



# Harlow College

## Access and Participation Statement 2021-2022

**Author: Executive team member with responsibility for HE**

**Approved: 8 July 2021 - Corporation**

**Review date - June 2022 – OfS requires an annual update.**

## **1.0 A Brief Description of Harlow College**

Harlow College is a medium-sized Further Education College (FEC) currently located on one campus in Essex. The College offers a wide curriculum at all levels including 16 to 19 provision, adult, Apprenticeships and Higher Education (HE).

In 2019 the College undertook a strategic review of its HE provision. This review identified issues and opportunities relating to the nature of the provision, the level of recruitment and identified a need for the College's HE provision to more closely align with its overall strategic plan. In particular this review identified a need to provide a niche range of HE courses that could be used to deliver Higher Apprenticeships to meet local needs.

In 2018 the College secured its OfS registration to fund a range of HNC/D courses.

As stated in our Strategic Plan (Vision 2019-2024) one of our main aims is to change and transform the lives of young people and adults in our community. We want all our learners to achieve their ambitions, to contribute significantly to the productivity of the economy and to have happy and purposeful lives. We want to do this by providing the opportunity to access learning, delivered to the highest standards and levels, in subjects that match local growth sectors and to address skills gaps. We work closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other local and national stakeholders to assist in the growth of a workforce with higher qualifications and skills. The College is bidding for Institute of Technology (IOT) status with collaborative partners including Anglia Ruskin University and the lead partner, South Essex College.

## **2.0 Mission and Values Vision**

Harlow College is recognised for providing education of the highest quality to its local community. Our Mission and Values Vision outlines our strategic intentions for the next 5 years and lays out the key principles for our next strategic plan.

We are ready to move into our next phase of development and are committed to ensuring that we change and transform the lives of young people and adults in our community. We want all our learners to achieve their ambitions, to contribute significantly to the productivity of the economy and to have happy and purposeful lives.

## **3.0 Our Values**

At the core of our strategy are our values:

- ✓ Students at the heart
- ✓ Be your best, be your future
- ✓ Work hard, work together
- ✓ Be innovative and enterprising

The College is made up of a wide range of people with diverse backgrounds and circumstances, which we value and regard as a great asset.

We are aware that some groups may experience treatment from time to time that has a negative effect on their quality of life. Specific legislation is in place to protect the rights of individuals and groups to ensure that discrimination is prevented and that they are given equal access to employment, education and other services.

Those most often affected are people who fall into the “Protected Characteristics” groups which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Gender re-assignment
- Marital and Civil Partner status
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The College recognises the barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing and achieving Education. Our vision is to create an accessible and supportive environment for staff and students. We aim to provide equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014.

#### 4.0 Harlow College position on access, success and progression for all our learners

##### 4.1 Access:

**Aim 1 for 2021-22 –Maintain the % of mature learners into HE courses at Harlow College, exceeding the HEI average of 54% age 21+.**

**Aim 2 for 2021-22 – Improve levels of retention and achievement for age 25+ (both 78%) to age 18-24 averages (80% achievement and 87% retention).**

The Education and Training Foundation Report (2016) on the local impact of college based Higher Education states that Further Education Colleges delivering HE have a significant proportion of students aged over 25 years. Harlow College actively supports mature learners returning to education through our broad Access to Education offer which feeds into our suite of HNC and HND qualifications. Based on the figures from the OfS Access and Participation Dashboard Harlow College age intake has shown an increase from 45% for age 21 and over to 61.5%, with under 21’s equalling the age 21-24 at 38%.

This moves Harlow College above the all HEI’s age profile. Harlow College continues to actively recruit a wider age range across its Higher National provision. However, the data for 2020-21 shows the retention and achievement for the age 25+ was significantly below that of the age 21-24 age range. This could have been a result of the impacts of the Covid pandemic and lockdown implications for students with young families.

Age Band	All HEIs % (Higher Education Institutes)	All FECs % (Further Education Colleges)	Harlow College 17/18*	Harlow College 18/19*	Harlow College 19/20*	Harlow College 20/21*
Under 21	46%	30%	47%	38%	55%	38.5%
21-24	25%	20%	25%	26%	45%	38.5%
25+	29%	50%	28%	37%		23%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

\*Harlow college data

## **Undergraduate HE Learners by POLAR Geography Classification**

The Participation of Local Area Classification (POLAR) looks at how likely young people are to enter HE across the UK, and by region. POLAR classifies 5 groups which are based on the number of 18-year olds entering HE, these range from quintile 1 to quintile 5, with quintile 1 as the least likely.

Harlow College serves a local area that that exists in POLAR 4 quintile 1:

- for Young Participation age 18 or 19 into HE
  - Adult HE qualification
  - Participation gaps by ethnicity based on GCSE
  - Gaps GCSE
- (2019 POLAR and gaps by postcode, Office for Students website).

The TUNDRA index tracks young participation in higher education by state-funded mainstream school pupils in England shows Harlow at Quintile 2. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (OfS dashboard) shows that for 2019-20 40% of the College's HE students were in quintile 2, with 70% in quintile 2 or 3.

The College, by its very existence, encourages and facilitates the transition of young people in the local area into HE, either within the College or with another HEI. The College should continue to seek ways to encourage learners of all ages, ethnicity and GCSE profile into HE through actively helping to reduce the barriers to study. This will be achieved through more flexible courses that are work relevant and can be studied either part time or full time or through blended learning, or that support students to continue with paid employment to enable them to continue their education. The College supports all its students into positive destinations, either be it into HE or employment.

### **4.2 Pass rate/Success:**

**Aim for 2021-22 – to narrow the gap between Pass rate and Retention rate by 5%**

Measures as an overall	Overall Value
Pass/ Success rate	94%
Retention rate	85%

For 2019-20 there have been a small number of extension requests granted to support learners to succeed. There have also been a very small number of longer-term extensions meaning that students now will not complete in the planned academic year. On this basis it is unrealistic for the pass rate and retention rate to be equal. However, we seek to close the gap between these to ensure as many learners who are retained, achieve timely success.

### **4.3 Continuation/Progression Data Higher Nationals**

**Aim for 2021-22 – continue to improve the non-continuation rates of learners completing HND courses through the promotion and further development of top-up tariff arrangements with ARU for all our HN offers. Target 50%.**

The College endeavours to provide high quality vocational courses that enable all our HE students to enter into positive destinations at the end of their study. Our courses are aligned to local LEP needs and future planning of new courses takes full consideration of the skill requirements locally, regionally and nationally.

The College actively encourages learners to sign up to the Pearson Global facility and promotes their Top-up search tool with our learners to find Top-up to degree courses. The College is lucky to receive NCOP fund money to appoint a dedicated IAG careers officer who will work with all our learners considering HE or moving through HE.

The College has a close relation with it's nearest HEI, Anglia Ruskin. Over 2020-21 the College has now in place a progression agreement and continues to seek direct entry to Top-Ups for our new HN offers of:

- Public Services
- International Travel and Tourism Management

The College has Top-Up tariffs in place with ARU for the following courses:

- Business Management- HND
- Advance Practise in Early Years – HND
- Engineering - HNC

## 5.0 Care leavers

The College supports care leavers, but identifies this is an area where more work can be done to ensure students complete their programme. There were no care leavers in this year.

## 6.0 Ethnic group

The College celebrates the lack of difference between ethnic groups and overall success on programme. At Harlow College ethnic minorities make up 18% of our HE student population, success rates below show a 1% difference. This supports our mission of every learner at the heart, celebrating the wide range diverse backgrounds and circumstances, which we value and regard as a great asset.

<b>Ethnicity Grouped (2019-20 data)</b>			
<b>Row Labels</b>	<b>Starts</b>	<b>Completions</b>	<b>Success %</b>
Non-White	6	5	83%
Not Known/Provided	1	1	100%
White	32	27	84%

## 7.0 Disability

**Aim for 2021-22 – to more closely align the success rate for those students with a disability compare to those without.**

The College has improved it success rate for those students with a disability from 75% to 80%. While the data shows a 6% difference between those with a disability and those without, the actual student head count is low. However, the College seeks to align these two success figures.

<b>Disability Grouped (2018-19 data)</b>			
<b>Row Labels</b>	<b>Starts</b>	<b>Completions</b>	<b>Success %</b>
Disability	10	8	80%
Not known/not provided	0	0	0%
Prefer not to say	0	0	0%
No disability	29	25	86%

## **8.0 Ambitions and Strategy**

**Aim 2021-22 – to Increase the number of students from BAME background onto our HE courses, currently at 18% but seek to raise this to 25%.**

The College wishes to commit to improve the access into HE for mature students in the local area. While success and progression are high for students from ethnic groups, the numbers recruited are low in comparison to those with an ethnicity of White British. Work has begun this year to identify, support and more specifically market our course offer to those from BAME backgrounds.

The College is also committed to continue its work to encourage and enable all learners that have had an Education Health & Care Plan, current learning difficulty or disability to apply for a higher education place. This is enabled by staff working closely with individuals to provide the best Information, Advice and Guidance prior to enrolment and thereafter.

## **9.0 Prospective students still at school**

Appointments can be made with us directly or through the school.

## **10.0 During the application process**

During the completion of the application form/UCAS, if students have completed the section about 'Learning Support/disability' this will enable support needs to be discussed at interview. All learners are welcome to bring along a person to support them during this process.

## **11.0 On programme**

At any stage of the College cycle, students can inform us of any change and or new support needs. Students are actively supported to disclose any aspects they feel they need additional help with.

## **12.0 Student involvement and collaboration**

The process for student engagement is well established at Harlow College. Students are consulted on ways to improve their experience across the whole cycle of their HE experience, including recruitment and marketing. There are multiple opportunities for this engagement across the academic year; students are our best advocate so their views are of great importance in seeking ways to continually improve access rates at Harlow College.

The College works closely with all feeder secondary schools and local primary schools. The College provides taster days for both secondary and primary students; the schools facilitate the communication of our marketing information through their parent mail system.

## **13.0 Support for students**

All HE students are gifted an iPad to aid research and workflow, irrespective of income. In 2017& 2020 respectively Harlow College won Apple Distinguished Schools status for FECs in the UK for its innovative teaching and learning using iPads. We firmly believe this aids progression and skills for future employment, and by using up to date applications used in industry will improve job outcomes for our learners.

The College has support systems to help students in hardship, including a food cupboard to support students when needed. There is a Chaplain on site as well as access to counselling and safeguarding services.

The College remains committed to reducing the barriers for all our learners to enable them to be happy, work ready and above all successful, achieving their ambitions and reaching their full potential.

This statement is published on the Harlow College website in the following location:

- <https://www.harlow-college.ac.uk/about/student-policies>

## TRACKING and REFERENCE INFORMATION

**Date Approved:– Standards & Curriculum Committee**

**Reviewed 8 July 2021, Corporation**

**Review Date: June 2022**

**Author/Responsibility: Executive team member with responsibility for HE**

**Equality Impact Assessment: tba**

**List of related policies, procedures and other documents:**

Equality & Diversity Policy

Academic Misconduct HE-FE Policy

HE Student Engagement Policy

HE Student Recruitment Selection and Admissions Policy

HE Teaching Learning & Assessment Policy

**Complaints:** If you wish to submit a complaint about the application of this policy or the procedure of it, please send your request in accordance with the provisions of the Grievance Procedure.

**Monitoring:** The application of this policy and associated procedure will be monitored by The Executive Team Member with Responsibility for HE.

**Easy reading:** To receive this policy/procedure in a different format, please contact HR Services.