

MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE

Access Agreement

2018-19

1. Introduction

This access agreement sets out the tuition fees and financial support arrangements for students entering higher education programmes at Myerscough College that are direct contract with HEFCE from 01 September 2018. It describes the amount of tuition fee income to be spent on access and success measures and how this income will be spent in order to safeguard and maintain fair access and promote high levels of retention and success.

Myerscough College is one of the largest UK further education colleges delivering higher education programmes in land based and sports subjects. The 2016-17 year 1 entry cohort comprised 487 students of which 298 were full-time and 189 were part-time. Indicative applications indicate similar levels of demand for 2017-18.

The College strap line is '*Opportunities for all to Succeed*'. This core priority is reflected in the College strategic objective: '*We will lead our peers in promoting equality of educational opportunity & outcome for all*' (Myerscough College Strategic Plan 2012-22). This reflects the high level of long-term commitment from the College to widening participation and the emphasis on quality of delivery and student support in the development of high level academic and employability skills.

The 2014 QAA Higher Education Review for the College commended the quality and enhancement of student learning opportunities (2 commendations) and identified 10 areas of good practice with no recommendations. The College QAA Higher Education Review report endorsed the College's commitment to widening participation and student success and identified good practice in '*the comprehensive support for learners in their transition to higher education*' and '*the wide-ranging support mechanisms targeted to meet individual needs that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential*'.

All higher education programmes at the College are awarded by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). Myerscough is the largest partner college of UCLan and has a mature and established relationship with the University. Myerscough is an Associate School of UCLan. This strengthened partnership provides opportunities to enhance access and success measures for students and the College has consulted with UCLan in the production of this Access Agreement.

2.0 Tuition Fee Limits

The specialist nature programmes at the College means that the majority of provision is resource intensive and falls into price band B.

Tuition fees for all Myerscough undergraduate full time higher education programmes for new UK and EU students will be £9250 per year for 2018-19 (international student tuition fee rates may apply for non-EU students). Continuing full time undergraduate students will remain on their current fee rates.

Tuition fees for the Foundation Degree Veterinary Nursing placement year (year 2) will be £1500 for 2018-19.

Tuition fees for all Myerscough undergraduate part time higher education programmes (other than Initial teacher training programmes) for all new UK and EU students will be £950 per module for 2018-19 (international student tuition fee rates may apply for non-UK students studying online programmes). Continuing part time undergraduate students will remain on their current fee rates. Part time students only study up to 4 modules per year, equating to up to £3,800 tuition fees per year (pro-rata £5,700 to full time fees) which is below the OFFA Regulated fee level for part time students.

Tuition fees for all Myerscough part time Initial Teacher Training programmes for all new UK and EU students will be £675 per module for 2018-19. Continuing part time Initial Teacher Training students will remain on their current fee rates.

The College may increase tuition fees annually by the inflationary amount and/or agreed amount set each year by the Government.

3.0 Access and Student Success Measures

The College continues to invest in significant access and student experience initiatives as identified in the sections on access and success below. Expenditure on financial support and additional access and success measures is based on estimates of the proportion of students from under-represented groups and indicates overall levels of spend in 2018-19 of approximately 23.7% of the fee income above the basic fee. This is consistent with levels of spend in previous years. The College will maintain this approach, where appropriate, to prioritise sustained investment in activities and infrastructure that support access and student success in the light of any future changes to higher education funding.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) widening participation and retention data with breakdown by priority groups are not available for Colleges nationally. However, to ensure comparability in reporting the College has aligned the way in which internal data on widening participation and student success are measured to match HESA criteria as closely as possible. The College recognises the need to capture meaningful higher education data on priority groups for widening participation and student success and works closely with our partner University, UCLan, to continually improve data reporting.

3.1 Access

The College is committed to widening participation and internal data on recruitment from priority groups suggests indicative performance against national widening participation indicators remains good. The table below indicates internal data on proportions of higher education students for 2016-17 according to different priority groups.

Priority Group		College 2016-17	National (HESA) 2015-16
Gender	Female	52%	56%
	Male	48%	44%
Age Group (Start of Course)	Full time young (<21)	71%	79%
	Full time mature (21+)	29%	21%
	Part time young (<21)	5%	8%
	Part time mature (21+)	95%	92%
Ethnicity	BME	4%	22%
	White	88%	77%
	Unknown	8%	1%
Learning Difficulty or Disability	Known disability	10%	7%
	No known disability	90%	93%
POLAR 3	Group 1	13%	11%
	Groups 2 – 5	87%	89%

Key points:

- The gender gap has closed and is better than the national trend.
- Participation from mature applicants is above the national trend.
- Participation from BME groups remains low compared with the national trend. This is reflective of the national picture for land-based studies where there is low participation from black minority ethnic groups
- Recruitment from those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities is above the national trend.
- The proportion of students from Polar 3 group 1 (those areas with lowest participation) is above the national trend.



The College is aware of the removal of Student Opportunity funding and will continue to increase investment in time and resources for the sustained development of long-term strategically targeted access activities that broaden the applicant pool, raise aspirations among potential applicants from under-represented groups and encourage them to apply to higher education. Key aspects of this work will focus on targeted activities to improve participation from ethnic groups and low-participation areas in POLAR 3 group 1 as identified in the assessment of performance outlined above. The total OFFA-countable spend on specific access activities will be approximately £67,000 for 2018-19. This level of spend will be focussed on access initiatives under three key areas of outreach activities, portfolio development and applicant support.

3.1.1 Portfolio Development

- The College has invested significantly in the development of flexible part time programmes through online and blended learning delivery and this activity has proved successful in promoting recruitment of mature part time applicants (95% of part time enrolments were mature students compared with 92% nationally as published by HESA). The College will continue to invest in the development of flexible and alternative modes of delivery through fully online and blended learning programmes in a range of subjects to support access to higher education from mature and second-career part time applicants. Part of this work will be to explore opportunities to develop degree apprenticeships in land-based subjects. This aspect of the portfolio development is at the very early stages of development but has potential to offer an alternative model of flexible learning which may appeal to some students and provide a way of meeting employer needs.
- The College has continued to invest in the development of a portfolio of programmes that provides progression routes at the College for all subjects from level 2 through to level 6 (including some to level 7) to support opportunities for local access to higher education in land-based and sports subjects. This work has contributed to an internal progression rate from level 3 to higher education at the College of 17% for eligible level 3 students who completed in 2015-16. However, this outcome is not as high as expected and the College will continue to develop the portfolio to provide long-term enhancement of progression opportunities from further to higher education in land-based and sports subjects, particularly for students from the College centres in East Lancashire and Merseyside. The portfolio also helps to enhance awareness of opportunities for studying vocational higher education to specific groups through some of the delivery activities. For example, students undertake outreach coaching work with local community and schools groups as part of the work-experience element for some of our sports programmes. This promotes strong links with BME and other priority groups such as white males from socio-economically disadvantaged areas for some of our specific sports programmes such as basketball, cricket, rugby and football.
- The College will also continue to develop and deliver a structured programme of internal progression activities to provide comprehensive information, advice, guidance and support for level 3 further education students and raise their aspirations of progression to higher education. This work has contributed to an overall progression rate to higher education (internal and external) of 32% for eligible level 3 students who completed in 2015-16 and supports the enhancement of opportunities for progression and social mobility, particularly for applicants in areas with a high proportion of low income households and traditionally low participation in higher education.
- The College has expanded delivery of further education programmes at centres in East Lancashire and Merseyside and the College is now the only provider of further education programmes in land-based subjects in the Liverpool area. This supports long-term investment in the enhancement of opportunities for progression and social mobility for applicants in these areas which have a high proportion of low income households and traditionally low participation in land-based higher education. The College will continue to develop the provision of information, advice and guidance about progression to higher education for our feeder routes at our Croxteth Centre which has an extremely high proportion of students from low income households.

3.1.2 Outreach activities

- The targeting of secondary schools and their feeder primary schools in the North West of England with a high proportion of students from under-represented socio-economic groups represents one of the key initiatives for improving long term outreach and access. The College has increased activity in this area to 441 schools outreach activities in 2015-16 and this has been successful in promoting access to higher education for students from under-represented and disadvantaged groups (the proportion of students from Polar 3 group 1 is above the national trend of 11% as published by HESA). The College invests in a dedicated Schools Liaison team to deliver a range schools outreach activities including school career



conventions and parent's evenings, school assembly presentations, mock interview events, schools' enterprise days, campus tours for schools and schools drop-in sessions. This work will be one of the key areas where the College will continue to focus the increased spend and provide sustained investment in outreach work. As part of this work the College will continue to target areas and regions with low participation rates. Examples include specific visit opportunities for targeted schools (such as Pleckgate High School, Blackburn) and targeted schools activities focusing on underrepresented geographic areas such as Preston PR1/PR2 postcodes and feeder schools to our Croxteth Centre which is one of the most deprived and underrepresented wards in the region.

- The College is aware of the low participation from black minority ethnic (BME) groups (4% participation from BME groups compared with 22% nationally as published by HESA). This is reflective of the national picture for land-based studies where there is low participation from BME groups. The College will focus on improving participation from BME groups through targeted activities with specific schools with high proportions of under-represented BME groups to promote careers in the land-based industries. Examples include the Tauheedul Trust, Preston Muslim Girls School, ESSA Academy, Preston Gujarat Hindu Society and advertising in the Asian Image newspaper.
- As a specialist provider of land-based and sports subjects, the College has a wide geographic catchment area and works with a large range of schools (over 400 in 2014-15) across the north of England. As such, it is currently impractical for the College to sponsor/co-sponsor an individual academy or free school. However, to support attainment-raising with schools, the College collaborates with local schools to deliver on-campus vocational 14-16 programmes to year 10 and 11 students. The students on the programme are from very different backgrounds with an increasing proportion of home-educated students on the programme. The activity helps to support their attainment and enhance awareness of vocational pathways to higher education. The programme was delivered to 198 students in 2015-16. The programme covers four main areas of provision.
 1. School Links – Accredited day release courses for under 16 learners at Entry Level and Level One across most College areas and centres
 2. Access to College Programmes – Ongoing enrichment courses for specialist LLDD providers for learners aged 14 upwards
 3. MySchool Programme – A school based programme supporting schools in delivering their own Level One Horticulture provision
 4. Pupil Progression Pathway – Dealing with the process from enquiry to enrolment of non-standard pre and post 16 full time students. These students are either pre 16 Home Educated or funded through an external organisation or post 16 students funded through an external organisation

In 2015-16 the programme also included a pilot of GCSE English and maths course for under 16 home educated young people.

Outcomes from the programme were high, the overall retention was 86.9% and achievement was 78%. Excluding GCSE English and maths, retention was 90.4% and achievement was 85%. Progression rates were high with 94% progressing to employment or further study. Of this percentage 77% progressed to either further education or an apprenticeship. Overall student satisfaction from the programme was 100% and all students on the programme also agreed they felt safe at the College. 96% of students on the programme agreed that the teaching on the programme helped them learn and 98% agreed that the course had helped to develop employability skills. Examples of how evaluation has been used to inform practice include review of initial IAG and early intervention with pastoral support to improve retention of home educated students and using the lessons learnt through the GCSE pilot to review how students are matched to appropriate GCSE or functional skills programmes. The College will be approaching more local Schools to set up this form of Collaboration to raise early aspirations of GCSE students and enhance awareness of vocational pathways to higher education.

- The College also invests in a series of 'Advise the Advisors' activities to promote access to higher education. Key aspects of this work include hosting three Careers Advisor events at the College each year and attendance at national events such as the Careers Guidance Show and the Skills Show to provide information, advice and guidance to Careers Advisors on opportunities for progression to further and higher education in vocational land-based and sports subjects.
- Myerscough College will work with colleagues in higher education institutions and further education colleges across the north west through the Lancashire and Cumbria National Collaborative Outreach

Programmes (NCOP). The project aims to support the most disadvantaged young people in England to progress into higher education by undertaking outreach activity in geographical areas where the higher education participation of young people is both low and much lower than expected. College outreach activities will be mapped with NCOP activities to ensure that the work delivered through this access agreement complements the work delivered through the NCOP and check that activities with target areas are not duplicated and under-represented areas or groups are not missed.

3.1.3 Applicant Support

- The College investment in measures to provide timely information, advice and guidance to applicants have been successful and helped support an offer to enrolment conversion rate of 63% in 2016. These initiatives include the appointment of an applicant information officer to provide a direct point of contact for additional support and guidance for applicants who need it most at key decision points in the UCAS calendar and an online facility to provide clear and easy access for applicants to information such as interview arrangements, course details, travel, finance, enrolment and joining instructions. The College obtains feedback from applicants and new students on their experience and will use this to target continued investment to further develop these key initiatives which are particularly beneficial for mature applicants and applicants from backgrounds with traditionally low participation in higher education who may not have access to usual information sources regarding higher education study.
- The College has further reviewed the provision of ongoing information, advice and guidance to applicants and will invest in a series of subject-specific applicant events to provide applicants with opportunity to find out more about studying higher education and life at the College and to help them decide if we are the right choice for them. Where applicants have declared a learning difficulty or disability the applicant events will be attended by a member of the College Inclusive Learning team to discuss the support available. This is of particular benefit for applicants who may be applying for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), mature applicants and applicants from backgrounds with traditionally low participation in higher education.
- The College is aware of the financial pressures on students and will continue to invest in a series of financial support measures (as detailed in section 4) to help promote access and progression to higher education and to support students in their transition to higher education. The College surveyed those students in receipt of financial support and of those that responded, 87% stated that the financial support had enabled them to take up their studies, 87% also stated that they would have found it difficult to stay on the course without the financial support and 84% stated that they were more likely to continue and complete their studies as a result of the financial support. However, uptake of bursaries and scholarships was not as high as expected in 2015-16 and the College will review the promotion and marketing of these financial support measures to ensure clarity and maximise awareness for potential students.

3.2 Student Retention and Success

Student retention and success has been a significant area of focus for the College in recent years. Internal data is generated for in-year student retention based on HESA criteria.

The internal figure for overall full time HE in-year retention in 2015-16 was 96%. Although not a direct comparison, this was above the HESA published non-continuation rate of 91% for UK domiciled full time first degree entrants in 2015-16. The internal figure for in-year retention for all students including part time was also 96%.

The College produces internal figures for overall in-year higher education student achievement from student retention and achievement data. The table below indicates internal data on higher education student achievement for 2015-16 according to different priority groups.

Priority Group		Achievement 2015-16
Total - All HE Programmes		85%
Gender	Female	88%
	Male	82%
Age Group (Start of Course)	Young (<21)	87%

	Mature (21+)	83%
Ethnicity	BME	84%
	White	85%
Learning Difficulty or Disability	Known disability	76%
	No known disability	86%
POLAR 3	Group 1	83%
	Groups 2 – 5	87%

Key points:

- Female student out-perform male students (within a 6% gap). This is largely subject-specific due to higher achievement rates in Curriculum Areas that are predominantly female (Equine and Vet Nursing).
- The gap in achievement between young and older students is low (4%). This is largely linked to mode of delivery where there is a higher proportion of older students on distance learning programmes.
- The gap in outcomes for students from different ethnicities is insignificant (1%).
- Achievement rates for students with a learning difficulty or disability is still the most significant gap and the College will continue to prioritise this area in the retention and achievement measures.
- The gap in outcomes for students from disadvantaged backgrounds is low (within 4%).

The College has also developed internal data to report on multiple dimensions of disadvantage. The achievement rate for white males from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds on full time programmes in 2015-16 was 86%, in line with the figure for the overall College. However, the figure for part time students from the same group was lower. The actual numbers in this level of statistical analysis were low, reducing the validity of the outcome. However, the College will continue to prioritise these groups in the support measures identified below.

The success of higher education student retention and achievement initiatives is evidenced in the 2016 National Student Survey (NSS) and in the 2014 QAA HE Review Report for the College. In the 2016 NSS student satisfaction for questions relating to Academic Support was 82%, just below the national upper quartile. The 2014 QAA HE Review Report for the College identified good practice in '*the comprehensive support for learners in their transition to higher education*' and in '*the wide-ranging support mechanisms targeted to meet individual needs that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential*'.

The 2014-15 cohort DLHE survey for destinations of higher education students reported positive outcomes (the proportion that had secured employment or further study) for Myerscough graduates were 98%. This was above the HESA published positive outcomes for UK domiciled leavers obtaining first degrees from full-time courses 2014-15 of 94%, confirming high levels of employability and progression opportunities for Myerscough higher education students. The 2014-15 cohort DLHE survey outcomes for graduate prospects (the proportion that had secured graduate level employment or graduate level further study) were 56%. Graduate prospects for Myerscough provision are not always a true reflection of outcomes for our graduates as some positions of high responsibility within the industries that we serve are not always recognised as graduate positions by the survey. Actions to remedy this are currently being explored through relevant professional bodies. However, the College will continue to focus on the development of graduate employability in the retention and success measures outlined below.

Although the College has a good track record in this area, the College is aware of the continued importance of student success and progression and will continue to increase investment in time and resources for the sustained development of long-term strategically targeted success and progression activities to maintain and improve student retention and success and narrow the gaps for priority groups across the student lifecycle. Key aspects of this work will focus on targeted activities to improve success and progression for students from low-participation areas in POLAR 3 group 1 and students who have a learning difficulty or disability as identified in the assessment of performance outlined above. The total OFFA-countable spend on specific success and progression activities will be approximately £113,000 for 2018-19. This increased spend will be focussed on access initiatives under three key areas of transition to higher education, on-programme support and progression.

3.2.1 Transition to Higher Education



- The College has developed an extended induction period for new students that includes a strong focus on supporting students through the initial transition to higher education. This induction package includes a combination of centrally organised cross-College activities and subject-specific activities to support students in the early stages of their programme. To avoid information overload at the initial stages, the induction package includes an initial orientation in week one, followed by a 6 week extended induction period that includes a series of tutorials and seminars to discuss expectations, study skills, learning styles and personal development and introduce the services and support they can access as higher education students. Tutors arrange the induction schedule for their own student groups around the central elements of the induction pack and this enables them to differentiate their induction activities to meet the needs of different groups of students. The induction package includes a personal tutorial and a research-based formative assessment to prepare students for the requirements of summative assessment. These support the transition to HE for new students and provide tutors and students with an early indication of expectations, academic level and areas where individual support may be required. The research-based formative assessment involves students collecting and analysing primary data right from the start of their course to promote the development of student scholarship, independent learning and academic skills for new students. The College has also further strengthened its online induction package for new students with enhanced content on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, British Values, and Student Support. The online package also includes our 'SelfSmart' initiative, a self-assessment programme that can be used as a measure learning gain for personal development and employability skills. The online induction package is of particular use to distance learning students, many of whom are from priority groups such as second career and mature students. These extended induction initiatives have been highly successful and are particularly important to support priority groups such as young students, those from low-participation areas and those in receipt of DSA. In the 2016 internal induction survey, 96% of students stated that following induction they felt more confident about their course and 98% of students stated they knew where to get help if they needed it. The College intends to build on the success of these initiatives and will continue to invest in measures to further enhance the development and delivery of the extended induction period to support the transition to higher education for students.
- The College has invested in the development and delivery of the College 'E-fest' initiative to enhance the student induction programme. The 'E-fest' is a cross-College event for higher education students to help raise awareness of the ILT technologies and software resources available to them to support their studies. All higher education students are scheduled to attend the 'E-fest' in groups during induction week. At the event, a series of round table events are presented to students covering ILT resources and software such as Socrative, 'MyApps' (accessibility and study skills software), presentations from JISC and a range of other resources. This initiative has been highly successful. Almost the entire year 1 higher education student population attended the 'E-fest' enhancing their awareness of a range of ILT technologies and software available to them. In the 2016 internal induction survey, 97% of higher education students agreed that following induction they were fully aware of the types of technology available to help support their studies. The College will continue to invest in the development and delivery of this initiative which is particularly useful to enhance awareness of software to support study skills, for students in priority groups such as second career and mature students, ethnic minority groups and those in receipt of DSA.
- The College Inclusive learning team also provides a transition scheme for students with more complex additional learning needs such as Asperger's and mobility/sensory impairments to help support a smooth transition into higher education and College life for students in those priority groups.

3.2.2 On-programme support

- The College invests in an extensive range of on-campus support services and works collaboratively with UCLan to promote and improve access to the University support services for Myerscough higher education students. On-campus, the College has continued to develop and enhance the central student support services centre, 'The Core' to provide extensive additional academic and pastoral support for students throughout their studies and to support progression to employment or further study. The Core services include the provision of a student finance advisor to provide additional IAG on financial help available for students from low income households. Further services provided by the Core include student support officers, counsellors, the College nurse and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator. The College works collaboratively with UCLan through the extended student induction period to enhance awareness of UCLan student support mechanisms and improve access to initiatives such as the <i> (the University one-stop student enquiries and information centre), 'Careers' service and study skills support initiatives at the University. The College will continue to invest in provision of these



services which provide valuable additional support throughout their studies for students in priority groups such as second career and mature students, ethnic groups and those in receipt of DSA.

- The College provides access to the inclusive learning study suite for all higher education students. The inclusive learning study suite provides support for students to develop study and research skills and help them with the planning of assignments under the supervision of specialist tutors. The College Inclusive Learning team has worked with the Education and Training Foundation to develop a new Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Guide and Self-Assessment Tool to RAG rate and focus on areas of need with regards to SEND and reasonable adjustments for HE learners. The College has led on a series of seminars to roll the self-assessment tool out to other Colleges. The College has also worked with the Heart of Deafness group to review the support and resources provided for deaf students through a mystery shopping exercise. The College Inclusive Learning team is also undertaking a research project into the evaluation of the induction period for deaf and hearing-impaired students. The College is aware of the increasing requirements of higher education providers to meet the non-medical needs of students in receipt of DSA (such as those with dyspraxia, dyscalculia, dyslexia or Asperger Syndrome) and has reviewed the direct support provided for these students. For students with a DSA, relevant sections of the DSA assessment of need report are used to develop informed support strategies for students and monthly SEND reviews are provided by specialist support tutors for students most at risk. The College is also aware of the support needs for students with a DSA who are studying on distance learning programmes through online delivery and is exploring the use of agencies to provide appropriate support for these groups of students. The College will provide increased spend on the provision of direct on-campus support for students in receipt of DSA in the form of drop-in study skills sessions, access to specialist software and regular targeted specialist sessions with an Inclusive Learning tutor. These initiatives will provide valuable additional support throughout their studies for students in receipt of DSA.
- The College has continued to develop and implement the electronic Student Support Register to assist early identification of student concerns in order to offer an appropriate level of support to improve retention, achievement and the student experience. The percentage of students who were on the Student Support Register and were retained through successful monitoring and support increased to 88% in 2015-16 (increase from 84% in 2014-15). Further analysis shows that 'health concerns' (particularly mental health) is the highest area of concern followed by student attendance and course concerns (academic ability and behind with work). The College has reviewed these key areas of concern to identify where further support or resources may be required. The increase in students with mental health concerns reflects the national picture and this may also be linked to attendance concerns and course concerns. The College has signed up to the 'Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health', an NHS initiative run by Workways. Through our commitment to this Charter we are working to increase awareness of mental health, provide support networks and information, and make it healthier to talk about mental health in our workplace, learning and social environments. Student attendance provides an early indicator of disengagement and the College monitors student attendance closely as outlined in the College Management and Monitoring of Student Attendance Policy. All student assessment workloads have also been revised to help address course concerns relating to assessment. The Student Support Register provides joined-up on-line support for tutors in monitoring 'at risk' students the College will continue to invest in this initiative to provide enhanced monitoring and support for students in priority groups with academic and / or personal difficulties, such as those receiving DSA and from low participation areas or other ethnicity groups.
- The College has invested in working with an extensive range of local, regional and national initiatives to improve understanding of the challenges faced by different groups and provide support for students. The College has been working with the National Centre for Diversity and has achieved the prestigious 'Leaders in Diversity' award. The College Inclusive Learning team is participating in a regional higher education Disability Support Network to provide a collaborative approach to the provision of support for students with mental health problems and specific learning difficulties. This work is in its early stages but will be an opportunity for sharing good practice in disability support with other local College and Universities. The College is working with Lancashire LGBT, a registered charity whose mission is to create opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities in Lancashire. We are working towards achieving their 'Quality Mark' standard with a view to identifying the needs of LGBT+ people in College and working to address them, supporting the self-empowerment of LGBT+ people and achieving equality for LGBT people in College, for example, by carrying out enrichment activity during LGBT History Month. The College is working with Lancashire Constabulary to further our commitment to eliminating discrimination. In partnership with the Lancashire Hate Crime and Diversity Police Officer we

are exploring options for further activity to raise awareness of hate crime and to encourage the reporting of it in College and within the local community. The College has signed up to Equality and Diversity UK's 'Racism Agenda 2016-2020', a national campaign to raise awareness of racism issues and create practical tools and resources to support curriculum and the personal development of students. One initiative the College is working to adopt is the Alzheimer's Society 'Dementia Friends' scheme, through which the College is working to become fully 'Dementia Friendly'. The College is also working with the Gypsy Roamer and Traveller Support Group to provide opportunities to study. Themed diversity awareness events have also been held across campus, such as Black History Film Club held in October to mark Black History Month, and monthly EDI prompt sheets were provided to Tutors for embedding into Schemes of Work. Our investment in these initiatives demonstrates the College's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, enhances equality of opportunity and fosters good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

3.2.3 Progression

- The College has developed a coherent approach to the development of academic, personal and wider employability skills to support students in preparing for graduate-level employment or further study in their chosen field. The development of employability skills is embedded in the curriculum through specific career development and work-related learning modules, vocational assessments and a centralised and structured programme of course and personal tutorials. These activities are linked to the College 'Graduate Employability' programme to provide a framework of learning materials, support and recognition for the development and enhancement of student employability skills. This joined-up approach to the development of graduate-level employability skills has been very successful and helped support high graduate-level outcomes for progression to employment or further study for the 2014-15 cohort. The College will continue to invest in the further development and delivery of this employability framework which is particularly beneficial for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may have little or no previous work experience and for mature students seeking to build on their existing portfolio or start a second career.
- The College has continued to provide a range of extra-curricular activities to promote employability and progression for higher education students. Subject-specific employer's events are arranged for students in each subject area. These events invite key employers and industry organisations in to an event where they can talk to students about career prospects and students can talk to employers about potential job opportunities. These events may also incorporate an industry liaison meeting to between the course team and employers to discuss suggestions for further enhancements to the curriculum and opportunities for working with employers to enhance the employability of students. These initiatives have been very successful and helped support DLHE positive outcomes of 98% to employment or further study for the 2014-15 cohort. The College will continue to invest in the development and delivery of these initiatives which are particularly beneficial as a step in to employment for students from disadvantaged areas who may have little or no previous work experience.

4.0 Financial Support for Students

The College will provide financial support to eligible students through the Myerscough College Higher Education Bursary Scheme. A limited number of bursaries are available, the bursaries will vary and will be tailored to those in the greatest need and who meet the criteria. The maximum award per student will be £2,000. This is a one-year benefit, not a recurrent annual entitlement and annual applications must be submitted. Students will be able to apply for bursaries in more than one academic year during their studies if they wish to do so. Students will be able to select how they would like the funds to be allocated through a financial bursary and/or discounted accommodation, course equipment, food and travel or other similar institutional services. To be eligible for a bursary, students must be enrolled on an undergraduate course and have declared household income of less than £25,000 (including benefits) to ensure students with the greatest need receive the maximum award. Meeting essential eligibility criteria does not guarantee or equate to an entitlement to a bursary. Full details of eligibility and support arrangements will be published for potential applicants on the College website in the 2017-18 academic year.

The College will continue to provide a series of Scholarships and a 'Welcome Package' for 2018-19 to complement the access measures and bursary arrangements and provide additional financial support thereby providing new students with a full and robust package of support and access measures.

A significant 'Welcome Package' will be provided to help support students in their first year of study and support their transition into higher education. This will include a waiver of the resources and facilities fee and other benefits such as free gym membership and £50 voucher to help with initial book purchases. These benefits will be made available to all new entrants and will be of particular benefit to those from low-income households.

All students who progress from FE to full time HE at Myerscough will also receive a £500 cash award in the first year of their programme. Again this will be of particular benefit to promote progression and social mobility for applicants in areas with a high proportion of low income households and traditionally low participation in higher education, particularly for students progressing from the College further education centres in East Lancashire and Merseyside.

The College will also make available 15 Scholarships consisting of a cash payment to support students with their studies. There are 5 Scholarships of £2000 each for applicants to Foundation Degrees in Sports Coaching, Health and Personal Training and Sport and Exercise Science and 10 Scholarships of £1000 each for applicants to all other programmes. Some of the Scholarships will be prioritised for applicants from targeted under-represented groups (white males from disadvantaged areas, BME groups and students with a learning difficulty or disability) and applicants who have undertaken extensive voluntary work or community work with under-represented groups to help raise awareness of higher education opportunities among these groups. Successful applicants for Scholarships must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Evidence of external representation of their School or previous College at regional level or wider in their chosen subject through competitions, exhibitions, presentations or other similar activities.
- Extensive evidence of volunteering work or charity fund-raising work.
- Evidence of extensive community work with under-represented groups.

Applicants must also choose Myerscough as their first choice, be on a full-time HEFCE funded Undergraduate course resident in the UK or Europe and enrolled on the programme (i.e. not withdrawn or suspended) at the time of each payment. Scholarships are paid in the first year of study subject to the following criteria:

- Half the scholarship will be paid before Christmas as long as students have >90% attendance (excepting extenuating circumstances)
- Half the scholarship will be paid at the end of year 1 as long as students have successfully passed all modules at the June assessment boards (excepting extenuating circumstances)

Full details of the scholarships and the application form will be published for potential applicants on the College website in the 2017-18 academic year.

The College is aware that financial support on its own is not the most effective support measure and will monitor the impact of direct financial support to ensure that the funds are being targeted correctly. This will include monitoring of the demand for Scholarships from under-represented groups.

The overall allocation of financial support for 2018-19 through the Myerscough Higher Education Bursary Scheme and other financial support measures detailed above is approximately £200,000. The amount allocated is based on the proportion of students from low participation areas and is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure sufficient funds are available.

5.0 Targets and Milestones

The College's specific targets and milestones for 2018-19 are outlined in the 2018-19 Access Agreement Resource Plan. Internal College data sources are used to set targets and milestones as HESA widening participation performance indicators do not cover further education colleges.

Where possible, the College has aligned internal data reporting with HESA and UCLan criteria to establish comparable data, which can be benchmarked to HESA and UCLan widening participation, retention and completion performance indicators.

Other targets outlined in the resource plan set out the desired outcomes of outreach and support initiatives across the student lifecycle to improve the recruitment, retention and achievement of students from under-represented priority groups.

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The Deputy Principal Finance and Funding and the Assistant Principal Higher Education are responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this Access Agreement. Monitoring and evaluation of progress against the targets will be measured using internal data streams and external data sources via UCAS and HESA.

Monitoring and evaluation of progress against the targets will be reported through the College Equality and Diversity Strategy Group and the Curriculum Quality Group who report to the Senior Management Team and ultimately to the Corporation Quality and Standards and Finance committees. The Corporation Quality and Standards Committee includes student representation membership. Evaluation of progress against the targets will feed into the College Equality and Diversity Annual Report and action plan to help prioritise activities and initiatives that have greatest impact.

7.0 Equality and Diversity

The College is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and has achieved the 'Leaders in Diversity' kite mark. The measures detailed in this Access Agreement will positively impact on access and success measures for identified priority groups and complement the work of the College Equality and Diversity Strategy Group. The College has taken reasonable steps to ensure that the financial support, access and retention measures covered in this agreement eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization, enhance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not as detailed in the Equality Act 2010. This Access Agreement has been consulted on and approved by the College Equality and Diversity Strategy Group who will monitor progress and report to the Curriculum Quality Group and Senior Management Team.

8.0 Provision of Information to Prospective Students

Information for students on the fees and financial support available will be detailed in the College prospectus and on the College website. The College will ensure that information is provided to UCAS and other key organisations in a timely manner to populate their applicant-facing web services.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) on tuition fees and financial support for higher education students are provided by the student enquiries, student finance, student services, admissions, course tutors and marketing teams. A series of course advice events and open days are held throughout the year to provide IAG to prospective students and many external marketing events are attended including UCAS events.

All full time applicants are offered opportunity to attend subject-specific applicant events where information regarding the fees and the financial support available through the College can be discussed further. Where applicants have declared a learning difficulty or disability the applicant events are attended by a member of the College inclusive learning team to discuss the support available.

The College has also set up an online facility to provide clear and easy access for applicants to information such as interview arrangements, course details, travel, finance, enrolment and joining instructions.

The Inclusive Learning team provides specialist advice for students with additional learning needs and those in receipt of DSA. The central student support services centre, 'The Core', provides a student finance advisor and other sources of support on academic, personal and career development for current students. These teams continue to provide advice and support for students throughout their programme to ensure that appropriate IAG is provided through all stages of the student life-cycle.

9.0 Consulting with Students

The College has consulted with the Students' Union, via the Student President and the Students' Union Liaison Officer in the development of this Access Agreement and the financial support, access and retention measures contained within it. The Student President sits on the Corporation Quality and Standards Committee who will be ultimately responsible for monitoring of performance of the Access Agreement.

This 2018-19 Access Agreement is subject to ratification by the College Corporation.

M. Cottam, Assistant Principal Higher Education
April 2017