SOUTH WEST COLLEGE

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN

2025/26 – 2027/28

WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2025/26 – 2027/28

PART ONE

Institutions are required to submit information under each of the headings below. Please see the guidance notes for help in completing this return.

1.1 Please provide a high level outline of your institution's Widening Participation policy in Higher Education and how this fits in with the institution's strategic direction.

South West College's strategic context is outlined in the College Development Plan 2024-25, which details key priorities for the year ahead and aligns with Ministerial Priorities of the Department for Economy: Good Jobs, Raise Productivity, Regional Balance and Decarbonisation. The College Development Plan reflects the sector's mandate to play a central role in supporting a strong and vibrant local economy through the development of professional and technical skills at higher levels and supporting those who may have barriers to learning.

The College serves the Local Government Districts of Mid Ulster and Fermanagh and Omagh across the south west region of Northern Ireland. Deprivation levels vary across specific areas and is relative to different measures. 25% of the predominantly rural region's working age population are considered economically inactive and contributing factors include the educational attainment profile of the region, alongside the disability and gender employment gap that exists among citizens.

The region has a below average percentage of working age residents with a higher-level qualification, with just 35% of residents holding a level 4+ qualification in 2023. Promoting educational participation at all ages and creating a culture of lifelong learning is essential for changing the skills profile of our region, focusing on encouraging individuals to avail of opportunities to upskill and reskill. The College continues to focus on developing Foundation Degrees in priority areas for economic development, with special focus on STEAM curriculum. In addition, the Higher-Level Apprenticeship (HLA) provision at South West College reflects several sectoral documents such as Securing our Success, DfE Delivering the Economic Vision, NI Skills Barometer, and the Sub regional Skills Barometer, OECD Skills Strategy; each of which are well understood by College Senior Managers, Middle Managers and Course Directors. This approach ensures that the College is aligning its HE provision and development with strategy.

South West College is fully committed to attracting, recruiting, and retaining the most able students from the most diverse backgrounds in the region to access Higher Education opportunities. Our Widening Access and Participation Plan builds on past achievements and experience and addresses the key challenges set out by the Department for the Economy whilst supporting the College's strategic direction by aiming to create a culture of lifelong learning, addressing skills imbalances, and promoting social inclusion through its educational offerings. To assist underrepresented groups, the College utilises the WAPP budget to support bursary schemes, tuition fee reductions, academic mentorship and health and well-being initiatives which facilitate comprehensive academic mentoring and pastoral support.

The following key points have informed the College's Widening Access and Participation framework:

1. Income and employment deprivation are evident across all areas of the South West region.
2. Some wards in the South West region rank among the highest levels of deprivation within Northern Ireland.
3. Half of SWC's enrolments come from students residing in highly deprived areas, with 50% of those in the 2022/23 academic year belonging to the lowest 2 multiple deprivation quintiles, above the sector average of 44%
4. Unemployment within the region shows signs of inadequate opportunities, skills shortages, and a lack of imbedded economic activity.
5. 25% of the 16-64 population in the region are considered economically inactive
6. Within several wards there is a particularly high level of education, skills, and training deprivation, with results within the top 20% most educationally deprived wards in Northern Ireland.
7. The region also has a below average percentage of working age residents with a higher qualification, with just 35% of residents holding a level 4+ qualification in 2023.
8. Only 35% of residents hold a level 4+ qualification in 2023
9. Economic inactivity rates are disproportionately higher for females (30%) creating a 13% gap in economic inactivity between males and females in the region

Through its Higher Education Strategy, the College aims to provide a quality learning experience in a supportive environment. We value the diversity of our student body and have a strong record in Widening Participation. Our plan focusses on the future, developing outreach initiatives, tailored academic and support services and financial support to maintain and widen participation.

1.2 What is your view of the success record of your institution in relation to recruitment, retention and progression for Widening Participation students?

SWC has faced numerous challenges to its HE recruitment in recent years. Factors such as competitive entry tariffs, restrictive arrangements in provision, public perception of some awards e.g. Foundation Degrees, and decreasing FE enrolments, make for an increasingly competitive landscape. Despite this, SWC has continued to review its HE curriculum to ensure that it is responding to the needs of the local economy and through the development of partnerships such as Ulster University, The Open University, Queen's University of Belfast, along with other professional awarding bodies, it is able to offer a suite of economically relevant provision that supports Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and promotes widening participation.

Undergraduate Widening Participation Performance Indicators, SWC

Northern Ireland WP Student Nos. 19/20 to 22/23

South West College	2019-20			2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
Student numbers	1602			1549			1566			1505		
	WP students (in group)	WP % of total students	HE Sector	WP students (in group)	WP % of total students	HE Sector	WP students (in group)	WP % of total students	HE Sector	WP students (in group)	WP % of total students	HE Sector
MDM Decile 1	25	1.6%	**6.8%**	29	1.9%	**6.7%**	36	2.3%	**7.0%**	40	2.6%	**7.5%**
MDM Quintile 1	189	11.8%	**14.8%**	187	12.1%	**14.9%**	171	11.0%	**15.0%**	175	11.3%	**16.4%**
MDM Quintile 1&2	690	43.1%	**34.2%**	675	43.6%	**34.5%**	686	44.3%	**34.7%**	670	43.3%	**39.0%**
Disability - in receipt of DSA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disability - DSA & Self Declared	63	3.9%	**12.8%**	54	3.5%	**13.6%**	54	3.5%	**15.3%**	75	4.8%	**8.2%**
Quintile 1 Young Males - Catholic	40	2.5%	**1.7%**	24	1.5%	**1.8%**	18	1.2%	**1.7%**	25	1.6%	**1.6%**
Quintile 1 Young Males - Protestant	4	0.2%	**0.3%**	4	0.3%	**0.4%**	4	0.3%	**0.4%**	5	0.3%	**0.5%**
Quintile 1 Young Males - Other/Unknown	8	0.5%	**0.4%**	12	0.8%	**0.4%**	19	1.2%	**0.5%**	15	1.0%	**0.7%**
Adult Returners - Total	558	34.8%	**28.6%**	505	32.6%	**26.6%**	493	31.8%	**28.8%**	505	32.6%	**48.7%**
Adult Returners - Part Time	505	31.5%	**22.6%**	452	29.2%	**20.4%**	425	27.4%	**22.9%**	445	28.7%	**45.3%**
Care Leavers		0.0%	**0.0%**		0.0%	**0.0%**		0.0%	**0.0%**		0.0%	**0.0%**

Source: Widening Access and Participation Plan 2025/2026 - WP KPI data, DfE

In 2022/23, 11.3% of students who participated in Higher Education at South West College were from areas which are the most economically deprived in Northern Ireland (Quintile 1).

In 2022/23, students from quintiles 1 and 2 make up 43.3% of the total students who participated in Higher Education at South West College. This compares with 39% for the HE sector.

To summarise, 2022/23 enrolment data shows that South West College continues to recruit Higher Education students from areas which are most economically deprived in NI (quintiles 1&2 – 43.3%).

Performance by deprivation

Performance rates of SWC final year regulated enrolments of Northern Ireland domiciled students by relative deprivation quintile in 2022/23

Deprivation Quintile	Final Year Enrolments	Final Year Completers	Retention Rate	Achievements	Achievement Rate	Success Rate
Quintile 1 Most Deprived	99	90	91%	82	91%	83%
Quintile 2	273	257	94%	236	92%	86%
Quintile 3	330	309	94%	285	92%	86%
Quintile 4	110	99	90%	96	97%	87%
Quintile 5 Least Deprived	31	29	94%	23	79%	74%
Unknown	9	8	89%	8	100%	89%
Total	**852**	**792**	**93%**	**730**	**92%**	**86%**

Source: EBS Data, South West College

In 2022/23, final year higher education enrolments from the most deprived quintile (Quintile 1) had a retention rate of 91% which remained unchanged from the previous year and 3% higher than 2020/21 (88%). Retention rate among Quintile 2 was 94%, which represents a 2% increase on the previous year. The retention rate for final year enrolments from quintiles 1 and 2 combined was 92.5%, which represents a slight difference when compared with the retention rates of quintiles 3 to 5 (92.7%). This data suggests that a return to 'normal' face to face teaching and learning following disruption resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, along with interventions to support students from quintiles 1 and 2 may have had a positive impact on retention.

The achievement rate for final year higher education enrolments from the most deprived quintile was 91% in 2022/23. This was a significant increase of 8% from the previous year of 83%. The achievement rate among Quintile 2 also reported increases from 88% in 2021/22 to 92%. The achievement rate for final year enrolments from Quintiles 1 and 2 combined was 91.5%, an increase of 5.5% on the 2021/22 rate. The highest achievement rate aligned to students residing in Deprivation Quintile 4 (97%).

The success rate for final year higher education enrolments from the most deprived quintile was 83% in 2022/23, which represents an increase of 8% from 2021/22 and 11% from 2020/21 (74%). The success rate among quintile 2 was 86% which is an increase of 5% from the previous year. The success rate for final year enrolments from Quintiles 1 and 2 combined was 84.5% which represents a 2.2% increase in comparison to the success rates of quintiles 3 to 5 (82.3%). Again, these increases in achievement and success are likely due to a return to 'normal' teaching and learning following the disruptions resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic

Young protestant males from areas of high deprivation
In 2022/23, 2.9% of students who participated in higher education at the South West College were young (under 20 years of age) males from Quintile 1. 1.6% were young Catholic males, while 0.3% were young Protestant males and 1% were young males with other/unknown religious background.

Persons with disabilities

4.8% of students who participated in Higher Education at South West College in 2022/23 declared a disability. This represents an increase of 1.3% from 2021/22 (3.5%)

Adult Learners (Age 25 and over)
32.6% of the total students participating in higher education at South West College in 2022/23 were adult learners, aged 25 and over. This represents a slight increase of 0.8% on the previous year.
28.7% of the students participating in part-time higher education, were adult learners, aged 25 and over. The census 2021 data for the Local Government Districts of Fermanagh and Omagh and Mid Ulster, shows that the proportion of the working age population aged 25 to 64 was 51%.

1.3 Please outline the Widening Participation aims, objectives and targets for the next 3 years for your institution.

You will need to provide details on key target groups within Access to Success, anticipated expenditure and the measures of success – your response should include a description of your approach to targeting, as well as the areas targeted for improvement over the next 3 years. You may wish to add to the projection tables below to report on your own institution's specified target groups if not already included in Access to Success.

South West College's Widening Access and Participation Plan (WAPP) and Strategy aims to address discrepancies in the take-up of Higher Education opportunities between different underrepresented groups in the south west region. These groups, who are most able but less likely to participate in Higher Education, include perspective students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lower household incomes and other groups who face barriers in accessing Higher Education. The principal features of the SWC WAPP plan 25-26/27-28 will focus on several key objectives that include:

- Access
- Transition
- Financial support
- Academic mentoring and support
- Health and well-being
- Employability.

Access

The College Governing Body and Senior Management Team are committed to ensuring that there is fair access to Higher Education for students from all backgrounds and that the College provides the appropriate information so that students can make informed decisions about their future. In order to promote participation in Higher Education, the College will continue to offer broad enrichment, information, and progression programmes throughout the life cycle of the Widening Access and Participation Plan to groups from feeder schools, local communities, local industry and within the College, through online and on-campus activities.

Transition

The College acknowledges that the transition to Higher Education can be challenging for students. The College's academic and student support teams will continue, in this new plan, to offer a comprehensive academic mentoring and pastoral support programme for the duration of the programme of study.

Financial support

As part of the College WAPP plan, there is in place a well-established bursary scheme which Higher Education students are made aware of at induction point. This initiative is welcomed by students who fall below the threshold income level. In addition, the College also offered a reduced tuition fee for students who were undertaking a full-time course in Health Care Practice. This initiative has been particularly important post COVID to support the undersupply of labour in the NHS. In addition, the College has rebranded its scholarship initiative to "The South West College Higher Education Community Scholarship" and increased its scholarship offer from three to five from 2022/23.

Academic mentorship

The College has appointed dedicated staff who provide academic mentoring support to Higher Education students on commence of their course. This cross-campus academic mentorship scheme is available to all Higher Education students on full-time, part-time and Higher-Level Apprenticeship provision. Students who are in receipt of a college bursary will be offered this support over other Higher Education students. The initiative provides support in areas such as academic skills, academic development, research skills, assignment writing, and examination preparation.

Health and well-being

In addition to our academic mentoring programme, students can also access other support services such as counselling, mindfulness, and other health and well-being related support.

Employability

Academic and support staff at South West College actively encourage Higher Education students to think about the next steps of their career. We support students to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and confidence to achieve their personal goals. The College's Higher Education Academic Board monitors and co-ordinates the delivery and further development of the 2025-26/27-28 WAPP plan. The main operational objectives of the South West College Widening Participation agenda are to:

- Continue to target students from low socio-economic backgrounds.
- Monitor the existing Higher Education course profile in relation to its relevance and attractiveness to non-traditional students.
- Continue to implement the Higher-Level Apprenticeship framework with a specific focus on adults, industry-based learners, as well as young people seeking high level vocational education and technical skills.
- Continue to develop additional access courses with progression to Foundation Degrees. This action will specifically target adult learners in work and unemployed.
- Continue to develop the College's Level 6 Honour Degree programmes to facilitate rural demand for Higher Education in the South West region.
- Continue to expand Higher Level apprenticeships
- Develop flexible models of teaching and learning that widens access and increases participation in Higher Education.
- Collaborate with industry partners to encourage lifelong learning within the workforce that develops and upskills individuals.
- Continue to enhance the portfolio of widening participation outreach activity offered by the College, which may include partnership initiatives with other Higher Education Institutions.
- Continue to oversee the development and delivery of Higher Education support services which is appropriate to learners from under-represented backgrounds.
- Continue to work towards supporting an increase in participation of underrepresented groups and develop effective monitoring and evaluation tools.
- The College will seek further guidance from the Department for the Economy (DfE) regarding the measurement criteria that should be used to capture accurate and appropriate data for monitoring
- Ensure that EDI is embedded within teaching learning and assessment strategies
- Further develop a college culture and understanding of widening participation in relation to age, race, gender, social class, disability.

1.3 (a) TARGETS

You will note that the tables numbered (i) to (vi) below have been pre populated with your institution's average enrolment for the last 3 years. You are now required to insert numerical targets for each of the groups identified across the **3 years 2025/26 – 2027/28**. These groups are regarded as being under represented in Access to Success.

(i) Group: **MDM Quintile 1**
Outcome: **To increase participation of those from NI MDM Q1**

(As per previous submission)

AVERAGE	Targets/Outcome

(based on 4 years 2019-2023)				
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**
XX				

(ii) Group: **Students with a Disability**
Outcome: **To increase the number of students who declare a disability**

(As per previous submission)

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023)	**Targets/Outcome**			
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**
XX				

(iii) Group: **Students with a Disability**
Outcome: **To increase the number of students in receipt of DSA**

(As per previous submission)

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023)	**Targets/Outcome**			
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**
XX				

(iv) Group: **Young Males from Quintile 1**
Outcome: **To increase participation of young males from NI MDM Quintile 1**

(As per previous submission)

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023)	**Targets/Outcome**			
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**
XX				

(v) Group: **Adult Learners**
Outcome: **To increase the number of adult learners participating in HE**

(As per previous submission)

AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023)	**Targets/Outcome**			
4 Year Average	**NUMBER OF STUDENTS**	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**
XX				

As HESA data is largely incomplete for the following area, the figure that you provided in a previous WAPP for 2020/21 has been inserted as a base line.

(vi) Group**: Number of Care Experienced enrolments**
Outcome: **To increase the number of enrolments for those from a care background**

(As per previous submission)

BASE YEAR	Targets/Outcome			
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Not available	Number			

1.3(b) The following tables have been provided for you to now insert any other **'specific'** institutional targets. These may be different to those groups identified in 1.3(a) or may relate to targets other than enrolments. In all cases you will need to identify the group and highlight what the target outcome will be e.g. outreach, retention etc.

(As per previous submission)

(i)

Group:
Outcome:

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Number			
	Percentage			

(ii)

Group:
Outcome:

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Number			

	Percentage			

(iii) Group:

Outcome:

Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored)	Targets/Outcome			
		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Number			
	Percentage			

1.3(c) Please now outline the estimated 'direct' expenditure required to meet the identified objectives in the table below. You may wish to refer to Part 2 of the guidance notes in "How to Complete your Widening Access and Participation Plan" for a definition of direct spend. Whilst we appreciate that figures for later years are only indicative we do require estimations inserted in each of the categories.

(Note - this information is lifted from Part 2 of the WAPP which for this current submission does not contain Outreach, Retention, Research Activity, Staffing/ Administration costs)

Activity	Estimated Spend 2025/26 (£)	Estimated Spend 2026/27 (£)	Estimated Spend 2027/28 (£)
Bursaries	£57,480	£57,500	£57,500
Scholarships	£14,000	£14,000	£14,000

Other financial Support	18,000	18,000	18,000
Outreach			
Retention			
Research Activity			
Staffing/ Administration			
TOTAL	**89,480**	**89,500**	**89,500**

1.4 List below the key programmes/projects financed from additional student fees that will contribute towards your institution's performance.
(Please refer to the appropriate section of the guidance notes before completing.)

Southwest College intends to continue widening access and participation student support services during 2025/26 - 2027/28, to ensure that Higher Education students from under-represented groups are supported to encourage participation in courses at the point of recruitment and admission. Key activities of this programme will include:

- Pre-entry induction workshops targeted at applicants from areas of low socio and economic deprivation, which focus on accessibility issues such as finance, time-management, learning support systems.
- One-to one tailored support to students requiring additional support to ensure participation. For example, transition meetings and guidance regarding Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) application process, and liaison with external organisations such as Cedar, MENCAP & Education Board Transition Officers.
- In-year financial hardship clinics and advice sessions which provide specialist advice and guidance to students from areas of low socio and economic deprivation.
- Continue to use our well-established referral system to ensure easy and effective access to existing support provided by experienced personnel such as our Safeguarding Officer, Student Counsellor, Student & Learning Support Officer, and the Higher Education Academic Tutor.
- The Widening Access & Participation Learning Resource Mentoring Scheme was introduced in 2018/19. The initiative has been enhanced with the appointment of an associate lecturer who provides academic mentorship across all campuses and will continue for the academic years 2025/26 - 2027/28. Key elements of the scheme include:
  1. Dedicated support and access to a wide range of quality resources in student-centred areas which enhance the learning experience of students identified as coming from widening access and participation target groups. This

will consist of an integrated suite of practical workshops and online presentations in a range of areas to include study skills, referencing, report writing, employability skills and mentoring support.

2. The Higher Education Academic Support and Student Engagement Programme supports under-represented groups in Higher Education, thus promoting widening access & participation to learners who are experiencing difficulties in academic matters that may have a negative impact on their progression and their ability to complete assessments and coursework.

- Financial Support: The South West College Bursary Scheme will target and assist under-represented and disadvantaged widening access and participation target groups. Bursaries are designed to assist students with course-related costs such as books, equipment, childcare, and travel. All bursaries will be means tested and to be eligible for bursaries students must meet the following criteria:
    1. The student residual family household income as assured by South West College, Student Finance or the EU Customer Service team must not be greater than £19,203.
    2. Students must be a permanent resident in Northern Ireland.
    3. Students must be registered on a full-time undergraduate course leading to a First degree, Foundation Degree or Higher National Diploma.
- The College as part of its WAPP plan wishes to offer five community scholarships targeted at students. There is a clear application process and the bursary for each successful applicant will cover their tuition fees for the three-year duration of their studies that will enable them to achieve a Foundation Degree (full-time) plus a one-year Honours Top Up Degree.
- South West College under its Widening access and participation plan is keen in recommencing its RISE outreach plan where SWC staff engage with community groups and feeder schools to promote participation to Higher Education courses that raises aspiration and student attainment.

1.5 Please provide a short summary of how your activities link to the key actions within Access to Success.

The College's 2025/26 - 2027/28 WAPP plan will specifically target under-represented groups identified within the Access to Success strategy. Specifically:

1. Key Action 4 3. The College marketing campaigns will support a centralised awareness and outreach campaign to the College's widening access and participation activities as outlined in Access to Success, with a particular focus on MDM quintile 1 and young protestant males.
2. Key Action 8 5. The Widening Access & Participation Learning Resource Mentoring Scheme will support work-based learners supported by APEL which is a key theme within the strategy. The College's APEL systems are already developed, and the College intends to continue to promote this to all prospective students.
3. These support initiatives will also improve retention and progression and associated attendance by actively monitoring attendance.
4. Key Action 9 8. The Widening Access & Participation Student Support Services and academic mentoring will support students from low participation / high deprivation

neighbourhoods and adult learners, particularly work-based learners, providing additional support for students in sustaining participation and improving attainment. 5.Key Action 10 10. The widening access & participation financial support measures will further support students from low deprivation areas and supports the development of philanthropic bursaries.

1.6 How do you plan to communicate information on the availability of financial and other assistance to students?

All full-time and part-time students receive a comprehensive induction programme at the point of recruitment and admission to a Higher Education programme; during which, all students are provided with detailed information regarding all financial and support mechanisms. The College operates a tutorial policy and system for all students across levels. In order to prepare Level 3 and Level 5 Foundation degree students for the transition to the next level of Higher Education, financial information and other student support services is provided within weekly tutorials. All information that is related to the College's widening participation strategy such as outreach initiatives and bursary/scholarship schemes, and APEL will be promoted on the College website and within college promotional material. Potential students from college widening participation target groups will also be informed of the support initiatives through the admissions process and policy.

1.7 How do you plan to monitor progress against the targets and the achievement of outcomes?

The College has a well-established Higher Education Academic Board that meets three times per year and consists of all senior managers of the College and Heads of Faculty. The board is responsible for the review and monitoring of the College Widening Access and Participation Plan against set targets for initiatives, associated outreach activities, bursary arrangements, recruitment, retention, and success of students from the identified socio and economic groupings. The committee also reflects on the effectiveness of activities against set targets, with a view to implementing improvements the subsequent year.

1.8 Please provide an additional evaluation on how you think your institution is performing or provide us with relevant documents in line with section 1.8 of the guidance document.

(Full details on how to complete this section are in the guidance notes)

In order to ensure consistency across institutions we would ask that you use the Kirkpatrick Model for this exercise. The concept is that individual institutions will learn from this self-evaluation and obtain evidence to influence future widening participation activity and plans. You may evaluate the institution's widening participation activity as a whole or evaluate individual projects.

The following sub headings should help focus your response. The Department expects that most institutions will be able to evaluate widening participation activity to at least Level 3 (as below).

Level 1 Evaluation – Reactions

What participants thought and felt about the programme
As in previous years, students have indicated through student and staff consultative meetings and snatch and grab feedback that they greatly value the Widening Access and Participation initiatives that South West College operates. The provision of bursaries and HE Community Scholarships are most welcome as they provide financial support that enables students to use to support their studies. The Higher Education Academic Support programme is specifically designed to support WAPP Higher Education students. This scheme has now been further enhanced with the appointment of a fulltime associate lecturer level who now operates across all campus's and offers a service during the day and in the evenings**.**

Level 2 Evaluation – Learning

The resulting increase in knowledge or capability
Bursaries and community scholarships provided to Higher Education WAPP students reduces financial burden and enables them to purchase resources that helps to further develop their knowledge and skills within their programme of study. The academic support advisors provide individual one to one support to WAPP students in the areas of study skills, academic referencing, assignment writing and examination preparation. This support also provides an understanding to students of the progression of knowledge and skills as is illustrated in their programme specifications and that meets the requirements of the FHEQ. This support also encourages the development of students' confidence.

Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer

Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application
Academic and career support activities provided for WAPP Higher Education students have improved academic achievement and retention. This has been measured at academic examination boards. In addition, students have confirmed that the support provided by the academic advisors has greatly prepared them for the significant work-based learning component of the College's Foundation Degrees.

Level 4 Evaluation- Results

Results- the effects resulting from performance
Overall, the senior management of Southwest College considers the Widening Access and Participation initiatives currently in place to be effective in attracting and supporting disadvantaged groups into Higher Education. The data provided indicates that the College is preforming well against the set targets. The WAPP plan and associated initiatives are revised quarterly at the Higher Education Academic Board (HEAB) and feedback from students is also sought.

PART TWO

Forward Plan 2025-2026

Part 2 is the forward plan for the institution in the academic year 2025/26. Institutions are required to submit information under each of the headings below. Please see Section 2 of the Guidance notes for help with completing this return

2 Estimated Fee Income

2.1 **Level of Fees**

Please provide details of the fees to be charged in relation to each of the course types you identify in the table below:

a) Fees charged at the maximum higher fee

Courses with a fee of £4,855		**Additional fee income per student** (*£4,855 max fee minus *£1,910 standard fee)	**Estimated Number of students in 2025/26**	**Estimated additional fee income**
Course Type	**Fee (£)**			
Bsc SocialWork Yr 1	£4,800.00	£2,890.00	15	£43,350.00
Bsc Social Work Yr 2	£4,800.00	£2,890.00	15	£43,350.00
BSc Computing Science / BSc Construction	£4,800.00	£2,890.00	30	£86,700.00
BSc Sport & Exercise	£4,800.00	£2,890.00	10	£28,900.00
BA Visual Media Arts	£4,800.00	£2,890.00	14	£40,460.00
		Total Students	**84**	**£242,760.00**
Estimated Total additional fee income from students charged the maximum higher fees				

b) Fees charged above standard but below the maximum higher fee

Courses with a standard fee of at least *£1,870 but less than *£xxx		**Additional fee income per student**	**Estimated Number of students in 2025/26**	**Estimated additional fee income**
Course Type	**Fee (£)**			
Foundation Degree Yr 1	£2,800.00	£890.00	210	£186,900.00
Foundation Degree Yr 2	£2,800.00	£890.00	180	£160,200.00
		-£1,910.00		£0.00
		-£1,910.00		£0.00
		-£1,910.00		£0.00
		Total Students	**390**	**£347,100.00**
Estimated Total additional fee income from students charged the maximum higher fees				

2.2 Summary – Total Estimated Additional Fee Income for all students in 2025/26 i.e total at 2.1(a) plus total at 2.1(b)

Total Estimated Additional fee income:	**£589,860.00**

2.3 Estimated Direct Expenditure on bursaries and other direct financial support targeted at Widening Participation Students in 2025/26 [See Guidance notes for 2.3 before completing] Add additional groups as neccessary

(a) Bursaries

Target Groups	Course Type	No of Students	Bursary Amount per student (£)	Total Bursary Amount (£)
Students with household income up to £19,203 *If there are different bursary amounts (e.g. Yr1/ Yr 2/ different fee levels), please indicate number of students in receipt of each amount, rather than an average or "up to" amount*	Bsc Social Work Yr 1	12	£475.00	£5,700.00
	Bsc Social Work Yr 2	12	£460.00	£5,520.00
	BSc Computing/Const	10	£480.00	£4,800.00
	BA Media	2	£480.00	£960.00
	Foundation Degree	130	£300.00	£39,000.00
Other low income groups *If there are different bursary amounts (e.g. Yr1/ Yr 2/ different fee levels), please indicate number of students in receipt of each amount, rather than an average or "up to" amount*	HNC	5	£300.00	£1,500.00
				£0.00
				£0.00
				£0.00
				£0.00
Adult Learners				£0.00
Students with Disabilities				£0.00
Young Males from low participation areas				£0.00
Other -eg Care Leavers				£0.00
Other -please insert				£0.00
Total Bursary Spend (£)		**171**		**£57,480.00**

(b) Scholarships

Target Groups	Course Type	No of Students	Scholarship Amount per student (£)	Total Scholarship Amount (£)
Students with household income up to £19,203				£0.00
Other low income groups	Foundation Degree	5	£2,800.00	£14,000.00
Adult Learners				£0.00
Students with Disabilities				£0.00
Young Males from low participation areas				£0.00
Care Experienced				£0.00
Other - please insert				£0.00
Total Scholarship Spend (£)		**5**		**£14,000.00**

(c) Other Direct Financial Support
(e.g fee waivers, discounts, accomodation, etc)

Target Groups (insert below)	Nature of Support	No of Students	Other Amount per student (£)	Total Other Amount (£)
Students with household income up to £19,203				£0.00
Other low income groups				£0.00
Adult Learners HNC in Health Care Pract	Tuition Fee discount	12	£1,500.00	£18,000.00
Students with Disabilities				£0.00
Young Males from low participation areas				£0.00
Other - eg Care Leavers				£0.00
Other - please insert				£0.00
Total 'Other' Direct Financial Spend (£)		**12**		**£18,000.00**

2.4 Estimated Direct Expenditure on Outreach Activities in 2025/26 aimed at Widening Participation students

(i)

Name of Programme/Project			
Activity type/s: **Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising**			
Target Groups			
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£0.00	**See Appendix:**	

2.5 Estimated 'Direct Expenditure' on Post Entry Retention Activities aimed at Widening Participation students in 2025/26

(i)

Name of Programme/Project			
Activity type/s: **Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising**			
Target Groups			
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£0.00	**See Appendix:**	

2.6 Estimated 'Direct Expenditure' on Research Activity aimed at improving the institutions Widening Participation policy in 2025/26

(i)

Title of Research Activity			
Research Target Group			
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£0.00	**See Appendix:**	

2.7 Estimated 'Direct' Expenditure on Staffing and Administration in 2025/26

Staffing and Administration costs should be attributed to an individual programme/project and included in the relevant tables above. However where costs cannot be attributed to an individual programme/project they should be included in the table below. Such costs should be kept to a minimum and should not exceed 10% of the total estimated direct expenditure.

Estimated Direct Expenditure	**£**
Estimated apportionment of Administration costs not already attributed to an activity	
Estimated 'other' costs please specify below	
Total:	**£0.00**

2.8 Summary of all Estimated Direct Financial Expenditure in 2025/26

Estimated Direct Expenditure	**£**
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on bursaries *i.e this will be a total that detailed at 2.3(a)*	£57,480.00
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on scholarships *i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.3(b)*	£14,000.00
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on 'other financial support' to students *i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.3(c)*	£18,000.00
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on outreach *i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.4*	£0.00
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on post entry retention activities *i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.5*	£0.00
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on research activity *i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.6*	£0.00
Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on Staffing and Administration *i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.7*	£0.00
Total estimated direct expenditure(£)	**£89,480.00**
Total estimated direct expenditure as a proportion of additional fee income %	**15.17%**

2.9 **Estimated 'Indirect' Expenditure on Widening Participation infrastructure and broader student support for Widening Participation students in 2025/26**

Please detail any other expenditure that is not direct expenditure from additional fee income in the table below. You are advised to read the Guidance notes for 2.9 before completing this part.

Description of Expenditure	Amount (£)
Higher Education Career Advice and additional support	£16,003.80
Total Expenditure (£)	**£16,003.80**

PART THREE

Monitoring Report for 2022/23 Widening Access and Participation Plan
Part 3 is the monitoring report for academic year 2022/23 and will be the actual spend incurred – you will wish to refer to your WAPP for 2022/23 to complete this section of the form

3 Additional Fee Income

3.1 Total Additional Fee Income in 2022/23 (please detail in the table below)

Total Actual additional fee income (£)	£625,600.00
Estimated additional fee income (£)	£412,935.00
Variance	**£212,665.00**

Please provide a written explanation of the variance in the table below
(only required where variance is +/-10%):

Full-Time Level 6 enrolments surpassed the expected forecast (67 students were estmated to enrol, however 118 actually enrolled). Post Covid there was a greater demand for L6 in SWC, particularly in construction and computing courses.

3.2 Level of fees

Please provide details of the fees charged for 2022/23 in relation to each of the course types you identify in the table below.

(a) Fees charged at the maximum higher fee

Please include Sandwich year and 1st-3rd year students - fees will therefore vary

Course type (Insert Below)	Fee (£)	Additional fee income per student (£)	Number of students in 2022/23	Total additional fee income 2022/23
BSc Social Work Yr 1	£4,630.00	£2,845.00	15	£42,675.00
BSc Social Work Yr 2	£4,630.00	£2,845.00	15	£42,675.00
BSc Construction / Sport / Computing /	£4,630.00	£2,845.00	78	£221,910.00
BA Visual Media	£4,630.00	£2,845.00	10	£28,450.00
Additional fee income from students charged the maximum higher fee (£)			**118**	**£335,710.00**

(b) Fees charged above standard but below the maximum higher fee

Please include Sandwich year and 1st-3rd year students - fees will therefore vary

Course type (Insert Below)	Fee (£)	Additional fee income per student (£)	Number of students in 2022/23	Total additional fee income 2022/23
Foundation Degree	£2,700.00	£915.00	326	£298,290.00
HNC Applied Biology	£2,700.00	£915.00	10	£9,150.00
HNC Healthcare Practice	£1,200.00	-£585.00	30	-£17,550.00
Additional fee income from students charged the maximum higher fee (£)			**366**	**£289,890.00**

3.3 Actual 'Direct Expenditure' on bursaries and other direct financial support targeted at Widening Participation Students in 2022/23

In the following sections you are required to provide a comparison summary of the activity and actual expenditure in 2022/2023 against that profiled in your institution's WAPP. You will need to explain any 'variances' identified in the tables 3.3 to 3.6

(a) Bursaries

Target Groups	Course Type	No of Students	Bursary Amount per student (£)	Total Bursary Amount (£)
Students with household income up to £19,203 *If there are different bursary amounts (e.g. Yr1/ Yr 2/ different fee levels), please indicate number of students in receipt of each amount, rather than an average or "up to" amount*	Bsc Social Work Yr 1	9	£470.00	£4,230.00
	Bsc Social Work Yr 2	11	£460.00	£5,060.00
	Bsc (Hons)	22	£470.00	£10,340.00
	Foundation Degree	83	£300.00	£24,900.00
	HNC	4	£300.00	£1,200.00
				£0.00
Other low income groups *If there are different bursary amounts (e.g. Yr1/ Yr 2/ different fee levels), please indicate number of students in receipt of each amount, rather than an average or "up to" amount*				£0.00
				£0.00
				£0.00
				£0.00
				£0.00
Adult Learners				£0.00
Students with Disabilities				£0.00
Young Males from low participation areas				£0.00
Other -eg Care Leavers				£0.00
Other -please insert				£0.00
Total		**129**		**£45,730.00**

Estimated bursary expenditure as detailed in your 2022/23 WAPP (£)	£64,350.00
Actual bursary expenditure for 2022/23 (£)	£45,730.00
Variance between estimated and actual bursary spend	(£18,620.00)
	-28.94%

Please provide an explanation of any Variance between your Estimated and Actual Spend if less than/greater than 10% in the box below:

The College over-estimated the number of students that would apply for the bursary - the income thresholds of the bursary criteria have not increased in line with the rate of inflation, resulting in and increasing number of students who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

(b) Scholarships

Target Groups (insert below)	Number of students	Scholarship Amount per student(£)	Total Scholarship expenditure 2021/22
Students with household income up to £19,203			£0.00
Other low income groups	1	£2,600.00	£2,600.00
Care Leavers			£0.00
Adult Learners			£0.00
Students with Disabilities			£0.00
Young Males from low participation areas			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
Total	**1**		**£2,600.00**

Estimated Scholarship expenditure as detailed in your 2022/23 WAPP (£)	£15,600.00
Actual Scholarship expenditure for 2022/23 (£)	£2,600.00
Variance between estimated and actual Scholarship spend	(£13,000.00)
	-500.00%

Please provide an explanation of any Variance between your Estimated and Actual Spend if less than/greater than 10% in the box below:

None of the applicants who applied for the HE scholarship for the academic year 2022/23 met the criteria. The value above reflects the 2021/22 recipient's Y2 fee waiver.

(c) Other Actual Direct Financial Support in 2022/23
(e.g. Fee waivers, discounts, accommodation etc)

Target Groups (insert below)	Number of students	Other Amount per student(£)	Total Other expenditure 2022/23 (£)
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
[insert group]			£0.00
Total	0		**£0.00**

3.4

'Actual' Direct Expenditure on Outreach Activities in 2022/23 aimed at Widening Participation students
Note 1: Institutions are not required to exhaustively list each and every activity and where possible activity should be grouped together e.g. by theme
Note 2: Relevant administration costs should be included in the expenditure against that activity.
Note 3: The Actual expenditure should be an overall total of the activities you have grouped together however a detailed breakdown of this expenditure should be provided as an Appendix.

Outreach Activities

(i)

Name of Programme/ Project	South West College Chief Executive Scholarship. (Refer to 3.3 b)		
Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising	The College offered three fully funded scholarships to students who are high achievers and reside in the lowest quintile 1 and 2. This initiaive was to target students from the College's feeder schools who reside in Quintiles 1 and 2		
Target Groups	Male and females who reside within the SWC catchment area who are high achieving and reside within Quintiles 1 and 2 of the SWC area.		
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£0.00	**Actual Expenditure (£)**	£0.00
Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable)	One student was in receipt of Yr2 fee waiver (awaded in 2021/22).		
Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable)	Whilst the College received applications for 2022/23, they did not meet the criteria so were not awarded. The college has since rebranded the scholarship as the South West College HE Community Scholarship with a revised criteria.		
		Variance	£0.00
Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%):			
As above			

(ii)

Name of Programme/ Project	HE Academic Support Programme		
Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising	An integrated suite of practical workshops and on-line presentations provided in a range of areas including study skills, referencing, report writing, emplpyability skills and job interview prep		
Target Groups	All WAPP target groups		
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£41,086.00	**Actual Expenditure (£)**	£42,371.00
Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable)	To offer pre-entry workshops and clinics to target groups across the College's four campuses. To deliver support activities throughout the year 100 students. To arrange six advice clinics in year four target group participants.		
Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable)	Total workshops / support sessions provided: 261 Total students supported in the academic year: 2074		
		Variance	£1,285.00
Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%):			

Name of Programme/ Project	Virtual and Post Covid Face to Face Outreach Programme.		
Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising	Careers guidance and Pre-entry awareness and aspiration raising.		
Target Groups	Pre-entry awareness and aspiration raising to low participation/deprivation neighbourhoods and feeder schools. Young protestant males from areas of deprivation eg Devinish Enniskillen.		
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£31,510.00	**Actual Expenditure (£)**	£39,726.94
Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable)	To maintain recruitment of full time higher Education participants from areas of disadvantage. Continue engaging with Schools in harder to reach rural locations. Maintain current full time and part-time Higher Education applicants from SEC5-7 socio-economic HE leaflets / advertising campaign to include HE Academic Events £20,000 Apportionment of time in relation to widening participation carried out by the Marketing Manager £8092 groupings. An appotionment of time in relation to promoting HE to feeder schools and raising aspirations to access HE will be attached to this post. £3418		
Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable)	The Covid-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on outreach activities during this period. The College continued to put in place arrangements to engage virtually with all feeder schools and approximatley 30+ community groups, and where permittable, carry out face to face liaisons. HE events continued to take place face to face in the College e.g. Open days/ evening as well as virtual events e.g. podcasts and Webinars. The College also executed outdoor advertising campaigns to reach harder to reach groups. Social Media campaigns were of significant importance during this period in terms of engaging with potential students and comunities.		
		Variance	£8,216.94
Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%):			
The College increased its efforts in respect of outreach activities folllowing the Covid 19 Pandemic. The variety of innovative initiatives resulted in additional costs in respect to planning, staff training, technology support as well as direct advertising and marketing costs.			

3.5 'Actual' Direct Expenditure on Post Entry Retention Activities aimed at Widening Participation students in 2020/21

Retention Activities

(i)

Name of Programme/ Project			
Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising			
Target Groups			
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£0.00	**Actual Expenditure (£)**	£0.00

3.6 **'Actual' Direct Expenditure on Research Activities aimed at Widening Participation students in 2021/22**

Title of Research Activity			
Research Target Group			
Estimated Expenditure (£)	£0.00	**Actual Expenditure (£)**	£0.00

3.7 **'Actual' Direct Expenditure on Staffing and Administration in 2022/23**

Staffing and Administration costs should be attributed to an individual programme/project and included in the relevant tables above. However where costs cannot be attributed to an individual programme/project they should be included in the table below. Such costs should be kept to a minimum and **should** not exceed 10% of the total estimated direct expenditure.

Actual Direct Expenditure	**Estimated (£)**	**Actual (£)**
Actual apportionment of Administration costs	£10,427.00	£0.00
Total Actual Direct expenditure (£)	£10,427.00	£0.00

3.8 **Summary of 'Actual' Financial Expenditure in 2022/23**

Actual Direct Expenditure	**Estimated (£)**	**Actual (£)**
Actual spend on bursary support to students (£) *this will be a total of that detailed at table 3.3(a)*	£64,350.00	£45,730.00
Actual amount of additional fee income spent on scholarships (£) *this will be a total of that detailed at 3.3(b)*	£15,600.00	£2,600.00
Actual amount of additional fee income spent on other direct support (£) *this will be a total of that detailed at table 3.3(c)*	£0.00	£0.00
Actual amount of additional fee income spent on outreach (£) *this will be a total of that detailed at table 3.4*	£72,596.00	£82,097.00
Actual amount of additional fee income spent on retention and success (£) *see table 3.5*	£0.00	£0.00
Actual amount of additional fee income spent on research (£) *see table 3.6*	£0.00	£0.00
Actual amount of additional fee income spent on Staffing and Administration (£) *see table 3.7*	£10,427.00	£0.00
Total Direct expenditure committed in 2022/23 (£)	£162,973.00	£130,427.00
Total Direct expenditure committed in 2022/23 (%)	39.47%	20.85%
Total Underspend in 2022/23 (£) (if appropriate)		£0
Total Underspend carried forward from 2022/23 (£) *(if appropriate)*		£0.00
Total Underspend to be reallocated in 2022/23 (£)		#VALUE!

The Department is keen to report on all activities undertaken to support Widening Participation and will require 'Indirect' expenditure to be included in 3.9.

Actual 'Indirect' Expenditure on Widening Participation infrastructure and broader student support for Widening Participation students in 2022/23

Please detail any other expenditure that is not direct expenditure from additional fee income in the table below. You may add additional rows as necessary.

3.9

Description of Expenditure	Amount (£)
Higher Education Career Advice and additional support	£14,997.87
Total Actual Indirect Expenditure (£)	£14,997.87

The Department is interested in measuring participation rates of various groups and how you see these changing over the years.

3.10 What were your institution's target outcomes and milestones as identified in your WAPP for 2022/23 and have these been achieved?

(i) Group: Quintile 1 (FT & PT)
Target/Milestone: To increase enrolments

Target	Actual	Please provide an explanation where a target has not been achieved
2022/23	2022/23	Covid 19 impacted HE recruitment during this period; particularly where inflated A-Level grades resulted in Universities accepting students that would normally have progressed to FE Colleges for Foundation Degrees.
218	175	

(ii) Group: Disability: Self Declared (FT & PT)
Target/Milestone: To increase enrolments

Target	Actual	Please provide an explanation where a target has not been achieved
2022/23	2022/23	
71	75	

(iii) Group: Disability: in receipt of DSA (FT & PT)
Target/Milestone: To increase enrolments

Target	Actual	Please provide an explanation where a target has not been achieved
2022/23	2022/23	
50		

(iv) Group: Young Males from Quintile 1 (FT & PT)
Target/Milestone: To increase enrolments

Target	Actual	Please provide an explanation where a target has not been achieved
2022/23	2022/23	Outcomes in this category were not achieved due to the recruitment preasures within the HE in FE enviornment. During COVID and due to inflated grades, traditional HE in FE students who would normally have enrolled on Foundation Degrees, instead secured places at University.
65	45	

(v) Group: Adult Learners (FT & PT)
Target/Milestone: To increase enrolments

Target	Actual	Please provide an explanation where a target has not been achieved
2022/23	2022/23	During COVID part-time recruitment in particular fell. This aligns to reduced enrolments of adult learners who mostly study part-time.
605	505	

(vi) Group: Care Experienced
Target/Milestone: To increase enrolments

Target	Actual	Please provide an explanation where a target has not been achieved
2022/23	2022/23	Students have not declared their status in this grouping.
0	0	