

2019/20 Access and participation plan

Institution: Petroc

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1. Assessment of current performance

Background

Petroc is a large, successful further education (FE) and higher education (HE) college that was formed following the merger of North Devon College and East Devon College in August 2008. The main communities served by Petroc are North, Mid and East Devon, Torridge and North Cornwall. As the only provider of both further and higher education within a 40 mile radius, Petroc offers a broad and diverse curriculum to suit the requirements of our local communities. The Ofsted full inspection report for March 2012, graded the college as “good with several outstanding features”. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) conducted a Higher Education Review of HE provision at Petroc during November 2014 and the report published in 2015 judged Petroc as meeting all UK expectations. In June 2017, Petroc was awarded a TEF Silver award.

Presently Petroc has approximately 10,000 students enrolled on programmes that range from level 1 to level 6, of whom over 500 are HE students. The vast majority of HE students are taught at the Barnstaple sites, with the Brannams Campus housing a bespoke University Centre. The College’s core purpose as stated in our Mission statement is “leading our Community in Learning, Enterprise and Skills; Equipping it for the Future, Economically, Socially and Culturally.”

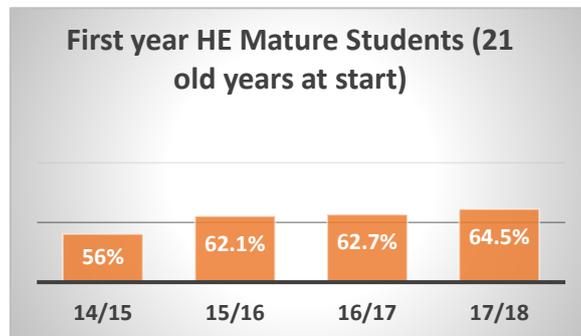
Access

Our rural location, the relative lack of economic prosperity, coupled with the excellent support we offer learners from under-represented groups means that we recruit a very high proportion of our higher education students from our local communities. In 2016/2017, over 97% of our Higher Education students lived within 30 miles of their main campus, and 85% lived within 20 miles of their main campus. This, itself, however, provides challenges in that our communities are poorly served by public transport meaning many students need to consider the relative cost of transport when deciding to study at Petroc.

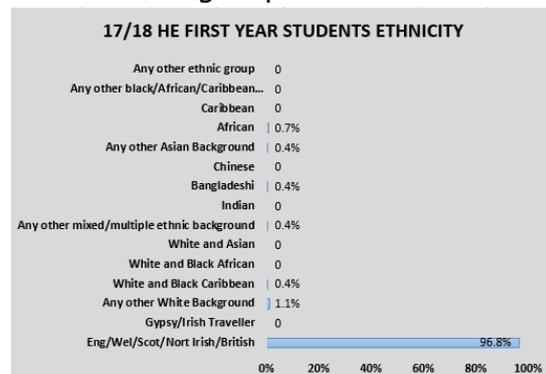
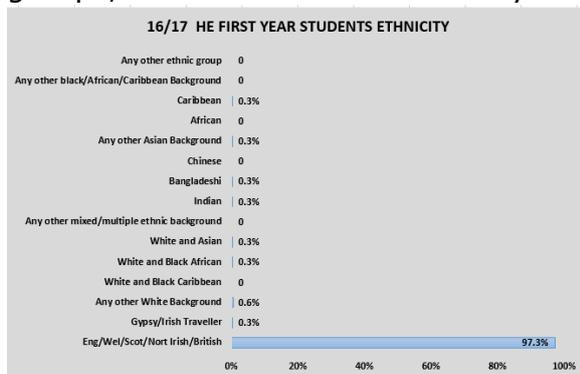
The area served by Petroc is considerably less prosperous than areas in the South of the County. There a number of wards such as Bideford South, Bideford East, Forches and Whiddon Valley, Ilfracombe Central, and Yeo Valley that have a POLAR 3 Quintile one participation rate of less than 20%.

Trends relating to outreach of HE programmes at Petroc demonstrate that we are increasing recruitment in these low participation areas with 2016/17

recruitment of 21% of students from quintile one and 29% from quintile two. Evidence would also suggest that previous strategies employed to target and recruit mature students have been successful with a growing proportion of HE students aged over 21 on start date. This currently stands at 64.5% for 2017/18 in comparison with 62.7% in 2016/17 and 62.1% in 2015/16.



The ethnic diversity of HE students at Petroc is representative of the local population and as previously stated the majority of our students live within a 30 mile radius of the campuses. Census data from 2011 indicates that 95.91% of the North Devon population are white British. The data for Petroc is marginally higher with 97.3% for 2016/17 and 96.8% 2017/18. Data from 2016/17 would indicate that Petroc’s recruitment of Asian, mixed/other and Black students rests in the sector’s bottom 25% threshold. As stated above this is representative of the local population and coupled with the fact that we don’t have the accommodation infrastructure to support improved access for these groups, it is not deemed necessary to prioritise these groups in terms of access.

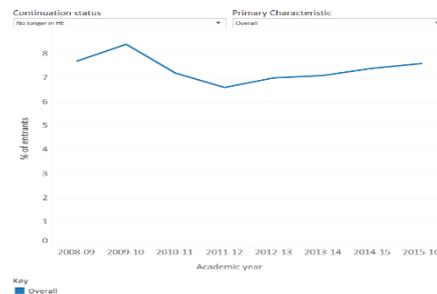
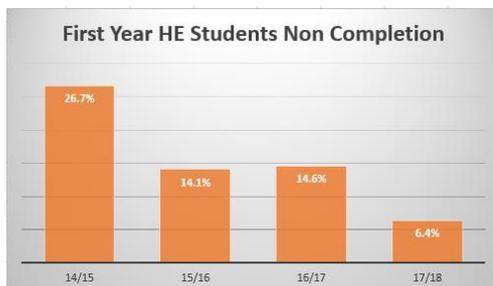


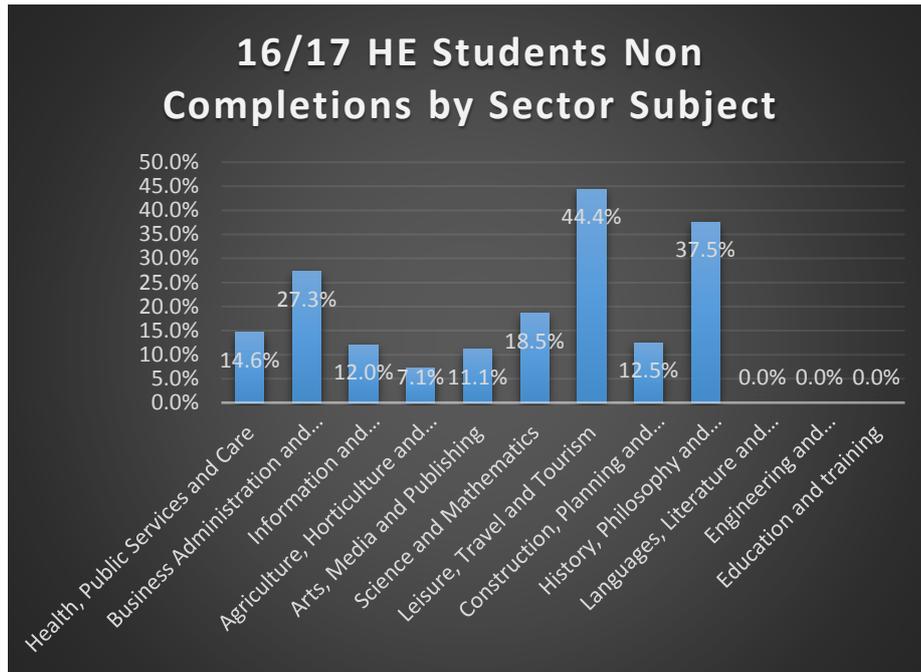
In terms of access for students with a disability, data from 2016/17 indicates that 20% of full time and 23% of part time students declared a disability upon enrolment which provides evidence that the emphasis placed upon interviewing all applicants and asking them to complete a disclosure of information form to self-declare a disability has been successful. In addition to this self-declaration Petroc will introduce a system of initial assessment to assess literacy and numeracy levels to ascertain specific learning disabilities of new applicants. Petroc currently collects data on care leavers through a self-declaration upon enrolment, however we currently hold limited data on access, success and progression as a very small number of students have declared this in the past

two years. In order to improve monitoring and evaluation of care leavers for future access and participation plans, we intend to offer interview training to staff that will specifically focus upon this question and explain that the information will remain confidential from their peers. Petroc will also work in collaboration with the Next Steps South West team to develop specific support mechanisms for care leavers and students from low participation neighbourhoods.

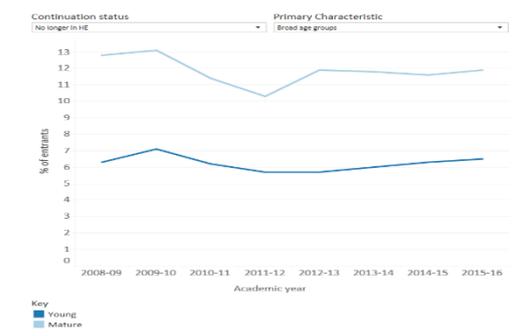
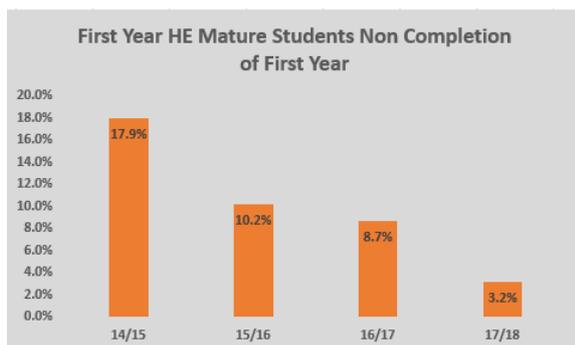
Success

Factors such as low qualifications on entry (69% with a low or non-tariff entry requirement in 2016/17), recruiting a high proportion of students from POLAR 3 quintile 1 and the number of students requiring some form of additional learning support has historically had a negative impact upon non-continuation at Petroc. This has improved since 2014/15 when non-continuation stood at 26.7% and a rate of 14.1% in 2015/16. Non-continuation for academic year 2016/17 was 14.6% which is below the national average of 7.6% and the TEF benchmark of 12.5% for institutions with a similar HE learner profile. Further analysis of the data based upon sector subject indicates a non-continuation issue in four areas, Business, Administration and Law, Science and Mathematics, Leisure, Travel and Tourism and History, Philosophy and Theology.





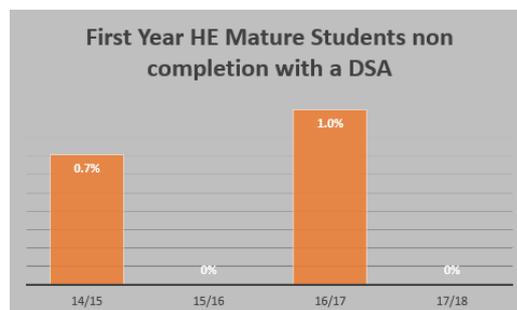
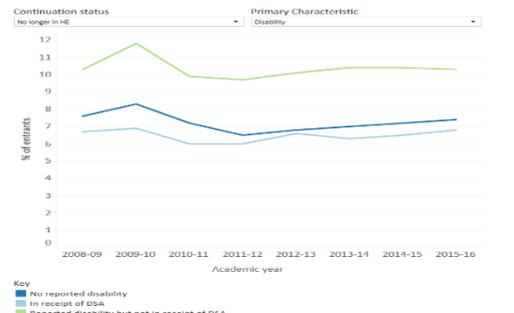
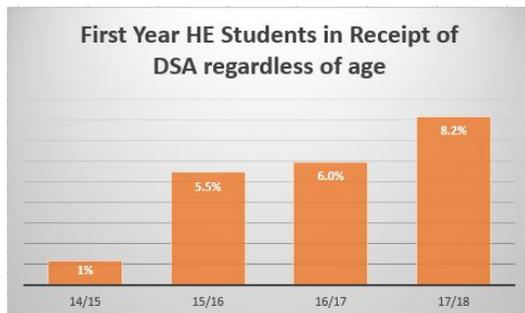
As previously stated, the majority of HE students at Petroc are mature, the trend of non-continuation for this group of students is improving and compares favourably with the national data. Non-continuation of mature students has improved from 17.9% in 2014/15 to 8.7% in 2016/17. The data from 2015/16 shows non-continuation of 10.2% compared with national data of 12%. This would indicate that measures to support mature students whilst on programme such as improved levels of support with study skills have been successful. It would appear that the demographic with high levels of non-continuation at



Petroc are those that are aged between 18 and 21 years which represents a future challenge for the institution.

In 2016/17, 20% of students declared a disability upon enrolment and the number of students accessing DSA has increased significantly since 2014/15 with 8.2% in receipt in 2017/18 compared with 1% in 2014/15. This would suggest that learning support needs have been identified at an earlier stage in the student lifecycle. All HE students are asked to declare disability at interview through the completion of a disclosure of information form and improvements

have been made in the identification of needs through the tutorial support system on all HE programmes. In terms of non-continuation, Petroc is significantly better than national average with non-continuation of 1% for students in receipt of DSA in 2016/17 compared to national data of 7% in 2015/16.



In terms of success data relating to non-continuation of minority ethnic groups, the data indicates that this group has 0% non-continuation and 100% achievement from 2014/15 to 2016/17. However, it is recognised that this is not statistically significant due to proportionately low recruitment and specific strategies to improve success and progression for these particular groups are currently not required as any gains from investment would be marginal.

As previously stated, Petroc currently collects data on care leavers through a self-declaration upon enrolment, however we currently hold limited data on success as a very small number of students have declared this in the past two years. Future improvements in terms of this data collection will be reflected in Petroc’s access and participation plan for 2020/21.

Progression

Petroc has developed a Higher Education Employability, Enterprise and Progression Strategy that details a strategic approach to embedding employability and progression within its Higher Education provision.

All FdA/FdSc programmes have clearly defined and published progression routes at Plymouth University with a significant number progressing to the specified ‘top up’ programme in 2017/18. Information regarding these specified

progression routes is available and provided to all cohorts including disabled, care leavers, LPN and BME cohorts however it should be recognised that data on care leavers and BME cohorts is limited due to proportionately low recruitment numbers. Petroc does not currently hold specific progression data for disabled and LPN cohorts, however this will be included in the access and participation plan for 2020/21.

TEF data from 2016/17 in relation to progression to highly skilled employment or further study indicates a challenge as Petroc's performance currently stands at 64.3% in comparison with a benchmark of 72.9% and it is suggested that this could have a significant impact upon mature cohorts. It is therefore our strategic aim to validate a greater breadth of level 6 awards to facilitate progression for mature students as this should be our target group in terms of gaps in progression.

Petroc students are successful when they progress to programmes at the University of Plymouth with 68% achieving a good degree and 21% achieving a first in 2016/17. Students who progress to a BA (Hons) programme at Petroc exceed the national average with 33% achieving a first and 73% achieving a good degree. This provides evidence of the success of Petroc in terms of attainment for progressing students which further highlights the need to improve the number of students that progress, particularly in mature cohorts.

Intersectionality

Due to the proportionately low recruitment numbers for the institution, intersectionality analysis is not deemed appropriate as data in relation to under-represented groups such as those from low participation neighbourhoods, care leavers and ethnic minority groups is not statistically significant to identify specific intersectional gaps in access, success and progression.

2. Ambitions and Strategy

Introduction

The Petroc strategy in relation to Higher Education is based on the desire to build upon the present productive relationship with the University of Plymouth, our degree awarding body, through whom we deliver all our degree-level provision. Recruitment, selection, admission procedures and our approach to teaching HE programmes are informed by our strategic relationship with the University. The academic cooperation agreement between the parties states that we will “facilitate access to higher education from under-represented groups providing for the needs of local enterprise and contributing to both economic regeneration and social inclusion across the region”. This partnership is of long-standing and has been particularly successful in delivering Higher Education to specific target groups including mature students and students who reside in POLAR3 quintile 1 and 2 low participation neighbourhoods.

The assessment of current performance would suggest that previous investment in access, success and progression has seen improvements in recruiting mature students and those from low participation areas. The number of students accessing DSA has also increased which has led to improvements in non-continuation in these under-represented groups. The key challenges for Petroc remain to be access and success for students aged 18-21 with low UCAS entry tariffs from low participation neighbourhoods and progression for part time, mature students from FdA/FdSc to honours level study or highly skilled employment. Therefore, the main target groups for additional investment/activity will be:

- improving access for students with prior attainment gaps from low participation neighbourhoods;
- improving success for students with prior attainments gaps from low participation neighbourhoods;
- improving progression for part time, mature students that traditionally have not progressed to higher level study or employability.

Access

As stated in the assessment of current performance, in 2016/17 Petroc recruited 69% of students with low or non-tariff entry requirements, 50% from POLAR quintile 1 and 2 neighbourhoods.

To support learners at outreach and recruitment stages, Petroc will maintain modest entry tariffs on all our programmes. In addition, the Higher Education Admissions Policy states that we welcome applications from students from a non-traditional background, some of whom may not yet have achieved a level 3 qualification. Applicants will continue to be able to access Higher Education based upon qualifications, life /work experience to maintain the high levels of access for these target groups. Students will continue to be supported at application, interview, and enrolment stage to understand the University’s and the Colleges’ offer and responsibilities, and to be able to access support and pertinent information. This approach to contextualising Admissions and Interviews supports our aim of Widening Participation from the targeted groups

of low participation and mature students and will support local social mobility. Furthermore, we will undertake targeted activities to improve attainment at GCSE and A Level to improve access to Higher Education for young people from the previously stated target groups. Close links with projects such as 'Next Steps South West', 'Hidden Talent in Devon' and 'Strategic Employer Engagement in Devon' will further widen the scope of our outreach activities with a particular focus upon local 6th form colleges and employers. The aim of this collaborative work is to contribute to improved access from low participation neighbourhoods.

Success

All Higher Education learners have been supported throughout their studies by a personal tutor system which provides both academic progress support and pastoral care. Student success is monitored at both programme and institutional level to ensure these strategies are proving effective and delivering benefits for learners, with a dedicated Higher Education Quality and Management team assessing progress and attainment.

This approach, with a clear focus on Widening Participation and social mobility, we believe will continue to be successful for student and institution alike, with delivery based upon excellent individual learner support from application to graduation, and programmes taught to small classes. We will maintain an average Higher Education group class of 10, allowing for a close relationship with support and academic staff.

There remains however an attainment and non-continuation gap for students with low tariff entry from low participation neighbourhoods and Petroc will invest in targeted activities for these groups in academic year 2019/20 including summer support sessions and targeted financial support/wellbeing sessions throughout the duration of their studies.

Progression

A key objective of Petroc is to stimulate and meet the demand for Higher Apprenticeships, Degree and Post Graduate level qualifications in order to achieve the outcomes of having increased the number of people studying University courses at Petroc by 10% by 2022/23.

We are highly proactive in developing and undertaking initiatives to engage and support young people and adults facing a variety of barriers to learning, and work closely with a range of stakeholders and partners to address the specific needs of local individuals, communities and businesses through curriculum development and targeted project activity. The key ambition for improving progression is to develop progression to further study or high skilled employment for mature, part time students. The College, in partnership with the University of Plymouth, retains a clear objective towards supporting local learners into Higher Education and the successful attainment of higher-level qualifications relevant to local employment demand. In addition, the college has a strategic aim to further develop degree level apprenticeship standards with a particular focus upon engaging with employers to promote these opportunities to part time students.

Petroc will continue to take deliberate steps to ensure our students are both ready for graduate employment and progression to final year honours as outlined in our Higher Education Strategies. We view the time spent with learners prior to the commencement of their studies to the formal progression links to both employment and the University of Plymouth (in excess of 60% of our students progress directly from an FdA or FdSc programme to a one year BA / BSc top up at Plymouth) as being crucial to student success. Close links with the University of Plymouth via the Faculty Partnership Managers, Academic Partnerships, and at programme level the Academic Liaison staff mean that the individual programmes are well placed to ensure smooth progression and consider curriculum relevance. Learners are encouraged to visit the Plymouth campus sites to improve transitional arrangements and support their transfer to level 6, with annual visits supported by the University, College, and Student Union. Activities to further develop these links to further study will be developed and particularly targeted at part time, mature students.

Collaborative Working

Petroc has well established relationships with local schools and sixth form colleges to promote the opportunities that exist in Higher Education locally with a particular emphasis upon higher apprenticeship opportunities, employability and STEM.

Petroc is a proactive partner in the Next Steps South West (NSSW) National Collaborative Outreach Programme project, led by Plymouth University, through which we are significantly enhancing our outreach activities through an agreed programme of activities and targeted projects. Specific target groups for the NSSW project relate to access for students from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3 quintiles one and two) and Petroc works closely with the appointed staff and student ambassadors on the project to engage with local schools to improve outreach for this particular target group. Our Access Agreement and Next Steps South West activities are mutually supportive, through a harmonised approach to avoid duplication.

Petroc is also a key delivery partner in two European Social Fund projects, Hidden Talent in Devon (HTiD) and Strategic Employer Engagement in Devon (SEED) being led by Plymouth University to support further activity to widen participation and engage with local employers. The aim of the SEED project relates to employer engagement in relation to higher level skills for mature students and this is clearly aligned with our ambition of improving progression to highly skilled employment for part time, mature students. The key aims of our collaborative working are therefore improving access for LPN cohorts and improving progression and employability for mature cohorts.

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement Evaluation

Petroc will undertake annual monitoring and impact evaluation of this access and participation plan to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement

of the milestones it has established. Impact of the activity on access, success and progression will be made using the OFFA Toolkit 4: Evaluation in particular the RUFDATA framework with a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the effectiveness of the plan and assess the impact of activities and financial investment. The evaluation will include analysis of each of our target groups (students with prior attainment gaps, part time, mature students and protected characteristics including, gender, race, ethnicity and disability).

Monitoring

Responsibility for the monitoring report will rest with the Head of Quality for Higher Education and the Higher Education Department Managers. Consultation will take place with students through the HE Student Forum in assessing progress and effectiveness.

The effectiveness of support and intervention for target groups will be monitored at half termly Quality Review meetings with HE Programme Managers overseen by the Head of Quality HE and the HE Department Managers. A review of attendance, retention, progress and achievement all students with the prioritisation of our target group learners based on a RAG rated 'students at risk' approach allowing for in year targeted intervention and activity for to prevent non-continuation.

The HE Non Continuation Action Plan was produced and agreed during the Autumn of 2017, the plan is reviewed and updated annually. The HE Department Managers and Head of Quality are responsible for implementation and monitoring. The majority of the agreed actions have now been implemented and integrated across all our HE provision, analysis of impact will take place at the end of the academic year when success rates are available.

The access and participation plan will form part of the termly Student Forum agenda, a student survey will take place and outcomes will be discussed and addressed at the forum. If students and stakeholders do not feel the plan is wholly being delivered or if improvements or additions need to be made the management team can review and amend where reasonably possible.

Evaluation

The evaluation report will be presented to the Senior Management Team the HE Student Forum and the Governing Body for approval and feedback. This will then be used for future planning and amendments to the Access and Participation Plan. The annual monitoring report will be submitted to the Director of OFS following its approval by the College Governors.

The report will incorporate the following sections:

- Financial data summarising recruitment levels, payment of bursaries, and other financial support made available to students.

- Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year and progress made in meeting institutional targets and milestones.
- Student success and progression support activities that have been undertaken during the year and progress towards meeting institutional targets and milestones.
- Evaluation information regarding the impact of financial support made available to students, including qualitative and quantitative data.
- Collated data from student feedback questionnaires specifically relating to access, success and progression measures.
- Planned changes to our approach, where relevant, based on the findings of our evaluation activities.

To enable the outcomes of our evaluation to influence practice externally the evaluation findings and good practice will be shared through our partner HEI the University of Plymouth partnership meetings and events including: the Teaching and Learning Conference, Faculty Partnership Meetings, Joint Board of Study. Petroc also forms part of the South West Peer Confederation and South West Colleges Group both offering a critical friend and sharing of good practice.

RUFDATA framework

R	Reasons and purposes	<p>Planning financial and resource allocation Developing support and academic provision to meet our ambitions and goals. Accountability: Did we achieve what we set out in the plan? Was the intervention, activities, support and financial spending effective in improving and increasing access, improving learner outcomes and progression?</p>
U	Uses	A dedicated day has been allocated for annual HE Staff development. This training will include how to support our target groups through identifying ALS needs.
F	Foci	<p>To establish whether the range of activities is appropriate and identify if additional activities are required. Identification of prioritisation of finances and resources.</p>
D	Data and evidence	<p>Quantitative For each target groups we will analyse input data against each element of the access and participation resource plan internal data for the student lifecycle (Recruitment, Success (Non-continuation, Achievement) and Progression. (See table below).</p>

A		<p>Qualitative Student forums – gain feedback on student perception of how Establish Case studies (from each target group)</p>
	Audience	<p>HEFCE</p> <p>Governors and Senior Management The analysis and evaluation on the effectiveness of the plan will be reported to the Senior Management Team and the Governing Body on an annual basis.</p> <p>Students will be consulted on the implementation of the plan through student forums. To ensure that students from a range of backgrounds and target groups are represented, all students will be invited to participate. Their characteristic will then be recorded against their feedback. Students can feedback through their Programme Student Rep or Lead Student Rep at any point in the year.</p>
T	Timing	<p>Data analysis Recruitment data analysis – November Attendance data – Half-termly Non continuation data – Half-termly monitoring and annual overview August Achievement data at modular level half termly, and programme level annually in August Progression data – annually in October</p>
A	Agency	<p>The Head of Quality – Higher Education will lead the data analysis and report writing. The Student Forums will be conducted by the HE Department Managers. The HE co-ordinator will present the finding to the Senior Management Team and Governors.</p>

To determine whether we have met our ambitions and goals we will conduct an analysis of the data as follows:

Input data	Participation data	Output data
<p>What was their highest level of qualification on entry? When where they last in education? What disadvantages do they have? Are they full-time or part-time? Did they attend the summer school? Did they enrol as a result of a marketing event which was targeted at non-traditional learners?</p> <p>Other input data: Learner postcodes Index of Multiple Deprivation Polar3 Free School Meals Identified as a care leaver SEN Ethnicity Race Age Sex School/college performance tables</p>	<p>Was the learner in receipt of ALS? Was the learner in receipt of DSA?</p> <p>What resources or support was put in place? How many times did they receive support or use the resources supplied? Who delivered it? Did they value it?</p> <p>Payment of bursaries, and other financial support made available to students.</p> <p>Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year.</p> <p>Student success and progression support activities that have been undertaken during the year and progress towards meeting institutional targets and milestones.</p> <p>Collated data from student feedback questionnaires specifically relating to access, success and progression measures.</p>	<p>What was their attendance level? Where they retained? What overall aggregate/degree classification did they achieve? Did they progress to a higher level of study/gain graduate level employment? Progress made in meeting institutional targets and milestones.</p>

Equality and Diversity

Petroc are committed to providing opportunities for all students no matter what their background or experience. We actively promote Equality and Diversity as a College and in 2014 achieved accreditation and gained the Equality Standard. As a College, we are committed to achieving an environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination, acknowledging the protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010).

The College encourages employees and learners to disclose their disabilities, or any additional needs, in order for appropriate support to be put into place. The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that, as far as is

reasonable, a learner with a disability or additional need has the same access to enable them to carry out their learning as a non-disabled person or any learner attending college to study. A reasonable adjustment may include: making adjustments to premises, rearranging a learner's timetabled classes to allow for access, such as a wheelchair. providing training or mentoring for a disabled learner, or supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled learners.

The approach to inclusivity and equality of access is embedded right from application: where accessible support is offered to learners to help them make the right decision on courses and the College ensures that this support can be accessed in a range of ways: online, in person, at various campus sites, or by phone. Guidance staff will also offer information on the range of support offered for eligible learners. An interview is offered to every applicant, and these interviews conducted by Programme Staff who are given training and guidance to support them in making learners aware of the opportunities to access support, with a particular focus on inclusivity. Those learners who identify particular needs to help them access education are then supported directly by our Additional Learning Support Office, who work with learners to provide individual approaches tailored to meet their needs. Learners are supported through the ongoing tutorial relationship to access this support at any point in their studies where a need may present itself.

Throughout their studies, inclusivity is supported through a range of teaching and learning activities. The College's Higher Education Assessment and Feedback Policy is currently under review and addresses the range of adjustments and considerations necessary to support learners through access and participation. The policy under review currently outlines the best practice for assessment in order to meet a range of learning needs, reasonable adjustment for recognised disability or protected characteristics, and works towards an inclusive stance across the learning, assessment and feedback cycle. The College recognises that HE learners may have different needs to FE learners, and so provide dedicated HE staff across Administration, Enrolment, Advice and Guidance, Learning Technologies and Resources, and a dedicated Higher Education Wellbeing Mentor who can offer support and signposting towards additional resources.

Petroc will undertake annual monitoring and impact evaluation of the Equality and Diversity strands of the access and participation plan to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement of the milestones it has established. Impact of the activity on access, success and progression will be made using the OFFA Toolkit 4: Evaluation, in particular the RUFDATA framework with a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the effectiveness of the plan and assess the impact of activities and financial investment. The evaluation will include analysis of each of our target groups (students with prior attainment

gaps, part time, mature students and protected characteristics including, gender, race, ethnicity and disability).

Student Consultation

Ongoing consultation with students is a core part of Petroc's general strategies. Learners are encouraged to feed-back via a range of modes and through elected Student Reps. Each cohort of learners is encouraged to elect 1-2 lead representatives and those Reps are invited to participate in training and a number of guidance and feedback events, include the termly Programme Committee Meetings. The concept "you said – we did" in response to listening to the Student Voice is important for Plymouth University and is available to all students to access through the HE Moodle pages.

At programme level, student representatives are members of the programme committee, both bringing the student voice to the committee and closing that feedback loop by responding to the student body, in essence extending the concept to include "you said – we responded".

Student representatives are invited to a Programme Committee meeting on a termly basis where feedback can be given in an open forum. Actions are taken forward from this forum at a college management level, student reps are kept up to date with progress being made via communication from the HE office. The College provides other avenues for feedback via personal tutors, suggestion boxes, and a tracked compliments and complaints system.

Students from groups both supported and not supported by the access and participation plan have the opportunity to express their views on the Access and Participation Plan. Each year, elected Student Representatives are consulted on a range of strategic and policy measures and documents across Higher Education and invited to participate in Programme Meetings and Validation events.

At the Petroc HE Summer School which is targeted at Care Leavers, students with disabilities, students from low participation neighbourhoods, BME and mature learners (but open to all learners) the students have the opportunity to speak with the Student Sabbatical Officer and HE Ambassadors who actively promote the post of Student Reps in a bid to encourage participation in the student voice from a wide range of backgrounds and underrepresented groups. Where possible we will actively encourage students in these groups to engage in consultation on the Access and Participation Plan, their learning experience and quality enhancement. We will endeavour to appoint a representative from each category of our target groups (Care Leavers, students with disabilities, students from low participation neighbourhoods, BME and mature learners) where feasibly possible and students are willing to do so.

Student Representatives were consulted specifically about the range of measures planned to improve Access, Success, Progression and Employability, forming and contributing to the range of activities outlined. Students further drive this

process in the form of participation as Higher Education Ambassadors, and in post-activity evaluation and review.

We will monitor and evaluate the feedback and attendance of student rep and quality meetings to ensure we are both hearing the views of and meeting the needs of learners from our target groups.

The Access and Participation Plan will be published on the Petroc website under 'Public Information', internally the plan will be published on the Moodle for open consultation. Student reps will be asked to gain feedback on the plan and report and consult on this (amongst other student enhancement agenda items) at the HE Planning meeting on a termly basis. The attendance for this includes Lead Student Reps, the Vice Principal Quality, Curriculum and Learners, the HE Coordinator, Head of Quality Higher Education and the HE Department Managers. We also have a Higher Education Student on the Board of Governors who will cross over from student forums to Governing Body meetings to scrutinise the effectiveness of the plan and represent the student voice.

3. Access, Success and Progression Measures

It is anticipated that the range of outreach activities identified in the 2018/19 access agreement will continue to promote access and maintain levels of success in terms of recruiting mature students and those from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN) in academic year 2019/20. These include:

- Events and promotional materials, including case studies, intended for mature learners and for non-traditional entrants to Higher Education
- A range of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) workshops and events aimed at raising attainment at GCSE and A Level and encouraging progression to higher level study in STEM subjects
- Aspiration-raising activities in collaboration with NSSW targeted at pupils aged 14 years and above from LPN including roadshows, visits from our HE Admissions team and master classes.
- Afterschool 'Ambition Academy' sessions for 14-16 year olds in a range of subject areas to improve attainment at GCSE
- 'Academic Academy' activity for 16-18 year olds in a variety of subject areas to improve attainment at A Level
- Summer school and taster programmes aimed at mature students and LPN cohorts to provide HE experiences, improve attainment, build confidence and develop HE-relevant skills.
- Support with the UCAS application process, particularly for students from low participation areas.
- Existing students supported to be NSSW Ambassadors for HE at events and open days
- Engagement with Plymouth University Student Union to raise local aspirations
- HE taster days in collaboration with the Higher Skills project aimed at encouraging our own Level 3 students to progress onto our higher education provision

- An annual high-profile Graduation Ceremony held in the centre of Barnstaple to raise awareness and aspirations in the local area.
- Information on financial support available to students with particular emphasis upon those students from low participation areas.

The assessment of current performance identified gaps in performance with national data in relation to non-continuation. Performance trends are improving for under-represented groups including mature students and those in receipt of DSA, however there remains a non-continuation gap for students aged 18-21 from low participation areas. Petroc will therefore prioritise funding above the basic fee cap on improving non-continuation, with a particular focus upon support provided to subject sector areas with high non-continuation rates. In academic year 2019/20, specific activities will build upon those identified in the 2018/19 access agreement and will include:

- Additional learning support for students entering higher education with low UCAS entry tariffs and from low participation neighbourhoods.
- Additional study skills sessions to be delivered in the summer to assist students that have referred elements of their programme as a first attempt.
- Drop-in support sessions to be provided by dedicated staff to focus upon wellbeing and financial support.
- Personal finance workshops to improve students' ability to manage their finances effectively
- Institutional milestones linked to success, achievement and retention
- An emergency hardship fund to support mature and LPN students with crisis-point challenges

Progression to higher level employment or further study remains a challenge for Petroc, in particular for part time and mature students. In order to promote progression, in academic year 2019/20 Petroc will engage in a range of activities such as:

- Clear information, advice and guidance to ensure students enrol on appropriate provision and consider progression routes from the beginning of their programme
- Employer forums and curriculum development to ensure provision meets local employer needs
- Visits to Plymouth University Campus to promote progression to BA/BSc 'top-up' degrees.
- Engagement of recent graduates as ambassadors and to provide case studies
- Employability support through guest speaker workshops, employer conferences and targeted careers advice
- Establishing greater links between FdA/FdSc programmes and higher apprenticeship standards/frameworks to encourage employability and progression from apprenticeship programmes at level 3.
- An enriched tutorial system adding to the student experience and supporting employability opportunities.

Having identified the range of activities, the institution has established the following quantitative measures in relation to its higher education provision falling under this access and participation plan:

- Non-continuation targets: to reduce our non-continuation rate and bring it in line with the benchmark of 12.5% (from 14.6%).
- Progression targets: increase internal progression from Petroc level 3 programmes to our Higher Education programmes by 5% from 70% in 2016/17 to over 75% by 2022/23 with a particular focus upon LPN cohorts.
- Improve the annual internal progression rate from foundation degree completers onto the new BA honours degree programmes at Petroc to 20% by 2022/23.
- Widening participation: maintain high level of student engagement from local area (in 2015 circa 97% of our students came from the local area), with a particular focus on areas in POLAR quintiles 1 and 2.
- Curriculum development: to respond to the identified needs of local employers and students by developing higher apprenticeships and the development of level 6 programmes that allow students the opportunity to complete a full degree locally

In addition to the range of access, success and progression measures identified above, Petroc will commit to providing funds for hardship and financial support. Financial support of £38,182 will be ring-fenced in 2019/20 which will be shared equally between full and part time students. This fund will be used to provide bursaries and scholarships for students with low prior attainment from low participation areas and for part time students with incomes up to £25,000. Petroc will also commit £31,240 as a financial hardship fund for all students in 2019/20. This will be assessed upon specific criteria and all students will be provided with information on how to apply through the tutorial system that is in place on all HE programmes at Petroc.

In 2017 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) ranked all local authority districts in terms of average gross weekly pay. Of 361 authorities ranked in England, Torrington was ranked at 360, North Devon at 342 and Mid Devon at 337 with 1 being most prosperous and 361 most deprived. This provides indicative information that the proposed financial support will contribute significantly to reducing the number of mature and LPN students who withdraw in year due to financial pressures. The ultimate aim of this will be to improve non-continuation for these target groups.

4. Investment

APP countable spend

Total APP countable spend for 2019/20 will be £196,042 which represents 46.5% of higher fee income to be invested on access, success, progression and financial support. The priority for investment will focus upon activities to improve success and non-continuation with an investment of £84,402 in 2019/20 which represents 20% of higher fee income with this investment increasing to £92,300 by 2022/23. We will maintain high levels of investment on access of £21,100 with an equivalent investment on progression of £21,100 which both represent a 5% investment of higher fee income. The investment on access and progression will increase to £23,492 by academic year 2022/23. Investment in financial support in 2019/20 will be £69,422 which represents a 16.5% investment of higher fee income.

APP non countable spend

Total investment on access and participation beyond that identified in the plan will be £343,078 in 2019/20. This is comprised of an investment of £143,288 on access, £173,922 investment on success and a £25,868 investment on progression.

5. Provision of information to prospective students

We are committed to the provision of accurate and accessible information to prospective students. The Petroc website provides information for both existing and potential students and contains full information on fees, bursaries and programme expectations and the results of all HE student surveys. We will publish the Access and Participation Plan on the college website under the Higher Education 'Public Information' section. The plan will also be made available internally for student consultation on progress and this will be held on the VLE Moodle page for Higher Education. We will seek feedback from current and prospective learners on the format and accessibility of information made available on the website to review where improvements can be made.

We hold a number of HE Open days and evenings throughout the year for all prospective students to come and see the College and meet the staff.

We are committed to providing timely and accurate information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) as appropriate.

Financial information will be made available to all prospective students considering courses coming under this plan and made available via the Higher Education website. Such information will be guided by the principles of accessibility, transparency and clarity.

Information will summarise the annual and aggregate fee for the chosen course, hardship arrangements, and other sources of financial support available to students. It will also identify the sources from which students can obtain advice

regarding the general financial framework applying to students undertaking full time higher education studies, so that they can establish the likely level of debt they will incur by the end of their studies. The institution will provide a full range of financial advice to prospective and current students through the production of fact sheets outlining fee charges and the hardship funds available to students with worked examples, through individual interviews and in response to queries received in person, by telephone or by email. Student Services will also provide briefing sessions as part of Open Day events and will be available to give individual advice and guidance.

During induction all students will receive a presentation from the Student Services team which will, inter alia, cover issues associated with student finance, student support, careers advice and learning support available. It is the intention of the College that all information relating to costs and means of support for students will be available in the Prospectus and on the college website and accessible via social media.

This information is explained verbally during the interview process, supported by the written leaflet, to ensure that applicants are fully informed before they make a decision on whether to accept a place with us.