



Access Agreement 2018-19

1. Introduction

This Access Agreement represents the commitment of Moulton College to widening access to higher education and to the principle that individuals with the potential to benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so. The agreement has been informed by the National Strategy for Access and Student Success, and lays down our strategic, whole student lifecycle approach to widening access and enhancing student success. It relates to higher education students beginning full or part-time study programmes in the 2018-2019 academic years and represents an evolution and a refining of goals established in the 2017-2018 Access Agreement together with a more evidence-based approach to impact evaluation.

As a further education college providing higher education courses, our cohorts are from under-represented groups and frequently the first in their family to attend higher education. In addition, the majority of students enter with a vocational qualification and the College's focus is on supporting HE students to achieve and progress to full degree achievement or to employment.

2. Fees, student numbers and fee income

Moulton currently has over 450 HE students, equating to approximately 360 FTEs and income for 2015-16 was approximately £3m. The college HE provision is validated primarily by the University of Northampton whilst HNs in Construction and Civil Engineering are approved by Pearson.

All students are now directly funded by HEFCE through the college and the relationship with the university is that of a validation service provider rather than a funding conduit as it has been in the past.

Following a period of consultation led by the Senior Leadership Team, with Higher Education management staff and the Student Representatives the fee for 2018 will remain at £9,000 for all students except those on an HND programme, where the fee will be £7,250. This reflects local competition in Construction Management courses, and the lower resource costs. The £9,000 fee is based on the costs of delivering high quality higher education courses in subjects which require extensive physical

resources and a student profile consisting of a substantial number of students requiring significant academic support during their learning journey. This uplift in fees will also enable the college to continue to deliver its duty in providing reasonable adjustments to support the learning of disabled students following the changes to DSA funding from 2016.

Table 1: Full time students paying higher rates

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
First Degree	258	265	280
Foundation Degree	186	192	195
HND	31	32	32

The college is adopting a ‘per module’ fee for part time courses (of £1500 per 20 credits). The largest course is 80 credits so the maximum part time fee will be £6000.

3. Access, student success and progression measures

Access expenditure for 2018-19 will be £165K, of which £140k is Offa accountable.

The College recruits from Northamptonshire and surrounding counties largely where there are particular pockets of low-participation as identified from the HEFCE analysis. The College also recruits a higher percentage of further education students from these areas as, in some subjects, the majority of students do not have A* to C grades at GCSE so they begin their level 2 studies on vocational courses that have practical activities as part of the learning process.

The College has a long history of school partnerships including the provision of specialist vocational programmes for students who are 14-16 that are delivered on the College’s campuses across the county of Northamptonshire. This work offers school students the opportunity to study in a College atmosphere and develop an understanding of level 3 vocational courses that can lead to undergraduate study.

As an FE college with higher education provision, we have no immediate plans to sponsor/co-sponsor an academy or set up a new school as we believe that a more effective and efficient approach is to work directly to support the raising of attainment of our own FE cohort and with on-campus school partnership pupils. In this regard, as part of our engagement with the NCOP programme we are currently piloting the use of HE students as mentors for FE students retaking GCSE Maths and English qualifications. Pupil attainment of 5 A* – C GCSEs in Northamptonshire schools is below the national average with a number of students entering FE in the county with GCSE grades of D and below in these subjects. This in turn limits their opportunities to access university provision. This initial pilot consisted of nine FE mentees and our intention is to roll the programme out to larger cohorts in 2017-18 and 2018-19 and is focused on supporting D grade students to improve their performance in English and maths and thus open up opportunities at HE level. Our target is to double the number of mentees by 2018-19 and to include and outcomes based target in relation to this in our 2019-20 access agreement.

The College has reviewed the schools outreach work for 2018-19 to build on the success of the recently appointed Young Person's liaison officer, with a more targeted approach at the Secondary sector to increase awareness of, and support progression to, the alternative routes into higher education that the college offers.

In addition, the following activities are designed to enhance potential applicants' knowledge and experience of higher education based in a specialist further education college:

- Taster days – open to school/college students from year 10 upwards to experience further and/or higher education by shadowing a current student for a day. This is advertised regionally as well as through the schools networks with which the College is involved.
- Visits to schools and colleges – a wide offer that sees repeat visits to schools and colleges each year to encourage higher education participation in general and college courses in particular.

- The College has open advice days where experienced college staff can advise about post 16 studies and how choices made for year 12 studies can fit with higher education to support a vocational ambition.
- Assistance with UCAS applications – for students studying at level 3 in the College and applicants who do not currently have an education base.
- Specific advice and guidance events for Construction Management programmes which traditional higher numbers of mature and ethnic minority learners.
- HE Finance guidance sessions for the parents of year 13 students.

Three further areas of access activity that have previously been funded by the Student Opportunity Fund will now be funded through increased OFFA-accountable Access Expenditure:

- Recruitment of 2 Peer Learning Mentors to specifically support and raise the aspiration of white males from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are currently studying of FE courses at Moulton College
- The college currently operates a Student Ambassador scheme that has previously been funded by the Student Opportunity Fund. The remit of the scheme is to recruit, train and deploy our HE students to raise the awareness and aspiration of potential FE students of higher education by sharing their experiences. We recognise that our students who have travelled this route are our best asset when encouraging potential students to consider embarking on an HE course. Talking to students currently studying the course about their experience acts as reassurance and can inspire those who have barriers or anxieties about the support that is available.
- The college also employs a Schools Liaison Officer with a remit to support access to higher education. This post will be protected by access expenditure funding allocation.

Student Success expenditure for 2018-19 is planned at £105,000, of which £98,000 will be Offa countable.

During recent years the proportion of students with a learning difficulty and/or disability has increased to 20% and this has meant an increase in demand for support prior and during study. The staff resource available has been increased on an incremental basis in order to provide pre-study help with applications for DSA, and ensure that support with academic assessments are in place. Students who have declared a learning difficulty or disability are statistically as likely to complete their studies successfully as students who do declare a learning difficulty/disability at any time during their studies. In addition to this, further study support for those without a declared learning difficulty/disability has also been provided with examples as follows:

- Piloting of an Academic Skills Coaching programme within the tutorial system to support students in making a successful transition to higher education and in developing enquiry skills to support involvement in project-based learning.
- Provide a support service for students presenting with mental health difficulties.
- Specialised higher education student support staffing and facilities. Students are able to use work-stations in a room with learning support. There are also confidential interview rooms in which students individual needs are discussed.
- Targeted assistance with claims for Disabled Student Allowance before courses start. All applicants who select the College as their first choice and declare a learning difficulty and/or a disability are invited to have an interview with specialist staff either in person or by telephone to try ensure that support is available from day 1 of the induction programme
- A personal tutor system is in place that is timetabled for students and staff where individual progress is monitored and any external issues that are impacting on students can be discussed confidentially.
- Early formative assessment following induction to assess any support requirements with assessment.

Student Progression expenditure for 2018-19 will be £50,000, and increase of 5.2%, of which £50,000 will be Offa countable.

While DLHE outcomes for Moulton College are good at 93%, it is widely acknowledged that the land-based sector experiences a challenge in the way in which 'graduateness' is determined, and the need to fully recognise the responsibilities associated with different types and sizes of business. In particular, a range of land based occupations associated with land based industries such as farming, equine business and veterinary nursing not being designated as graduate occupations.

For the 2018-2019 academic year, Moulton will continue to provide students with progression support through the Careers Manager and the Learning Advisor who work within the Library Services provision. Their remit involves specialising in Careers and Progression, offering information, advice and support, mainly in the form of one to one appointments, but also via some group tutorials, to prospective and on course learners across all sites.

The Library Services Team has had a positive impact on learner retention, by providing Advice and Guidance to pre-course learners, ensuring that they enrol on the correct course, as well as providing information and support to all students throughout the academic year, on appropriate progression routes including HE level courses, Apprenticeships and Employment.

4. Financial support

- £500 fee waiver for part-time students not funded by any other means e.g. employers based on residual household income below £25,000.
- General bursary based on household income:
 - Residual income of below £25,000 per year - £1,000
 - Bursary of £1000 for care leavers, carers and single parents

- This will be paid in 2 sums of £500/£250 in December and April subject to engagement demonstrated by attendance of at least 85%
- A Hardship fund will be created to support any student in dire financial need.

5. Targets and milestones

The College's stated milestones are:

- To maintain the proportion of minority ethnic students as at least 17% of the higher education student population.
- To grow the number of NVQ Level 3 entrants
- To encourage and support applicants and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve at higher education level, and to grow them to 22%.
- To improve progression from Level 4 to 5 to 84%.
- To increase the number of mature students to 55%.

The milestones have remained consistent with previous years, to reflect a changing management structure within higher education provision at the College, with trends across the milestones for a requirement of further progress. The level of ethnic minorities has reduced slightly which reflects lower recruitment to Construction management programmes, and while mature students numbers have not yet increase substantially, it is anticipated that a revised offer will stimulate growth. There has been poor progress with improving the Level 4 to 5 progression and assessment and delivery structure has been reviewed where appropriate alongside improved support for all students to improve this milestone.

6. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

The targets in this this agreement will be monitored on an ongoing basis and in year adjustments will be made where necessary. This will be through our internal quality assurance model where our higher education and our performance against our access agreement will be reviewed and monitored. This will include a review of all

targets and due consideration to the impact on access, student success, progression and equality and diversity measures.

Specifically, plans for monitoring and evaluation of the 2018-2019 Access Agreement targets and milestones will include:

Annual monitoring of internal progression to higher education courses using UCAS destination reports. The use of UCAS reports will provide a consistent annual dataset to evaluate performance against this target.

Financial support measures will be robustly evaluated with bursary recipients completing an annual bursary review survey to clearly establish the utility of the scheme in supporting students in their higher education journey. Both qualitative and quantitative information will be collected and this will feed directly into an annual review of the bursary scheme. Recommendations for amendments to the scheme will be made accordingly based upon the outcomes of this survey. This will ensure that it is an effective support measure and that the scheme is meeting its strategic aims. The Emergency Hardship Fund will be similarly evaluated.

The target for maintaining a high proportion of enrolled students from widening participation backgrounds will be reviewed and evaluated annually through the development of an annual enrolment report. This report will identify the proportion of students living in widening participation postcodes, specifically in quintile 1 of the POLAR3 classification.

An annual review of the academic support programme and intervention process will take place to ensure that it positively contributes to students' success, retention and progression. Retention rates of year one HE students will similarly be evaluated through annual analysis of Examination Board data to ensure progress is being made in this area.

7. Equality and diversity

Moulton College Equality and Diversity statement:

Moulton College is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all people who work and study at the College and this policy is intended to respond to the spirit as well as the letter of the Equality Act 2010. The College also aims to promote all other forms and strands of equality and human rights that may be relevant to its work.

The College seeks to employ a workforce which reflects the diverse community at large, because it values the individual contributions of all people. The College will treat all employees with dignity and respect and provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. To this end, within the framework of the law and best employment practice, the College is committed, wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the local community.

The College will provide a suitable learning environment for the education and training of all students of varying abilities and interests and to do this without creating unnecessary barriers to this provision.

The College is committed to ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment are available and accessible for a broad range of students. It will achieve this through diverse marketing and admissions arrangements; the provision of full and part-time courses in different modes of attendance; the use of a range of teaching and assessment methods and media; the delivery of a diverse curriculum and the provision of a broad range of student support services which cater for students with diverse needs.

The College achieved the Investor in Diversity Standard at Stage 2 in March 2014 and this was approved again early in 2016. The college has an Equality and Diversity Working Group that monitors all the College's outcomes in relation to under-represented groups in further and higher education.

The emphasis with the milestones and targets and across access, student success and progression is very much on teaching, learning and assessment being available for all learners to drive successful outcomes to their course of study.

8. Information for prospective students and interested bodies

Detailed information about fees and funding will be available on the College's website and its links with the UCAS website. Details about fees and funding is also sent to applicants routinely as they are all invited to attend applicant events where they can discuss fees and funding with specialist staff as well as have a 1 to 1 discussion with a tutor who teaches on the course.

Moulton College recognises its responsibilities to work with other bodies involved in the recruitment of and funding for students. The College will continue to work closely with UCAS, the Student Loan Company (SLC) and provide robust data and the information needed to meet their requirements. We will supply course information to these agencies, meet attendance confirmation deadlines with the SLC in order to activate loans for students and will meet the moratorium date to release fee payment to the College. We will also fulfil our obligation to confirm changes in student circumstances.

9. Consultation with students

There is student representation on the College Board of Governors and at Academic Board. In addition to this the higher education student representative committee meets termly with the opportunity for students to feedback on elements of the Access agreement including support, student success and progression.

10. Responsibility for the Access Agreement

Responsibility for this access agreement lies with the Head of Higher Education and the Agreement is approved by the Senior Leadership Team.