

ACCESS AGREEMENT 2018 — 2019



INTRODUCTION

Burnley College is extremely committed to strategies for widening access to higher education. The College's stated purpose is to 'build futures and change lives' (Burnley College Strategic Plan 2015-18) and this is supported by seven strategic objectives, including 'to significantly expand the range of local opportunities for university-level study whilst maintaining high standards' and 'to maintain outstanding equality of opportunity'. These objectives are being achieved in conjunction with our sole university partner, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), with whom the College has a strong and mature relationship. Widening participation was at the heart of the bid to build the new 'UCLan Burnley' joint university and College campus in 2009. Together we have developed and implemented a range of initiatives over a period of years at the unique joint campus in Burnley which both organisations share and at which we both deliver university courses under the 'UCLan Burnley' brand.

Following the transfer of all our higher education provision to our direct funding contract with HEFCE in August 2015 a separate Burnley College Access Agreement for 2015 - 2017 was approved by OFFA. This 2017-18 agreement consolidates the activities and initiatives introduced in that agreement and builds on this and the work previously done with regard to our indirectly funded provision under the UCLan Access Agreement. Whilst the impact of the 2015-17 agreement is mainly still to be felt, the initial monitoring in January 2017 of the first year of operation (which only affected around 40 of our learners) showed positive progress towards goals. This agreement allows for further improvements, enabling us to invest substantial resources in measures to maximise all students' engagement, performance and attainment during their degree studies and beyond. Although the transfer of HEFCE funding direct to Burnley College necessitates this separate access agreement, this agreement seeks to remain consistent with the approach UCLan is taking, as we deliver provision at a joint campus. Furthermore, following discussion with the HEFCE and UCLan in Spring 2017, it is likely that some provision (and up to 200 students) will return to indirect funding via UCLan from September 2017. Like UCLan, we recognise that academic and support staff are the cornerstones of students' success and Burnley College is making significant investment in the development of its people as well as its undergraduate courses. Access to innovative interactive learning spaces and latest technologies will create an environment which enhances students' achievement and progression. All our staff will be equipped to draw on best practice in designing and delivering professional learning to raise levels of student attainment and employability. A key strand of our strategy for improving student progression and success is to define clear responsibilities and measures, so that we are able to ensure performance is closely monitored against the nominated targets, that there is appropriate challenge at all levels and that actions to meet (or exceed) targets are implemented in a timely fashion. Alongside this, we continue to make significant investment in all aspects of student support.

In line with the Government's 'Area Review' process of further education colleges, the College is currently in discussion with another East Lancashire college who provide both further and higher education, and has submitted a proposal to the Transactions Unit for a

Type B merger from the summer of 2017. If this merger is completed, this may necessitate some subsequent changes to this agreement.

FEES, STUDENT NUMBERS, FEE INCOME AND FEE RISES IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS

In 2018 Burnley College will charge £9,000 pa for all new students commencing full time undergraduate courses, with the following exceptions:

- The foundation entry years of the undergraduate courses will remain at £6000. This consolidates our strategy to utilise foundation entry year programmes to widen access for students with non-standard qualifications.
- Part time courses vary in duration and intensity, which affects the charges. We have a range of fees based on the varying markets for our part time courses, and although we may charge anything up to £1500 per 20 credit module, currently no part time provision is planned with a charge of more than £1000 per 20 credit module. No part-time student is allowed to study more than 4.5 modules (90 credits) during an academic year and consequently there are no plans that any part-time student will be charged more than £4500 per year in 2018-19
- We currently have no sandwich years or Erasmus/overseas study years. However, should the implications of Brexit bring about changes to the status of current EU students who are studying with us, we will review this aspect of the agreement in light of this.

2018-19	Fee
Full-time undergraduate foundation entry years	6000
Full-time undergraduate foundation degrees	9000
Full-time undergraduate honours degrees	9000
Sandwich years	n/a
Part-time (per fte)	Up to 6000*
PG courses for the initial training of teachers that are subject to regulated fees	9000
Erasmus / overseas study years	n/a

**But to an actual planned maximum of £4500 for any part-time student within any academic year*

Although eligible, we elected not to introduce the permitted real terms fee increase for 2017-18. We may potentially apply any permitted real terms rise in fees in subsequent years if permitted.

EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND SUCCESS MEASURES

Prior to the introduction of our Access Agreement, the College had invested significantly in measures to promote access and this expenditure has been increased through the additional income generated as a result of this Agreement. Indicative expenditure for 2018-19 will continue to strike a balance between 'access and progression' and 'student success' activities, whilst at the same time providing bursary support to recognise the fact that a significant number of students enter from low income families. Feedback from students and from the UCLan Students' Union is that such measures encourage low income families into higher education and improve progression rates.

The College plan to use approximately 60% of the higher fee income each year on measures designed to further improve student access, success and progression. Whilst specific proportions will stabilise over the next three years as the higher fee works through the cohorts, the largest proportion (15-20%) will be on specific measures to support success, with specific additional measures to promote access accounting for 6% rising to 7% and progression 1-2%. The remainder of the additional expenditure (initially 40% but stabilising to approximately 28% by 2018) will be spent on financial support, which is designed to contribute to student access, success and progression. The actual amounts are likely to change and proportions may change slightly as a result of the proposed return of some students/courses to indirect funding, and the intended merger with Accrington and Rossendale College. Information on the specific measures planned is contained in the following sections.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Financial support will be provided to students in cash and through payments to support learning.

Timely information will be provided to ensure that applicants and students are aware of the support available.

In September 2016 the Burnley Bursary was introduced to deliver financial support to the poorest students, and this will continue in 2018-19. It will do this by:

- Providing £2,000-worth of financial support in Year 1 for all full time undergraduate students paying the maximum £9,000 fee from households with residual incomes of less than £20,000 (with the exception of any students already in receipt of support such as any NHS- sponsored students).
- Providing £1,000-worth of financial support in Year 1 for all full time undergraduate students paying the maximum £9,000 fee from households with residual incomes between £20,000 and £25,000 (with the exception of students already in receipt of support such as NHS-sponsored students).

To encourage retention and achievement payment of bursaries will be conditional on students meeting the agreed targets with regard to attendance and assessment completion.

Additional funds are allocated to enhance the HE Hardship fund. Through these additional funds, we will be able to provide more targeted financial support, especially to mature

students, student parents and to students in need, at appropriate points throughout the student study cycle.

Our approach to financial support is based on UCLan's discussions with the Students' Union and on feedback from previous and current First Years, as well as national research and feedback. The Students' Union favours an approach which continues to provide a high level of support to the very poorest students, but allows for differing levels of support for other students presenting varying needs. Feedback to UCLan from previous and current First Year students suggests that, although the availability of financial support is not a key determinant in the decision to come to University, once here it is highly valued and may make a significant difference in some students' ability to stay the course, thus impacting favourably on student success and progression. While recognising that national research does not point to bursaries having significant impact in widening participation, we agree with UCLan that tailored investment, based on impartial and auditable criteria, will allow interventions by way of financial support to be used to maximise student retention and achievement.

Support for students in financial hardship is already offered through a variety of targeted interventions. Following the removal of the HEFCE Access to Learning Fund, Burnley College followed UCLan's lead in setting aside a similar amount on an ongoing basis to support students suffering financial hardship. This fund gives students facing hardship additional financial support to access and remain in Higher Education. Targeted areas for this funding include assistance for students in areas such as:

- meeting specific course and living costs which are not already met from other sources
- supporting dependents whilst studying
- supporting students who may be estranged from their families
- providing emergency payments for unexpected financial crisis
- identifying help for students who may be considering giving up their course because of financial problems.

The College also provides **financial grants for students in targeted areas**. Assessments for financial grants require supporting evidence and there are two types of grant award – Standard and Non-Standard.

Standard Assessments are based on an individual's circumstances where 'expected' household income is off-set against 'reasonable' expenditure, to determine if there is a shortfall between the two. (NB for consistency, the College adopt the figure for 'Reasonable' expenditure based on that agreed annually by a UCLan review panel which includes representation from the Students' Union).

Non-standard assessments are made when a student has circumstances which are unexpected, causing financial hardship and are outside of the general day-to-day living costs considered within the standard assessments (e.g. assistance with funeral costs).

Short term 'Loans': Funding is allocated to support students with small 'loans' ('advance payments' - maximum usually £250) in times of crisis. This includes the beginning of the academic year, where students may be experiencing a delay in receiving their student funding. These loans are repayable and can also be deducted from any grant assistance subsequently awarded from the College's Access to Learning Fund.

Recommendations for 2017-18 included more targeted support for students with disabilities, particularly those facing financial hardship, to ensure that changes proposed to Disabled Students' Allowance from 2016-17 do not deter students with disabilities from accessing and succeeding in Higher Education. Although a review of the impact of these changes and subsequent changes in support is not yet possible, it is anticipated that the support we provide will be continued at at least the 2017-18 level in 2018-19.

SPECIFIC INITIATIVES – TARGETED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Care Leavers are a group of students who are particularly vulnerable when they enter Higher Education. In the absence of parents or families to provide role models and support them financially, they often require additional support to enable them to succeed on their course and overcome any barriers they may face.

UCLan, In September 2014 introduced a new, targeted financial support package for students who are Leavers from Care, and under this Access Agreement Burnley College introduced a similar package from 2016 for those studying a UCLan course with Burnley College, and will maintain this in 2017-18 and 2018-19 with any amendments necessary to improve it following the first year of operation by the College in 2016-17. All students who meet the criteria (UK Home student enrolled on a full-time, undergraduate UCLan programme with Burnley College, defined as in care for at least 13 weeks, spanning their 16th birthday and under 25 on the first day of the academic year of commencement of course of study) will be eligible for financial support, along with a range of other targeted support arrangements including:

- a cash bursary of £1000 per year of study for Home undergraduate students meeting the criteria for Care Leaver status, paid in four instalments through the year at times when students need additional financial support the most
- a dedicated point of contact for advice and support, from application through admission and enrolment and study. This point of contact is able to offer advice on a range of issues and signpost / refer to other Services as required, including offering advice on funding sources in addition to the Care Leavers' Bursary
- access to enhanced study skills support and enhanced careers support
- a Care Leavers' Group (staff and students), which meets to provide opportunities for discussion and mutual support
- and we are exploring ways of supporting students who may need year-round accommodation contracts where they may not have alternative accommodation during vacations. As yet in 2016-17, there has been no need to implement support in this aspect.

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG ADULT CARERS

Building on the success of the targeted support for Care Leavers, UCLan has worked with the Students' Union on developing targeted support for students with caring responsibilities, and Burnley College would like to join this initiative from 2017, expanding the benefits for its students, and if successful continue this in 2018-19. This was originally planned for 2016-17, but following reflection it was felt best to hold this initiative until the other access measures had been put in place, and initial evaluation of their success undertaken. A significant proportion of students, young and older, have caring responsibilities. Currently information on such students is gathered through interventions such as Counselling or Hardship funding support. The Students' Union at UCLan launched a survey of students to gather additional data on the needs of this group, and have requested that the University should move to gather data systematically through student enrolment to facilitate the development of targeted support. The College currently flag young FE learners with caring responsibilities, and provide some support, and we would like to develop a similar system for our HE students, drawing on the best of the College FE and UCLan's approaches. Planning for this support is still at an early stage of development, but as with Care Leavers, initial plans include:

- targeted financial support (amount and eligibility criteria to be defined)
- flexible arrangements for study (eg ease of access to course materials via the VLE when students are unable to attend because of caring responsibilities)
- dedicated point of contact for advice and support at all stages from application through to study and graduation
- opportunities to meet with other students and staff with similar responsibilities to share experience and gain peer support.

EVALUATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The College will undertake evaluation of the impact of these initiatives relating to financial support for students in areas such as access and participation, retention, student satisfaction and academic performance and achievement.

ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Traditionally both Burnley College and UCLan have an extremely strong track record of access for under-represented groups.

Like UCLan, we have a strong story to tell, but we continue to be mindful that there could be threats to our continued success in this area. When UCLan and many other universities moved away from providing foundation entry year programmes the College made a strategic decision to maintain its programmes and developed them as validated provision. These programmes have since been expanded to cover the majority of our programme areas and UCLan have supported and followed this lead. The cost of these courses will be maintained at £6000 to allow for access to higher education by students with non-traditional qualifications, within which students from low participation neighbourhoods form a high proportion. A significant proportion of the additional income raised from those courses charging above £6000, alongside existing Student Opportunity funding, will be utilised in the initiatives identified within this agreement designed to help meet the challenging targets we have set to promote fair access for all learners.

We are working to understand the nature and extent of how any differential impacts on under-represented groups and are developing and piloting a series of internal data reports to examine this at both Divisional and College levels. We have also been developing a series of initiatives to ensure that students from all backgrounds are effectively supported to be able to complete their programme of study with us. This is being rigorously monitored through the College structure and investment in enhanced data collection and reporting systems.

We are not only concerned to ensure that our students complete their courses; we want to see them achieve strong grades that ensure that they are competitive in the graduate job market. We are, therefore, working to identify and understand any differentials in the achievement of students from under-represented groups. Although Access Arrangements have only been in place a relatively short time, since our combined 2015-17 Agreement, and therefore monitoring is in its early stages, we have already been able to identify some initial progress towards targets. Our most recent monitoring return for 2015-16 indicates positive progress towards all 5 targets, with milestones being met in 3 out of 5. For Example:

- Student Success – the target was exceeded with an increase from 91% in 2014-15 to 95.3% for courses featuring within the Agreement in 2015-16
- Access – Students with Disabilities – there was an increase of 2 students (from 20 to 22) from the baseline year of 2014-15 to 2015-16
- Student success and Progression – the number of students on vocational awards (fdAs/FdScs etc) gaining high grades increased by 6\$ from the baseline year (2013-14) to the 2015-16

ACCESS MEASURES

UCLan's Strategy for the period 2015-2020 affirmed their commitment to "continue to lead the UK higher education sector in promoting equality of educational opportunity" and Burnley College will continue to support them in achieving this commitment.

COLLABORATION AND OUTREACH

Collaborative provision

Widening participation remains the major driver behind the development of the UCLan Burnley University Campus jointly run by UCLan and Burnley College. The opportunities that Burnley College already provide in collaboration with UCLan for people from Pennine Lancashire to study university programmes locally already shows a different demographic even to those studying at UCLan's Preston campus. Evidence indicates that this collaboration already makes a significant contribution to mature student entry, with 74% of students based at Burnley and being over 21 compared with 54% of students at UCLan's Preston campus. 48% of students here at Burnley come from low social classes, compared with 40% at UCLan's Preston campus.

Although our relationship with UCLan has changed in the light of government policy (indirectly funded student numbers via UCLan reduced significantly and from 2015-17 no longer exist as we have been successful in gaining directly funded numbers), we remain committed to working collaboratively to extend educational opportunity within the region. UCLan continues to be the validating partner for all our courses which are now directly funded. Additionally, following HEFCE guidance in spring 2017, we will be returning around 20% of our student numbers to UCLan's indirect contract from September 2017, due to the following progression process for those students not completing their university award with Burnley College:

Some students who commence their university studies with Burnley College, many of whom would not have met the entry requirements to commence a level 4 programme at UCLan Preston, are able to progress to Preston having successfully completed 1 or more years of their degree with Burnley College, and having been effectively prepared for the demands of higher level study at a large city centre university campus. Others are able to continue their studies on higher level provision offered by UCLan at the UCLan Burnley Campus

HE-FE-SECONDARY SCHOOL COLLABORATION

- RAISING ATTAINMENT IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

The College have a history of working with local primary and secondary schools to raise aspirations to progress through further education and into higher education, and through this to promote improved attainment. The College will continue to increase investment in both time and resources to enable the development of strategically targeted long-term outreach activities that will continue to broaden the pool of applicants. In particular it will seek to raise the aspirations of children and young people and more mature applicants from under-represented groups and encourage them to apply for university education, either at

the College or elsewhere. HEFCE data shows that the participation rate of young people into HE for the ward in which the College is situated is below 20% compared to the national average (provisional) HEIPR of 48% and that it is in the bottom quintile. Almost all the wards in which local feeder primary and secondary schools and 6th forms are situated within the East Lancashire corridor are in the bottom 2 quintiles. (HEFCE 2016). The application of further access measures through the increased funds available seeks to address this imbalance.

The College invests in a Schools Liaison Team who deliver a range of internal and external activities to local schools. The aim is to develop the model that has worked effectively for FE (and implicitly for future progression to HE) to give a parallel focus on HE, and work has already begun establishing stronger connections with schools with 6th forms and other post 16 providers where an expanded programme of liaison activities can be promoted. Each curriculum area within the College's teaching Divisions has developed a programme of Master Classes and Guest Lectures that support the achievement of their current qualifications; these will be offered to pupils in local schools and 6th forms. We currently work with over 45 local secondary schools and over 20 primary schools on a regular basis delivering sessions in school and hosting sessions on campus. This year we have further developed our primary links and run more on site sessions than ever before. Key initiative which have proved popular and successful in recent years include:

- Enjoyneering – an annual event for secondary schools to compete in an Engineering competition and learn from University tutors and students
- Employability Conference – Annual event for Year 10 students to take part in a range of 'business and employability' related activities over a week
- Lancashire Science Festival – this started in 2016 for years 4-8 and was extended in 2017 to include years 9-13

A post to co-ordinate this work was funded for the first time in 2015-16. This will represent a key plank in the strategy to improve outreach to and access of disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

- **SPONSORSHIP OF SCHOOLS**

The College has no current plans to sponsor schools or 6th forms in the local area. Although some initial work was done in 2014-15 and the College provided staff to support the management of a local 6th form and local secondary school it was agreed not to pursue this at present pending the outcome of the Area Review process which has resulted in the College currently being in the process of negotiating a type B merger with another local FE college. This proposal is currently awaiting a decision by the Transaction Unit.

COLLABORATION WITH HEIS

The four universities covering Cumbria and Lancashire (University of Cumbria, University of Central Lancashire, Edge Hill University and Lancaster University) continue to liaise post-Aim higher in order to share ideas and best practice for outreach activity, to minimise the risk of duplication, and to make the most effective use of the resource available across the four institutions. Although there are practical limitations in the ability to share resources and facilities where institutions are not closely co-located,

collaborative working has continued, mainly in relation to re-directing requests for activity from 11-16 schools to Universities more closely located to their geographical locations with regard to primary activity.

Burnley College are now working collaboratively with UCLan as part of a newly established network under the National Collaborative Outreach Programme initiative for Lancashire (following the completion of the CLNNCO initiative in December 2016). Edge Hill University and Lancaster University are also supporting the programme alongside a broad range of other FE Colleges from within the county. Discussions are currently taking place regarding the specific targets and work, and NCOP staff have now been appointed, including two outreach officers based here at the Burnley Campus, who have been in post since February 2017.

OTHER OUTREACH MEASURES

Enhanced curriculum mapping will ensure even more effective ladders of progression from levels 2 and 3 through to levels 4 and 5 and beyond

The college seeks to maintain courses across curriculum areas that may recruit low numbers, sometimes in single figures where it feels this provision provides an important opportunity for local people to access study at university that may not otherwise be available to them and/or where it meets a specific need of local employment or the local community. This particularly supports those from low-income households and those with caring responsibilities where travel to study outside of the area may be difficult

This approach results in an average class size of 14.2 which enables a more personalized approach to university education that also supports improved retention and achievement.

Curriculum delivery modes are designed to facilitate access for students who may need to maintain employment to support them in their studies, or who have caring responsibilities. Full time courses mainly operate on family friendly compact timetables, condensing full-time delivery into 2-3 days per week, and avoiding post 4pm finishes where possible. Part-time study options are also offered on a significant number of courses, including the option of evening only attendance on some courses to enable access for students who are in full-time employment.

To provide applicants with the opportunity to illustrate all aspects of their potential to undertake our university courses the College has invested in its decision to interview all FT and PT applicants who it is considering for a place. We believe this is particularly beneficial to applicants from non-traditional backgrounds. These events also provide an opportunity for applicants to gain further first-hand information about their course of study and the expectations as well as giving information on financial aspects of studying including sources of financial support.

PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A varied set of public and community engagement activities contribute directly and indirectly to the widening participation agenda by engaging young people, parents, teachers and

advisers. We are working in collaboration with a range of partners to reach out to communities in deprived areas of our sub-region. The College's 'Winter Wonderland', held for the first time in December 2014, and now organised as an annual event, is our flagship community event, with an attendance of around 3500 people visiting the campus for the event in December 2016. The core audience is school children aged 10-16 years, and families with young children aged approx. 5-14 years. It aims to engage young people and their parents/carers by providing an initial point of contact with the College's FE and HE that many underrepresented groups would not otherwise have had, and it is in this sense aspiration-raising. Visitor feedback tells us that we are successful in this aim.

In Summer 2016 we worked collaboratively with UCLan to bring the UCLan 'Lancashire Science Festival' (that has run successfully in Preston as part of UCLan's school and community engagement Access policy since 2012) to Burnley for the first time. This was highly successful and will be extended in 2017 by a further day, with an additional target group of year 9-13 students. We will now run this annually and it will form part of our 2018-19 strategy.

Students also make a contribution to many of our current outreach activities and are encouraged to contribute to public and community engagement events in a variety of ways. The College held its first HE Volunteering Fair in spring 2015 and is now an annual event. We will also work with the UCLan SU and UCLan's Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership (CVCL), which is based at the Burney campus, both of whom also provide recognition for student volunteering, and work in partnership with them to maximise student involvement and recognition. The majority of university students on campus attend placements or other forms of work experience either alongside or as part of their course, and through this make a positive contribution to the local community as well as providing a visible presence and positive role-model to members of the community. Much of this voluntary work is with people with welfare needs or who are disadvantaged in some way and as such these initiatives provide further outreach to these under-represented groups.

A guest lecture programme was piloted in 2014-15 and has been embedded and extended in 2016-17. Key influencers from local schools and 6th forms and community leaders are invited and it is planned to open up this programme to wider sections of the public. This will be well established by 2018-19.

The College have validated and delivered a heavily subsidised preparatory study module as a University Certificate of Achievement. The Introduction to University Study is 20 credit module offered for just £95 with potential further reductions based on successful completion and progression to HE. It is designed as an access measure and is aimed at students with limited or no experience of formal study at a higher level and who often have no experience of higher education within their family. Tracking students who have completed this course forward, this programme has been demonstrated to increase student access and also to sustain engagement to improve progression and success through the student study cycle. The benefits of this programme were endorsed within the QAA's report following the Higher Education review of Burnley College in May 2015. It is planned to extend the availability of this course.

Plans are still under development to work with UCLan to further develop Burnley-based social media and contact centre style activities designed to engage students prior to their entry and provide a forum for prospective students to discuss concerns and ask questions in an informal and supportive environment. These activities could include welcome

contacts and follow up to ensure that students' journey into higher education is as smooth as possible. These will help provide re-assurance and advice to students from low participation areas or with low levels of family experience in higher education.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Student retention achievement and success have been a key focus of Burnley College's strategy to enhance the quality of our university offer and fit into 2 of the 3 'Rs' of 'Recruitment Retention and Rigour' around which the strategy is based. The College produces internal data for in-year retention and achievement but based on HESA criteria. Current data indicates that for the academic year 2015-16 performance indicators indicated an improving picture. Full time retention was 91% with part-time at 92%. With FT and PT achievement standing at 95% and 98% respectively this results in an overall success rate of 86% for FT and 90% PT. Although 2015-16 HESA figures are not yet available we anticipate these figures will be around the benchmark.

This has been achieved through deploying student support mechanisms that are varied and wide ranging and we already commit considerable resources to initiatives, both College specific and in conjunction with UCLan, that are designed to smooth the transition of our students into HE; support them and maximise engagement during their critical first year of study; develop strong communities of learning and cohort identity to strengthen academic performance from under-represented groups; re-engage those students who have withdrawn or who are at risk of withdrawing; and provide specialist support for students with specific needs associated with, for example, disability or family hardship. Increasingly, however, we are also placing much more emphasis on working proactively with students to encourage and help them to make the most of the opportunities available to them, both as part of and in addition to their academic programmes and to build networks to support their future success. Like UCLan, we believe that this is essential if we are to address the challenges to social mobility likely to be experienced by many of our students, in particular those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are in the process of developing a new Health and wellness package for our HE students, as we have recognised that a significant factor for many of our students who are not retained is linked to issues with physical and/or mental/emotional health and wellbeing; this is particularly true for many of our target groups including those from low socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities.

The success of these initiatives so far was also endorsed within the QAA's report following the Higher Education review of Burnley College in May 2015. They concluded that *'the College has effective arrangements in place to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential'* and one of the identified areas of good practice was *'the effective support for students' transition into higher education study (Expectation B4)'*. The initiatives were further endorsed in the outcomes of the 2015 National Student Survey (NSS), where academic support was rated at 90% (the upper quartile was set at 84%) and there is a positive score of 1.2 above benchmark in the most recent TEF matrix. Burnley College achieved an outstanding NSS overall satisfaction rating of 97% in 2015.

In 2015 an enhanced induction programme was introduced and this builds on the success already identified by the QAA Report. This programme included a centrally organized programme of events in addition to course specific activities, and was positively evaluated

by students.

The DLHE survey reporting on Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education indicates the success of the College in preparing students for employment or further study with 'Positive Outcomes' standing at 90.2% in the TEF metric (based on 2 years of data). In spring 2015 the College held its first Graduate Careers and Employability Fair and this was repeated in 2016. Further support for the employability agenda is planned for future years, and there is a renewed focus on providing tailored one to one careers' advice and support to students. From 2018 this will include additional on-line materials that students and alumni will be able to use on campus and access off-campus to support their employability and career development.

The College will continue to increase investment in strategically targeted measures designed to maintain and further improve student retention, achievement and success and address any issues identified with regard to any of the identified priority groups.

TARGETS AND MILESTONES

We aim to:

- achieve or exceed our target for the recruitment of full time students with disabilities
- achieve progressive increases in the percentage of students expected to complete their degree
- reduce any differential gap identified in attainment between vocational (ie FdA/FdSc/HND) and non-vocational (ie BA/BSc Hons) students
- increase the number of internal care leavers progressing to higher education
- continue to promote the recruitment of local students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds as identified by the LEP deprivation bands and POLAR data

In addition, in recognition that we may need to work harder in the future to attract students from under-represented groups, we believe that our strategy to expand the availability of foundation entry years to our degrees will ensure the overall proportion of such students amongst our student body is maintained, and remains at least at benchmark.

In supporting these aims we will:

- engage younger age groups from year 6 upwards in activities to raise aspirations and achievement and promote progress into higher education
- engage students in Year 10 upwards from the targeted cohorts in a co-ordinated programme of interventions leading to the achievement of qualification levels that will facilitate HE progression
- work in to strengthen the progression of vocational learners, including apprentices, and part time learners into HE

- support our students with employability embedded within the curriculum and through extra curricula activities and structured work experience.

These aims and targets are consistent with those of our sole partner awarding university, UCLan, who we will continue to work collaboratively with to help both partners achieve their planned outcomes.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Access Agreement is monitored through reports to the University Management Group which is chaired by the Assistant or Deputy Principal responsible for University Studies, who is a member of the College's Senior Management Team (SMT). The student voice is well represented on this group. Overall responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of the Access Agreement resides with this member of the Principalship and the Dean of University Education, (Peter Mounsey), who is a member of the Student Experience Committee. Operational management and delivery of outreach activity is delegated to the Strategic Marketing Manager (Jayne Wynne) and responsibility for meeting course-level retention targets lies with the Heads of Division and their Curriculum Managers overseen by the Dean of University Education, reporting in to the College/University Board.

Monitoring of the targets and milestones identified within the Access Agreement is addressed on an on-going basis through the use of the College's management information system, which is updated as new data becomes available (overnight in some cases) and presents key performance data for use by the College Governing Board and its sub-committees, Academic Board and other College committees, the Senior Management Team, Teaching Divisions and Service Areas.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The College is strongly committed to its equality and diversity responsibilities across the full range of its activities as a provider of further and Higher Education. Throughout the student study cycle we actively promote equality and diversity by providing diverse entry routes to our degree courses and a suite of interventions and support tailored to ensure students achieve their full potential regardless of prior attainment. Our access agreement is closely linked to our equality and diversity work. For example we are expanding the suite of foundation entry year courses to provide non-standard access to more of our undergraduate degrees at a fee significantly below that of degrees at level 4 and above. The study skills and learning to support the transition to higher education embedded within the curriculum is designed to further strengthen, and ensure, student success. Our access agreement and equality and diversity focus are both intended to fulfil our key commitment of enabling access and providing equality of opportunity to all those who are able to benefit from higher education.

We will closely monitor and evaluate activities to consider the impact on protected equality groups in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The most recent inspection of the College by Ofsted stated that equality and diversity permeated the organisation We have included a strategic objective in our Strategic plan for 2015-18 'to maintain

outstanding equality of opportunity', and our strategic goals state that we must demonstrate equality of opportunity in meeting all other goals. It is anticipated that this, or a similar goal, will continue in any updated version of this plan in operation in 2018. We believe this is a significant strength and an indication of our commitment to ensuring that equality and diversity issues are at the centre of the College's core priorities.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Information for students on the fees and financial support will be detailed in the College's university prospectus/promotional literature and on its website. The College will also ensure that UCAS and other key bodies, including UCLan, are provided with accurate information in a timely manner. Information is also made available in a variety of other ways; through talks and publications at Open Events, Interview Events and Applicant Days; through pre-entry information sent to applicants; through public engagement events; leaflets and guidance information in public places; and through staff advising students at recruitment fairs and open days or working with under-represented groups through a wide range of outreach activities.

CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

Student views are highly valued within Burnley College and are sought on a wide range of matters, through a range of mechanisms from representation on committees, including the Governing Board, feedback at course and College level, and in the operation of this Access Agreement the College will continue this process of consultation with students.

