

Access Agreement

Sussex Coast College Hastings

2017-18

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1. Introduction to Sussex Coast College Hastings

- Our Vision for Transformation: Inspiring futures: Changing lives
- Our Mission: High Quality Education and Training in partnership

Sussex Coast College Hastings is a Further Education College serving the areas of Hastings and Rother, situated within the town of Hastings at two main campus sites, Station Plaza and Ore Valley.

The College has received awards or recognition from a large number of organisations including Action for Business, Centre for Vocational Learning, Investors in People, Positive about Disabled People, Action for Inclusion, Wella Centre of Excellence, Cisco Networking Academy, Academy for Renewable Energies, D&AD (Design & Art Direction), RSA (Royal Society of Arts) and YCN (Young Creative Network) with 59 international design awards.

The Colleges Higher Education (HE) provision has received in (March 2012) a grading of full confidence across all key areas with QAA IQER. Its largest subject areas are Construction/Engineering, Sixth form and The Arts. The College currently has approximately 2125 16-18 learners, 2636 Adult, 161 fulltime and 245 part-time HE students for the academic year 2015-16 via franchise agreements with the University of Brighton and University of Central Lancashire. HE accounts for 1/16 of the total income for the College. The College works in partnership with two Higher Education Institutions, The University of Brighton (UOB) and The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). The partnership with UOB has existed since 1987 and the College currently offers foundation degrees BA (Hons) Top-Up and a BA (Hons) top-up programme. The University of Central Lancashire partnership was developed in 2010 to deliver a foundation degree and HNC in Nuclear Engineering. The college extended its HE provision by delivering both HND/C courses from 2012/13.

The progression rate to Higher Education for the young people of Hastings and Rother is one of the lowest in East Sussex. Hastings is ranked as the second most deprived ward in East Sussex and the nineteenth most deprived in the UK. The 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked Hastings overall level of deprivation as one of the worst in the South East and 19th of the 326 Local Authorities for local concentrations of multiple deprivation dropping from 32nd most deprived in 2007. There are also distinct pockets of deprivation across Rother (ranked 139 overall) with areas of Sidley in the top 10% most deprived in the country and further areas of Bexhill and Rye in the top 20% most deprived. 9 out of 12 LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) Castle, Central St Leonards and Gensing wards are ranked in the most deprived 10% nationally.

This Access Agreement for 2017-18 pays careful consideration to the local demographic in East Sussex. Through this agreement the College seeks to ensure that its vocational provision in HE is maintained at the highest standards.

Higher Education is an integral part of the work of the College and is carried out with the following aims:

- To widen participation so that more students and non-traditional students in the East Sussex area can access Higher Education.
- To provide a supportive progression route to Higher Education for those without the formal entry requirements or who have non-traditional qualifications.
- To offer opportunities for progression from within the college for those learners completing level 3 programmes of study.
- To provide blended and flexible learning including e-learning, off site, part-time and top-up provision to ensure the college engages with local and regional employers.
- To provide professional research and development opportunities for all staff
- To provide flexible HE that is responsive to local employer requirements,

particularly in sectors where participation in HE is currently low.

2. SCCH HE Strategic Plan 2015-18

Mission

Sussex Coast College Hastings will provide and grow a first class Higher Education offer to meet the needs of individuals, employers and the local communities of Hastings and Rother.

Strategic Aim 1:

Provide a flexible, relevant and distinctive curriculum that supports and meets the needs of local people and employers whilst increasing the number of International students on programmes (Annex 1 outlines the current and future curriculum developments)

Strategic Aim 2:

Increase and widen participation in Higher Education amongst local residents in Hastings and Rother

Strategic Objective 3:

Ensure HE students benefit from a high quality teaching and learning experience, which meets their needs, employers and local, regional and the national economy

3. Fee Levels, Student Success and Progression Measures

Fee levels for 2017/18

| Fee category – Full time courses | F/T Fee PA | P/T Fee PA |
|--|------------|--------------|
| BA (Hons) degrees (Three year undergraduate degree) | £7,500 | £3,750 |
| BA (Hons) Top –degrees (One year | £7,500 | £3,750 |
| Foundation degrees (Two years) | £7,000 | £3,500 |
| HND | £5,900 | £2,950 (HNC) |
| UoB FDA 3 new degree courses | £7,500 | £3,750 |

| | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Estimated Additional Fee Income | £160,200 | £280,000 | £360,450 | £480,000 |
| Additional Income spent on Access Measures | £32,040 | £56,000 | £72,090 | £96,090 |

4. Resourcing Priorities for 2017/18

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------|---|
| 1. Access | £4,000 | 12.5% | Outreach work (see below) |
| 2. Student Success | £4,000 | 12.5% | Retention of students (HE Mentor) whilst on courses |
| 3. Financial Support | £20,000 | 62% | Bursaries for FT students from low income families |
| 4. Progression | £4,200 | 13% | To support students into employment |
| Total | £32,040 | 100% | |

We have attempted to cover our own HE aims and objectives as outlined in the colleges HE Strategic plan 2015-18. We have reflected in the expectation by Offa to take into account the student life cycle and made an attempt to spread this across three main areas.

We attempt to improve retention and attainment by currently employing a HE Mentor who supports students that are struggling on the course. Students are referred by Course Leaders or can book to see the Mentor themselves. Accurate records are kept which looks at the background issues and evaluates the support given and required. The information then gets fed back to the course leadership where concerns can be raised and external support can be recommended if required. The Mentor is managed by the HE Manager who can support and act on an individual basis if required. This is set to continue.

5. Financial Support for Students 2017/18

1. £500 maximum cash bursary for students income of below £25,000 per year - £1,000 Residual income of below £42,600 per year This will be paid in 2 sums of £250 on 1st December and 1st March subject to engagement demonstrated by attendance, only applicable to home students (application on a first come first serve basis)
2. A Hardship Fund will be created to support any student in dire financial need. All eligibility will be based on an assessment of household income and outgoings. Normally to be eligible to apply for hardship award the applicants will have a residual income of under £25,000 per annum.

6. Outreach activities

1. to support progression to HE from the College's level 3 provision, in particular to the promotion and development of activities which engage 16-18 learners who are completing their level 3 qualifications, Access to Higher Education and other students who come with non-traditional qualifications. Sussex Coast College Hastings is committed to collaborating with other Higher Education Institutions to provide quality outreach opportunities for non-traditional learners across Sussex.
2. to support a range of other outreach activities for adults to encourage a greater number of people from NS-SEC and LPN backgrounds to apply and study with us. These include tasters

during Adult Learners Week each May and forging partnerships with other local adult education groups to discuss potential progression onto our HE programmes. Our team of employer engagement staff also provide information on HE progression routes and courses to employees in the local area. Data will be captured to show whether the named adults involved in these outreach activities actually convert to applications and enrolments onto HE programmes.

The College currently has a strong relationship with the University of Brighton, based on a tradition of partnership for providing information, advice and guidance for our learners. We intend to build on this relationship in the coming academic years, supporting each other's outreach efforts to enhance the experience participants.

Through our partnership network, we are currently exploring ways of further developing our collaborative outreach work to provide quality opportunities for Widening participation pupils and students across Sussex.

The college has begun to develop a longer term approach to outreach with the introduction of a Primary college initiative that encourages groups of Primary school children to attend taster sessions to enable them to experience our college and see what potential progression routes are available to them. This work targets Year 6 students to embed ideas of potential progression as they transfer to secondary school. The college also provides a wide range of Year 10 and 11 taster activities that provide young people with FE and HE information to support progression.

The college has also recently formed a new group focused upon educational attainment and progression in the town. Entitled the Hastings Academies and College Alliance (HACA) it contains all four secondary schools, the college and the University of Brighton as members and is focused upon raising the quality of education, standards and results and progression though and to HE. This is part of the colleges longer term planning and support for the area.

This Access Agreement is the responsibility of the Head of HE within the college. He is line managed by the Deputy Principal: Curriculum and Quality who will oversee this work and ensure compliance with this agreement.

These personnel are in turn held to account on the key performance indicators within the document by the Curriculum Quality and Standards Committee who receive reports on progress twice-yearly. The Quality and Standards committee is chaired by the Vice Chairman of the College Corporation and will monitor and oversee the delivery of this agreement. The committee also contains student representation, via the Student President.

The committee will review progress and make recommendations accordingly based on the use of socio-economic data from student enrolments to ensure that access is fair and the student body is commensurate with the wider socio-economic demography of the Hastings and Rother area.

This Access Agreement will be monitored on a regular basis placing emphasis on monitoring the key performance indicators at quarterly Principal's Performance Review audits throughout the year. The information will be shared with other Heads of Learning at the Higher Education Strategy Board.

Widening participation

The undergraduate curriculum has been planned to encourage students to study at the College and developed in conjunction with local industry partners. Through information gained partly through the College's Work based learning team, the college now is focusing and investing further on a local vocational training agenda at HE level that will support key local

businesses and anticipate the developments of industry. It is hoped this will both encourage participation and demonstrate that the College is aware of the educational needs of the local community and committed to responding to these, through an HE offer including foundation degrees and Higher National Diplomas in several subject areas and a variety of study modes.

This offer seeks to improve existing levels of recruitment from underrepresented groups: 38% of the College's 2011-12 cohort came from NS-SEC categories 4-7, with 32% of this cohort also coming from Low Participation POLAR neighbourhoods 1 and 2. 62% of this cohort received the maximum available University bursary, because their household income was below £25,000.

Despite the local issues of low participation and deprivation in Hastings and Rother, these rates are lower than at some other FECs in Sussex, and the College has set targets to address this. In particular, the College will seek to:

- i. increase participation from under-represented groups as defined by NS-SEC and LPN data
- ii. increase internal progression from Further Education to Higher Education

Targeting groups

Schools

Our newly appointed schools liaison co-ordinator (August 2016) will be visiting all the local schools and talking with groups (including non-traditional groups) to promote the vocational focus of our courses. This is to emphasise to the non-traditional types of students that studying at a University can include vocational subjects and higher apprenticeships.

Employers

We will offer Higher Apprenticeships and our dedicated sales team will recruit employers from local businesses including employers who want to progress through to level 4 & 5.

Recruitment fairs

We are looking to target this potential market which will include youth centres and other youth organisations to invite them into a 'Did you Know that you could Study for a Degree' event at the college, or at their venue, to attempt to overturn the myth of only academically orientated students succeeding at university level. We will provide overall student support and financial advice. HE in FE tends to be more supportive and we don't believe new potential students realise this. We aim to attempt to change this through these workshops.

University Centre

Significant work is currently being undertaken by community stakeholders in the town as to what they see the future of the new university centre in Hastings being. The report will indicate what a range of people in Hastings want which could provide us with valuable market research which can be utilised setting up focus groups in the community.

7. Performance to Date Against Our Targets and Milestones

N/A – All our directly funded numbers fees have been under the £6,135 fee threshold. We have reported this to OFFA each year which has been acknowledged.

8. SCCH Monitoring and Impact Assessment Capability

The college will include the monitoring of all data against its targets set out in the Access Agreement, this will become an agenda item at each board held three times per year (1 per term) Key members of the group HE management and the Student Services department will report on activity, progress, issues, ensuring that the work is carried out against the quality assurance cycle set out for HE. Issues and concerns and what impact the Access Agreement has had on a yearly basis will be raised and discussed for future consideration. The Director of HE will report this impact to the PPR (Principals Performance Review) meeting (three times per year), to report to Senior Management of progress, Governors will be present as part of this process.

Annual Self Evaluation conducted by the college will provide an opportunity to analyse progress against performance data set in the agreement, and evaluate on a year on year basis to ensure the offering is accurate.

The college will review its monitoring processes of its expenditure to ensure that the correct expenditure and impact is undertaken, we recognise that we are new to this system and will endeavour to honour this to the best of our ability as this will be our first year.

The evaluation of our outreach work will form part of our annual reporting to our Corporation. We have discussed with UCAS and will purchase, as part of the UCAS package, POLAR data. This will provide us with key data to analyse.

We will compare the percentage of data received from our outreach work in comparison to our enrolment numbers to ascertain if the feedback received at the events and focus groups is being implemented.

All interview forms/enrolment forms at the college will ask where they heard about the course. We will include an option for 'external event' and 'If so, where was the event held?', for example.

Feedback forms from these events will help us to assess and develop our outreach approach and establish good and bad practice.

9. Consulting with the Student Body

The most recent involvement with have had was in 2011/12, a focus group was convened made up of level 4, 5 and 6 students. General questions were asked regarding the colleges current system regarding scholarships and bursaries including communication of information, amount, payment and usage. The basic proposal for the Colleges 2014/15 OFFA agreement was outlined and feedback was provided below:

- 95% of students were satisfied with the method and timeframes for payments
- 5% of students suggested that a payment award be made to students could be made for students who made good progress.
- 100% of students did not want fee waivers
- 90% of students were happy receiving their bursary in two payments, with only 10% suggesting that the bursary be split in monthly payments. This echoes the past EMA method of student payments that was given to many of our level 3 students who have progressed onto our HE programmes.
- Students generally wanted more information prior to application/ enrolment regarding bursaries, scholarships etc. They understood that this information was available to them on Direct.gov but thought it useful to adopt this with the colleges marketing for HE. This supports

an action point by QAA at the colleges recent IQER (March 2012) that the college needs to provide more student focused information to applicants.

10. Equality and Diversity

Overview

Sussex Coast College, Hastings is committed to Equality and Diversity in everything we do:

- in access to all our curriculum, academic or vocational, for all those who wish to learn.
- in the delivery of the highest quality education and training to everyone.
- in employing staff and all our employment practices
- in our partnerships with other bodies
- in our procurement of goods and services

Our Single Equality Scheme is a key element within our strategic objectives. The Scheme demonstrates our commitment to not just fully meet our obligations as set out in the Equality Act 2010 but to become a beacon organisation that others look to for best practice.

We will work with our community to raise and work on issues of equality and to promote the advantages of a diverse and mixed society. Our curriculum aims to develop in a manner that meets the needs of our community and the ability of our students to compete in the local, national and international arena.

We do not envisage teaching to be 'outstanding' unless it takes into account issues of equality and diversity and prepares our students to work in a culturally diverse society either within the UK or internationally. As an employer we will ensure that all our processes are in line with good practice in Equality and Diversity.

Our Single Equality Scheme Aims

To cover the protected characteristics of the abovementioned Equality Act 2010:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender
- Age
- Sexuality orientation
- Religion and Belief
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Plus:

- Economic and Social Inclusion

We aim to:

- Ensure the development of a curriculum that enables all sections of our community to raise their aspirations and to achieve their maximum potential.
- Support learning programmes at appropriate and accessible levels for all potential learners, enabling progression.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion within the content and delivery of our learning programmes.
- Provide a learning and working environment which is safe and free of bullying and harassment relating to the above characteristics.
- Provide a learning environment which is accessible to all.
- Work with local bodies, statutory or voluntary, to develop and provide a College which is central to the Hastings and Rother community and its regeneration programme.

- Support bidding for funds which will help us achieve these aims in partnership with others in the community.
- Actively participate in the moves to promote and regenerate Hastings and Rother as a place which welcomes people from diverse cultures, faiths and beliefs, and ways of living.
- Celebrate the achievements of individuals and groups who have assisted the progression to equality of opportunity.
- Aim to recruit, retain and develop a workforce that reflects the diverse nature of the locality and employ the very best staff available to enable us to reach our aims.
- Implement a continuing professional development plan in Equality and diversity for all staff.
- Use positive action to help meet the college targets

We have:

Zero tolerance of bullying, discrimination, any behaviour which may make the college feel an unsafe place or of behaviours which damage or worsen the physical environment for others on grounds of the above characteristics or for any other reason.

Equality and Diversity Objectives

Our Single Equality and Diversity Objectives are:

- Set out targets against which we can be measured on improvement of Equality and Diversity, in all nine categories
- Use our Principal's Performance Review process to monitor our progress on equality and diversity issues and that it delivers increased understanding of issues so as to develop our performance on equality and diversity.
- Develop equality and diversity impact measurements in all divisions and departments to ensure progress can be made in each of the areas of the College.
- Develop performance indicators and quality measurements that enable us to monitor and report our progress.
- Develop our Equality Impact Assessment process to ensure that all new processes, policies and significant changes are fully assessed and that a plan for impact assessing existing services, policies and practises is introduced.
- To embed Equality and Diversity within all Teaching and Learning.
- To ensure all staff and students receive an induction programme which ensures they understand the legal requirements of Equality and Diversity
- To ensure the student admissions policy and process is audited annually and produce a report for SLT
- To ensure that Equality and Diversity is fully introduced in all our procurement of goods and services.
- To work with our partners to promote Equality and Diversity.

Further details of our equality and diversity policy can be found in the full Single Equality Scheme document.

11. Provision for Information to Prospective Students

The College provides clear and accurate information about fees and financial support. We will ensure that the planned year on year increase in fees is clearly communicated to students. The web site lists fees in categorised tabular form and a detailed fees policy document is available to view on line and download. The College website meets the requirements of the Key Information Set and UNISTATS. All appropriate full and part-time course pages display the interactive KIS widget and content updates have been made to add the full programme specification for all programmes with module level details including learning outcomes and assessment requirements.

Sussex Coast College will provide the following information for all our HE students and stakeholders:

- Information on fees through our website
- Course information through the HE prospectus
- Details of financial support
- Details of other resources available at the College
- UCAS website/fairs
- Publication of KIS information

