expenditure to be spent on Equality of Opportunity	67.3%	63.9%

Provision of equality of opportunity by category of expenditure (A1 – A10) will include:

A1. Promote and safeguard fair access to higher education, including identifying individuals with the greatest potential from disadvantaged backgrounds;

The Group recognises the need to work closely with a variety of providers and communities to ensure progression to HE curriculum is responsive to employer and local needs and that it seeks out collaborative opportunities to provide and promote education as a life-choice. The Group will continue to do this through:
- Widening access activities and events in primary schools, secondary schools, in Communities First Clusters and with under-represented groups as identified in this fee and access plan
- Gateway to HE programme
- Operation of fair and equitable admission processes, recognising individual applicant experience and qualifications in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Operation of DBS and risk assessment procedures on criminal conviction disclosures and for all programmes involving placements with children and vulnerable adults.

The Group will also continue to engage and provide widening access activities and meeting the strategic aims and objectives of the South West Wales Reaching Wider Partnership and the North and Mid Wales Reaching Wider Partnership

A2. Attract and retain students and potential students from under-represented groups;

The Group makes available and widely promotes a clear student financial support package that is easy to understand, apply and which is particularly directed to support under-represented groups. This includes:
- Bursary awards
- Higher Education Hardship Fund
- Support for disabled students.

As part of its widening access and promotion of higher education the Group will offer a range of taster HE sessions and a Level 4 module in order to promote aspiration in under-represented groups as well as level 3 students and cohorts in the local community.

Each undergraduate programme will develop a bilingual module working with resources from and in partnership where possible with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The Group is not in a position to offer Welsh Medium programmes at present but will offer weekly Welsh Medium tutorial provision.

The Group is committed to supporting students through the provision of a range of services (including counselling, financial advice, careers advice, referrals etc.) to help students transition into, fully participate throughout and progress strongly from higher education.

Sustainable higher education is promoted through the creation of cohorts and addressing underrepresentation at lower levels of qualifications, with clear pathways through to study at a higher level, for example Women in Construction.

The Group will provide support to students entering from non-traditional backgrounds and with weaker academic, numeracy and communication skills diagnosed at application though a range of mechanisms, including literacy programmes, study skill summer schools and series of online tools and resources. This work is supported by Study Skill Support, Student and Transition Retention Officers and the continued implementation of the Study Skill Enhancement Project recommendations.

A3. Raise the educational aspirations and skills of people from under-represented groups to support success in higher education;

Through a variety of widening access mechanisms the Group will deliver activities and events to raise aspiration in school students and communities to make higher education a real life choice. Through its alumni mentoring scheme to higher education students and potential entrants to higher education the Group will work to attract those currently under-represented into higher education. These will include:
- School based activities to highlight pathways to and value of Higher Education
- Community taster activities and events
- Alumni mentoring scheme.

A4. Support and increase retention, progression and completion, particularly people from low participation neighbourhoods, looked after children, care leavers and carers;

Induction programmes are delivered to all new students, incorporating a range of study skill workshops and activities to introduce Group facilities, resources and staff and support transition into higher education. All students are allocated a personal tutor and the higher education tutorial programme provides regular dialogue, academic support, pastoral care and preparation for progression.

A range of monitoring and mechanisms support students to protect and boost attendance levels, protecting retention and outcome levels. Robust data reporting enables interventions, referrals and enhancement project development to support strong retention of all students. The following support is also in place to promote retention, completion and progression:
- Bursary awards
- Student Transition and Retention Officers
- Continued implementation of the Study Skill Enhancement Project recommendations
- Monitoring of attendance, retention and withdrawal information
- Study skill support

- Enhancement project spend.

A5. Improve the higher education experience for groups under-represented in higher education;

The Group employs a variety of activities to boost student employability skills, to give real life work and work-related experiences. Student representative programmes and training, involvement in committee structures, student ambassador programmes, enrichment type activities to develop softer skills and traits all adds value to programmes to boost employability skills in under-represented groups. This also includes:
- Bursary awards
- Student union activities
- Activities aligned to the Student Involvement Strategy
- Employment fairs
- 'More than an education' offer to students.

A6. Provide to under-represented groups effective information, before and during their studies;

Information provided about higher education study includes targeted information for students under-represented in higher education. This ranges from the support available, financial schemes, study skill support, bilingual and Welsh Medium provision. Hard copy and online information is available and accessible and includes:
- Open day activities and advice
- Taster events
- Level 3 progression events
- Information to prospective students
- Information to enrolled students.

A7. Provide high quality academic and welfare support to groups under-represented in higher education;

The Group will continue to invest in student services and study skill support to ensure students have access to advice, support and help. These services are communicated through the Group website, printed information, programme handbooks, induction, tutorial activities and through promotional events on the campuses. Provision includes:
- Student Services (including welfare support, financial support and advice, counselling, referrals)
- Study Skill support
- Higher education tutorial system
- Measures taken under the Prevent duty
- CPD for staff
- Funding for Student Union activities
- Supporting student feedback mechanisms and reporting
- Enhancement project spend

A8. Support the progress to employment or further study of groups under-represented in higher education;

Staff are aware of the need to embed employability skills in programme and make explicit links between content and employability in addition to the 'add on' provision available to support progression to employment of further study. The Group supports progression through a number of mechanisms:
- Career advisor access

- Higher education tutorial system
- Employment fairs
- Alumni mentoring scheme.

A9. Other measures to support groups under-represented in higher education such as evaluating fee and access plans' effectiveness, supporting the regional Reaching Wider Partnership and/or other relevant provision, (please specify these measures).

The Group is fully committed to widening access and ensuring equality of opportunity and has recently appointed a Coordinator to oversee all activities relating to widening access. The role includes working with the South and Mid/North Reaching Wider Groups and further developing widening access through:
- Integration with local schools and communities.
- Bringing individuals in to the HE environment for taster settings.
- Increasing the visibility of opportunities for HE learning.

CATEGORIES OF PROVISION: PROMOTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION MEASURES TO DELIVER:

The percentage forecast for expenditure on promotion of HE is 32.7% of the proposed £107,000 details of expenditure for the promotion of HE by category of expenditure is presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Expenditure on promotion of HE by category of expenditure

Categories of expenditure to :	2019/20 £	2018/19 £
1. deliver more effective engagement with private, public or voluntary bodies and communities in	4,500	4,250
2. improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experi	15,000	14,875
3. strengthen the employability of Welsh graduates	3,500	3,889
4. promote Welsh higher education more effectively internationally		0
5. deliver sustainable higher education		0
6. raise awareness of the value of higher education to potential students	12,000	10,175
7. other, for example fee and access plan evaluation		0
	35,000	**33,189**
Percentage of forecast expenditure to be spent on Promotion of HE	32.7%	36.1%

Promotion of higher education by category of expenditure (B1 – B7) will include:

B1. Deliver more effective engagement with private, public or voluntary bodies and communities in Wales;

The Group has close links with a range of employers. With the recent refocus of the Group's Business Development Unit the Group aims to more effectively engage with employers to enhance student opportunities and employability skills including:
- Employer engagement activities (needs analysis, curriculum enhancement, lectures, visits)
- Strengthen work placement and volunteering opportunities for students across all HE programmes
- Employment fairs held on campus with local and national employers present to create aspiration.

B2. Improve the quality of learning and teaching, with reference to the quality of the student experience;

The Group will continue to invest in a range of learning technologies, IT facilities and in its learning environments through a continued programme of estates maintenance. The Group will continue the work of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Project to deliver high quality learning and teaching through further strengthening of the:
- CPD for staff
- Peer observation system of teaching and learning.
- Monitoring and response to student satisfaction levels

Through strengthening of the student involvement systems, student feedback, focus groups and Vocal Eyes activity the Group will have a range of information to consider and support improvements in provision and the student experience. The Group will also use internal surveys, e.g. the enrolment and induction survey to review provision and inform continuous improvement.

B3. Strengthen the employability of Welsh graduates;

The Group looks to strengthen employability through a variety of mechanisms outlined below:
- Employment fairs
- Alumni mentoring scheme
- Bilingual module development
- Welsh medium tutorial provision provided on a weekly basis
- Management and monitoring of work placement
- Embedding employability skills and experience through tutorial and curriculum delivery
- Funding to support Student Union activity (that includes the promotion of employability).

B4. Promote Welsh higher education more effectively internationally;

The Group will continue to participate and invest in activities that are reputation enhancing. This in turn will promote higher education nationally and internationally and includes:
- Activities connected with the Assistant Principal, Worldwide Operations
- Promotion of HE through the Assistant Principal, Worldwide Operations
- Engaging in reputational activities (e.g. TEF).
- Monitoring and compliance activities linked to UK Visa and Immigration.

B5. Deliver sustainable higher education;

Sustainable higher education is promoted through the creation of cohorts and addressing underrepresentation at lower levels of qualifications, with clear pathways through to study at a higher level. It also relies on strong quality assurance mechanisms and continued investment ensure programmes remain industry focussed and fit for purpose in supporting student transition into employment. Sustainability is achieved through:
- Investment in resources and facilities to enhance curriculum delivery
- Employer engagement to ensure fit for purpose curriculum
- Strong and robust quality assurance mechanisms
- CPD for staff
- Promotion of pathways from FE to HE, from levels 3/4 to level 5/6
- Engaging in reputation building activities.

B6. Raise awareness of the value of higher education to potential students.

The Group works with schools, the local community and students at lower levels of study to promote the value of higher education. This is achieved through a variety of mechanisms including marketing activities, widening access activities, open events, taster sessions, information evenings, social media and website activity. The Group ensure high quality information and guidance. The Group's annual celebratory graduation event promotes those who succeed at higher education and through student case studies, the value of higher education is promoted generally and in those under-represented in higher education. The use of a variety of media helps maximise awareness of the value of higher education.

B7. Other measures to support the promotion of higher education such as evaluating fee and access plans' effectiveness, supporting the regional Reaching Wider Partnership and/or other relevant provision, (please specify these measures).

The Group is fully committed to promoting higher education opportunities in under-represented groups and has recently appointed a Coordinator to oversee all activities relating to widening access. The role includes working with the South and Mid/North Reaching Wider Groups and further developing widening access through:
- Integration with local schools and communities.
- Bringing individuals into the HE environment for taster settings.
- Increasing the visibility of opportunities for HE learning.

Monitoring progress and compliance with the Fee and Access Plan

The Higher Education Quality and Enhancement Management Group (HEQEMG) have the responsibility to implement and oversee delivery of activities, events and interventions to meet the Fee and Access Plan targets. This group will ensure actions are identified in the Higher Education quality development plan and/or commission enhancement projects to ensure the fee and access plan targets can be met. The HEQEMG monitors the completion of the quality development plan actions and enhancement projects through their termly meeting as well as fee and access plan targets allocated elsewhere.

Interim reporting on the progress against the fee and access plan targets is to the College's Standards and Performance Management Group. This and the HEQEMG meeting are overseen by the Vice Principal, Academic Services. The Standards and Performance Management Group reports to the Senior Management Team and receives minutes of the management group meetings and they and Governors receive interim reporting on the progress and performance against the fee and access plan targets in year and receive the annual monitoring statement in the following October reviewing performance against the fee and access plan targets for approval before submission to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales.

This plan was approved by the Board of Governors on 2nd July 2018.