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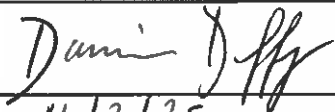
Cover sheet of a Widening Access and Participation Plan for 2025/26 - 2027/28

The cover sheet is for internal Departmental use – it will not be published by the Department

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| Institution: | Belfast Metropolitan College |
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| Principal Contact for Widening Access and Participation Plans | |
| Title: | Mr |
| First Name: | David |
| Last Name: | McDowell |
| Post Held: | Head of Department - Learner Success |
| Telephone: | 02890265123 |
| E-mail: | dmcdowell@belfastmet.ac.uk |

| | |
|---|--|
| Senior management responsibility for Widening Access and Participation Plan: This should be the person that the named contact reports to | |
| Title: | Mrs |
| First Name: | Fiona |
| Last Name: | Dempsey |
| Post Held: | Interim Director of Curriculum & Learner Success |
| Telephone: | 02890265000 Ext 3008 |
| E-mail: | Fdempsey@belfastmet.ac.uk |

| | |
|--|---|
| Signature of head of institution: |  |
| Date: | 11/2/25 |

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

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.

Belfast Metropolitan College operates within a strategic framework determined by:

- The Programme for Government
- The Minister for the Economy's Economic Vision and
- The College Strategic Plan – "Choose Success", which covers the period 2021/22 until 2024/25

The Strategic Plan articulates five key targets for Belfast Met:

- **College of Choice**
- **Employer of Choice**
- **Partner of Choice**
- **Digital by Design**
- **Sustainable by Nature**

Central to the College's Widening Access and Participation Plan is the aim of being the College of Choice for all students from disadvantaged backgrounds; a College of Choice for all those who fall into widening participation cohorts.

Belfast Metropolitan College is committed to the promotion of opportunity, choice, and excellence in our Higher Education provision. It is essential that opportunity for higher education extends to those members of our society from backgrounds of disadvantage and, in particular, backgrounds of multiple disadvantage. Widening participation is not simply a matter of social justice, but an economic imperative if Northern Ireland is to remain competitive in the face of economic challenges. The College is steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that no student is denied the opportunity to progress in their education because of their personal circumstances or social/economic background.

The College's mission to make a fundamental impact on the economic and social success of the city of Belfast links with the strategic aim of reconnecting disconnected people. Over the next three years, the College will maintain its reach and help to widen participation, enhance social mobility, build community capacity, and create a fairer society.

In the face of increasingly complex global challenges, we remain dedicated to our widening participation goals to increase uptake by those students most able, yet least likely, to achieve in a higher education programme of study. Our Widening Participation initiative aims to achieve this by encouraging applications through outreach activity, and by ensuring our students get the tailored personal support interventions that they require to enable them to reach and fulfil their potential whilst studying with us.

Many young people and adults with the academic potential to enter higher education do not currently apply to study at the College. This may be due to:

- lack of aspiration;
- adverse personal circumstances;
- limited family income;
- insufficient information;
- no family experience of higher education; and/or
- lack of understanding of the benefits of higher education qualifications

Once on course our students face multiple barriers to their education and learning, including:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Cost of Living | Poor Organisational Skills | Poor Time Management Skills | Economic Disadvantage | Anger Issues | External Responsibilities |
| Disability | Long Term Medical Condition | Isolation | Digital Poverty | Lack of motivation | Personal Circumstances |
| Pregnancy | Low Self Esteem | Low Confidence Levels | Change in routines | Anxiety/Depression | Poor Mental Health |
| Suicidal Thoughts/Self-Harm | Family breakdown | Relationship breakdown | Unhealthy Relationships Domestic Abuse | Victim Support | Bereavement |
| Low levels of resilience | Homelessness | Care experienced | Single or Young Parent | Drug Abuse | Alcohol Abuse |
| Sexual Abuse | Loss of Job | Transport difficulties | Criminal Background | Carer | Sexuality |

The College is committed to delivering the Widening Participation initiatives outlined in this document, to help our students break down and overcome the barriers that they face to their education and learning, thereby creating a fairer society, securing improvements in social mobility and supporting economic growth within Greater Belfast and beyond.

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

Belfast Met has a strong record of success with respect to recruiting and retaining students from widening participation cohorts to allow them to achieve success, progress and reach their full potential.

This is evidenced by:

Quintile of Deprivation

The College continues to attract HE students from the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. In 2023/24, 20% of HE learners were from Quintile 1, with 35% recruited from Quintiles 1 & 2. 870 students enrolled on HE courses in 2022/23 were recruited from these quintiles – the largest number in the FE sector. Belfast Met also had the second largest proportion of Q1 HE students in the FE sector during the five-year period up to 2023.

Disability

Belfast Met is a College of Choice for those with additional support needs, as evidenced by the proportion of HE students declaring a disability. The College is fully committed to its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act, SENDO Legislation and WAPP commitments to promote and retain enrolment by students with disabilities on our HE programmes. In 2023/24, 11.5% of our HE students declared a disability. Extensive advice and support are offered to these students by our Inclusive Learning staff, regardless of whether individuals qualify for DSA funding.

The top 3 categories of disabilities disclosed are:

1. SpLD (includes general, mild, moderate learning difficulties and ADHD),
2. Autism
3. Mental Health Disability

The College has achieved the Autism Impact Award (June 22- 25).

Ethnicity

In 2023/24, 5.3% of all HE learners came from a BAME background. 16% of all Belfast Met learners were from this background in 2023/24, the second highest proportion among the six FE colleges.

Age Profile

23% of all HE Adult Learners in FE aged 25+ were enrolled at Belfast Met during the period 2019/20 until 2022/23. Belfast Met also accounted for 44% of all learners in this cohort in FT HE programmes over the same period.

In 2022/23, DfE data shows that Belfast Met had 110 learners classified as Young Males (aged under 20) from the lowest deprivation quintile enrolled on HE courses. This represents 42% of total sector enrolments for this cohort.

HE Pathways

Belfast Met provides WP cohorts with access to HE via a broad range of pathways, including:

Further Education Level 3 Provision

With a keen focus on student success, strategic partnerships, and technological integration, we continue to shape the future of skills development in Northern Ireland.

In 2024/25 there are a total of 3,570 full-time & part-time enrolments. The College is highly proactive through its Marketing, Careers and Curriculum teams in seeking to promote HE opportunities to this cohort of students. WP learners constitute a significant proportion of these enrolments as evidenced by DfE data showing that in 2023/24 Belfast Met scored above sector enrolment averages in 6 out of 7 demographic variables showing diversity and levels of social inclusion.

Learner satisfaction levels are high. In the 2024 Learner Satisfaction Survey, 98% of respondents said they felt welcome at Belfast Met, whilst 94% described it as an excellent place to study.

A Levels

Belfast Met is amongst the largest providers of full-time A Level programmes in Northern Ireland, with approximately 360 full-time learners and approximately 300 part-time students in the 2024-25 academic year. This provision attracts significant numbers of students from WP cohorts and provides an important route to HE for students who may have struggled in a mainstream school setting.

Access Programmes

The College has a well-established provision in Access in a wide range of subject areas that have been identified as areas of growth and high demand. The provision ranges from Access Diplomas in Computing for the Economy, Maths and Finance, Maths and Physics to Biological/Biomedical Science and Humanities & Social Science, all validated by Queen's University Belfast or by the University of Ulster. The learners undertaking these courses come from a range of diverse backgrounds with over 30% living in the most deprived areas in NI. Many of these learners had a negative experience with formal education and left school with few or no formal qualifications, meaning they either are unemployed or employed in low-skilled jobs. Many of the students come with their own unique issues including mental health issues, caring responsibilities, and negative educational experiences.

Apprenticeship NI (APPNI)

The Apprenticeship pathways offer learners opportunities to gain valuable industry-recognised qualifications from Level 2 through to a Level 5/6 Foundation Degree. The provision, having achieved a 'Very Good' rating across all key performance indicators, continues to evolve, setting the stage for transformative learning experiences and impactful career progression, offering a spectrum of apprenticeships in collaboration with industry partners. Approximately 500 students are enrolled on Level 3 programmes within this provision.

Higher Education Provision:

The College takes pride in offering a diverse range of HE courses closely aligned with industry demands. In 2024-25 the College had over 2,300 students enrolled on full-time and part-time HE courses ranging from Bachelor's Degrees through Foundation Degrees to Higher National Diplomas. Our partners include QUB, Ulster and OU as well as awarding organisations such as Pearson. These programmes are highly attractive to WP groups for a range of reasons, including lower costs and proximity to home.

The College's Support Service Provision

Belfast Met has a wide range of student support services. Available to all students, these are of particular importance to WP cohorts, who may need some additional help in negotiating barriers to learning and progression.

The College has in place to support our learners from Widening Participation backgrounds a comprehensive portfolio of student support services designed to identify and break down the barriers that our students face to their education and learning, enabling our students from WP backgrounds to reach their full potential.

Cost of Living

Over 40% of our learners hail from Quintiles 1 and 2, representing the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland. The economic pressures faced by many of these students can have an inhibiting effect, particularly when it comes to progression to HE.

In recent years, the College has adopted a range of measures to support students facing economic hardship, including:

- The Winter Warmer Campaign - free information briefings leading to a daily £6 lunch voucher for all participating students
- The Breakfast Club at Titanic Quarter campus
- Grab and Go Breakfast at Millfield campus
- Taste not Waste project - provides free healthy meals for students to take away
- College funds to address economic hardship
- Signposting and collaborative work with community food banks
- Wear and Share - Belfast Met's sustainable clothing scheme
- Warm Spaces Campaign

- Promotion of college showering facilities
- Hype Clinic provision
- Provision of free sanitary products.

Student Wellbeing

At the forefront of our commitment to student welfare, Belfast Met has a dedicated team of Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officers. This team provides tailored support to students presenting with a broad range of welfare-based problems and challenges and is able to engage extensively with students from WP backgrounds.

The service delivery model revolves around three core principles:

- **Promotion:** Initiatives like school inductions, wellbeing events, online workshops, and wellbeing pop-ups actively promote a culture of wellness.
- **Prevention:** Proactive measures include clinics with external agencies, early intervention, student activities, and comprehensive wellbeing support and guidance.
- **Intervention:** We provide tailored wellbeing tools, strategies, and resources. Our team engages in wellbeing assessments, robust safeguarding efforts, internal support services, Inspire Counselling, and adept referral/signposting to relevant agencies.

This service is highly regarded by students, as highlighted by the 2024 Learner Satisfaction Survey:

- 98% of learners said they felt safe and secure at Belfast Met.
- 93% of learners said they know who to turn to if they feel their wellbeing or safety is at risk.
- 96% of learners agree that the college encourages them to look after their mental health.

Support for Students with additional support needs

We are a College of Choice for learners with additional support needs. This is evidenced by the sustained growth the College has experienced in attracting students with a disability, learning difficulty or long-term medical conditions. The Inclusive Learning team ensures that all presenting students, including HE students who are not supported under DSA, have their additional needs assessed and, where appropriate, are provided with curriculum support recommendations and specialist examination arrangements.

Careers and Employability

A team of trained advisers offers information, advice and guidance to current and prospective learners, to ensure they are supported to make effective decisions regarding their future careers and have access to opportunities for skills development, work

experience and employment. In doing so, the Careers and Employability Service delivers an impartial, high-quality professional service which supports inclusion and promotes equality of opportunity. The Centre has dedicated resource allocated for outreach pre-entry work aimed at targeting those most marginalized in our society. This service successfully achieved the renewal of the Matrix Quality Kite Mark (2022 – 25). They are instrumental in rolling out the “Moving on up at the Met Campaign” ensuring that students from economic backgrounds can see progression routes to HE provision within the College and to the real and viable opportunities open to them.

The College’s Student Funding Service is crucial in ensuring that both current and prospective learners are enabled to overcome the financial barriers they face to their education and learning. Each year this team assesses and supports student applications across five key funds: Hardship/Learner Support Fund (DfE), Care to Learn (DfE), Higher Education Bursary (Belfast Metropolitan College), Family Action Fund (Family Action), Digital Device Allocation Scheme (Addressing Digital Poverty). Such support is vital to a number of WP groups studying at a range of levels.

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.

Aims

The College's mission is to make a fundamental impact on the economic and social success of the city of Belfast; this links with its strategic aim of becoming a College of Choice for all. Over the next three years, the College will maintain its reach and help to widen participation, enhance social mobility, build community capacity and create a fairer society.

Objectives

- To ensure that no student is deprived of Higher Education opportunities as a result of socio-economic barriers to education and learning.
- To enable our students to break down the barriers that they face to their education and learning, thereby facilitating academic success.

Targets

To achieve our Widening Participation aims and objectives, we have decided to allocate resources to a number of cohorts of students determined to be disadvantaged. These include:

- Those who suffer economic disadvantage (the lowest socioeconomic groups);
- Those from geographical areas of high-level disadvantage (low participation, high deprivation neighbourhoods);
- Those with a physical or learning disability, long-term medical condition or learning difficulty;
- Those aged 25 or over who are in low-level employment but require upskilling (via part-time educational provision in both further and higher education);
- Those who are, or who have been, in care, and those who are on the edge of care;
- Those who are single or young parents;
- Those who are carers;
- Those who have had involvement with the criminal justice system;
- Those who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless;
- Those who are struggling with their sexuality - LGBT and, in particular, transgender students;
- Those who are struggling with their health and wellbeing.

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**

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019- 2023) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 522 | | | 490 | 490 |

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

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019- 2023) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 256 | | | 300 | 300 |

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

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 106 | | | 110 | 110 |

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

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 82 | | | 80 | 80 |

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

| AVERAGE (based on 4 years 2019-2023) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 4 Year Average | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 1001 | | | 1000 | 1000 |

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**

| BASE YEAR | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|-----------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 5 | Number | 20 | 20 | 20 |

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.

- (i)

| |
|---|
| Group: Students who have disclosed they are Transgender |
| Outcome: To increase the number of enrolments among this cohort |

| Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 11 | Number | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| | Percentage | .9% | .9% | .9% |

- (ii)

| |
|---|
| Group: HE students presenting with Wellbeing concerns |
| Outcome: To enhance retention rates for students from a WP back |

| Baseline (statistical or % participation last year monitored) | Targets/Outcome | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | 2025/26 | 2026/27 | 2027/28 |
| 100 | Number | 110 | 110 | 110 |
| | Percentage | 10% | 10% | 10% |

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.

| Activity | Estimated Spend 2025/26 (£) | Estimated Spend 2026/27 (£) | Estimated Spend 2027/28 (£) |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Bursaries | 109,850 | 110,950 | 112,050 |
| Scholarships | | | |
| Other financial Support | | | |
| Outreach | 61,500 | 62,200 | 63,000 |
| Retention | 88,500 | 88,500 | 88,500 |
| Research Activity | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Staffing/ Administration | 25,000 | 25,250 | 25,500 |
| TOTAL | 289,850 | 291,900 | 294,050 |

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.)

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Pathways to Education - 2.4 (i)

The College delivers an annual Pathways to Education event to professionals working with potential students from backgrounds of disadvantage. The workshop provides an overview of the College's educational provision and support services, and an understanding of the application and enrolment process. This enables attendees to better support young people from backgrounds of disadvantage into the College. Belfast Met is also represented on the Pathways to Education NI Committee.

Careers & Employability Service outreach activity, including direct engagement with post-primary schools and Area Learning Communities to promote HE opportunities to WP Target Groups - 2.4 (ii)

The Careers Team has secured representation on the Belfast Area Learning Communities to facilitate engagement with Careers teachers in the post-primary sector. This in turn results in direct engagement with pupils from WP backgrounds in secondary schools, usually through visits to the schools, to promote HE opportunities to these cohorts.

Moving on up at the Met Campaign - 2.4 (iii)

This is a Careers and Employability initiative targeting students from disadvantaged backgrounds to explore their options in terms of progressing within the Met. It delivers targeted, campus-based activities aimed at Belfast Met Level 3 students, many from WP backgrounds, to promote and inform them about HE opportunities at the College. Particular emphasis is placed on reduced costs and proximity to home, in order to encourage WP students to pursue HE courses at the College.

Wellbeing Project Outreach - 2.4 (iv)

To build capacity through referrals from the community and voluntary sector, the College engages in outreach activities with stakeholder groups through the Wellbeing team. Such engagements lead to college applications from the hardest-to-reach members of our society. These students very often require continued support from the Student Wellbeing team throughout the duration of their programme of study.

RETENTION ACTIVITIES

Student Resilience Building Project - 2.5 (i)

The project provides a single point of contact for students from specific backgrounds of disadvantage. These include: care leavers; single and young parents; those with a criminal background; and those who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, as well as targeting students who struggle with general health and wellbeing difficulties. The project provides follow-up assessments and tailored support, where applicable. It also provides dedicated one-to-one mentoring support for students who are WP cohorts. Bespoke training and guidance are provided for staff in working with students with specific WP needs, including criminal disclosures and adult safeguarding. All staff can avail of one-to-one guidance based on students' individual needs. Workshops are held for students, many from a WP background, to promote the development of skills and behaviours that enhance resilience.

Disability Support for HE Learners who do not receive DSA Funding Support - 2.5 (ii)

Needs assessments are carried out for students who disclose a disability, learning difficulty and/or long-term medical condition(s), but who do not receive Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) funding. Corresponding support recommendations are implemented and reviewed throughout the year.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Widening Participation - Student Voice - 2.6 (i)

Student satisfaction surveys are administered to capture feedback from all HE learners, including those from WP backgrounds. Engagement activities such as Class Representative meetings are used to gather feedback from students from areas of disadvantage to help to inform future development of College processes and support packages.

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

The College has integrated its Widening Participation initiative with the Department for Economy's Access to Success regional strategy for widening participation in higher education. As such, the College determines it will:

- Collate and annually review data pertaining to our students who study on our HE programmes of study.
- Continue to review the context in which our students operate and identify the barriers that they face to their education and learning, in order to provide agile responses to help them to overcome those barriers.
- Attract more students from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education provision, thereby promoting social inclusion, through our internal/external outreach and aspiration-raising interventions.
- Identify underrepresentation in provision from a number of groups, e.g., low-income groups, low participation neighbourhoods and persons with a disability, and take appropriate action to promote participation from these groups.
- Enable the workforce to upskill - the College intends to continue to offer adult Access provision and to increase foundation degrees and part-time provision accordingly.
- Develop further the opportunities presented by the College's MIS system (Tribal EBS) for data capture, to ensure an accurate and evidence-based means by which to analyse underrepresentation.
- Continue to build on our retention initiatives to ensure that all students receive the support that they need to stay on course and successfully achieve in their programme of study.
- Continue to provide an HE Bursary.
- Continue to make and return a Widening Access and Participation plan on an annual basis.

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

The College communicates Widening Participation initiatives, including financial support, to students via the following College channels:

- All-student e-mail updates
- Careers and Employability bulletins
- College open days
- College website
- Poster and digital campaigns
- Prospectus (both full-time and part-time)
- Student ambassador videos
- Student Council and Class Representative engagement initiatives
- Student induction programme
- Student Support section of CANVAS – our Virtual Learning Environment site
- Student Support Handbook
- Student Voice initiatives
- Extensive on-campus promotion of support mechanisms

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

The Governing Body of the College is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the College meets its Widening Participation remit. Its members are supported in this role by the College Directorate and Strategic Leadership Team, who assign service-specific, operational, Key Performance Indicators to ensure that the College strives to achieve its collective ambition with respect to its Widening Participation goals.

The annual WAPP is an important means of evaluating College performance and of setting achievable targets.

The College undertakes an annual review of its Widening Participation engagements, to reflect on the extent and success of provision, and to identify areas of best practice and areas for further development. This includes analysis of data obtained and feedback from the student voice. This then feeds into the Whole College Quality Improvement Planning process. Specific services are assigned dedicated key performance indicators with respect to widening participation.

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

The Learner Satisfaction Survey (LSS) is an opportunity for existing learners to rate their learning or training. The survey is mandated by the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy (DfE) and takes place annually. Staff-Student Consultation Committees are mandated for many HE programmes and serve as an important mechanism for allowing students from WP backgrounds to raise specific concerns. Class Representative meetings, hosted by the Students’ Union, provide an additional mechanism for students from WP backgrounds to express views on matters relating to the support provided whilst on their courses.

The key findings from the 2023-24 Learner Satisfaction Survey are below:

| Overall College Results ^{5 6} (% Agreement) | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| | 2023 | 2024 |
| Overall Learner Satisfaction Indicator | 95 | 94 |
| I feel welcome at Belfast Met | 99 | 98 |
| I feel safe and secure at Belfast Met | 98 | 98 |
| Belfast Met is an excellent place to study | 96 | 94 |
| I would recommend this course to a friend or family member | 94 | 91 |
| I believe that I have made the right course choice | 95 | 94 |
| I enjoy my course | 89 | 89 |

The results continue to reflect very high levels of satisfaction among our students.

Level 2 Evaluation - Learning

The resulting increase in knowledge or capability

- Evaluation of the impact of the College’s Widening Participation initiatives takes place annually and is reported on in the *Widening Access and Participation Plan* and in the *Whole College Quality Improvement Plan*.

- Learner surveys have been adapted to ensure that results for the higher education cohort of learners can be measured separately. For example, the HE *National Student Survey* results are analysed and published to show how the College performs against UK benchmarks. Key data relating to learning from the 2024 survey includes the following satisfaction ratings;
 - **Teaching** (Belfast Met: 86%; NI Sector: 86%; UK Sector: 85%)
 - **Learning Opportunities** (Belfast Met: 85%; NI Sector: 83%; UK Sector: 82%)
 - **Assessment & Feedback** (Belfast Met: 84%; NI Sector: 80%; UK Sector: 78%)
 - **Academic Support** (Belfast Met: 88%; NI Sector: 87%; UK Sector: 86%)
- *Student Voice* engagement is structured to ensure that our HE students get to meet with members of the Strategic Leadership Team separate from their FE counterparts. A 'you said, we did' concept and culture has been established and embedded. This is of particular importance as a means of identifying the challenges faced by WP cohorts and of providing College management responses to the issues raised.
- All services with Widening Participation KPIs assigned also conduct a service-specific evaluation of the WP initiatives through their service annual review cycle.

Level 3 Evaluation – Transfer

Behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application

The evaluation mechanisms outlined above allow the College to evaluate the impact of its programmes at a range of levels. They allow the College to learn, reflect and plan its approach to WP on the basis of quantitative and qualitative analysis. The annual WAPP is informed by the feedback garnered via these platforms.

Level 4 Evaluation- Results

Results- the effects resulting from performance

The College is proud of its record of engagement with a broad range of WP cohorts. We recruit students from a wide variety of disadvantaged backgrounds onto our FE programmes and create pathways to HE for many of them, as evidenced by the data tables in this plan. Teaching and support staff have a strong track record of seeking to enable students facing significant barriers to learning to develop the skills and confidence required to progress and succeed in HE.

PART TWO

**WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN
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 Social Work | £4,855.00 | £2,945.00 | 58 | £170,810.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| Total Students | | | 58 | £170,810.00 |
| 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 (£) | | | |
| HND | £3,110.00 | £1,200.00 | 386 | £463,200.00 |
| Foundation Degree | £3,110.00 | £1,200.00 | 656 | £787,200.00 |
| BSc Fashion | £3,110.00 | £1,200.00 | 49 | £58,800.00 |
| Foundation Degree QUB | £3,167.00 | £1,257.00 | 104 | £130,728.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| Total Students | | | 1195 | £1,439,928.00 |
| 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: | £1,610,738.00 |
|---|----------------------|

2.3 Estimated Direct Expenditure on bursaries and other direct financial support targeted at Widening Participation Students in 2024/25 [See Guidance notes for 2.3 before completing] Add additional groups as necessary

(a) Bursaries

| Target Groups | Course Type | No of Students | Bursary Amount per student (£) | Total Bursary Amount (£) |
|--|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Students with household income up to £19,203 <i>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</i> | BSc Social Work | 40 | £490.00 | £19,600.00 |
| | BSc Fashion | 10 | £311.00 | £3,110.00 |
| | Foundation Degree | 170 | £311.00 | £52,870.00 |
| | HND | 100 | £311.00 | £31,100.00 |
| | Foundation Degreee QUB | 10 | £317.00 | £3,170.00 |
| Other low income groups <i>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</i> | | | | £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 Bursary Spend (£) | | 330 | | £109,850.00 |

(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 | | | | £0.00 |
| 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 (£) | | 0 | | £0.00 |

(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 | | | | £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 'Other' Direct Financial Spend (£) | | 0 | | £0.00 |

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

(i)

| | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|--|
| Name of Programme/Project | Pathways to Education | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Pre- Entry Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | All Widening Participation Cohorts via Community and Voluntary Sector professionals who work with marginalised members of our community. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £1,500.00 | See Appendix: A | |
| Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | See 1.4 | | |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To provide a forum for Voluntary and Community sector representatives to engage with relevant college staff in order to raise awareness of HE opportunities among target groups. | | |
| Activity: New or Ongoing i.e undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate in either the NEW or ONGOING box |
| | Ongoing | X | |
| Other Activity Type | | | |
| Name of any collaborative partner | Partners have included: Ashton Training and Employment, Belfast City Council, British Red Cross, Conway Education Centre, Donegall Pass Community Forum, East Belfast Mission etc | | |

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|--|
| (ii) Name of Programme/Project | Careers & Employability Service outreach activity, including direct engagement with post-primary schools and Area Learning Communities to promote HE opportunities to WP Target Groups. | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | Students from Quintile 1; Young males from Quintile 1; Care-experienced learners. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £6,000.00 | See Appendix: | A |
| Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | See 1.4 | | |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To engage with Area Learning Communities throughout the academic year and to facilitate at least six visits to secondary schools in order to promote HE opportunities to target groups. | | |
| Activity: New or Ongoing i.e undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate in either the NEW or ONGOING box |
| | Ongoing | X | |
| Other Activity type | | | |
| Name of any collaborative partner | Belfast Area Learning Communities; Post-primary schools. | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|--|
| (iii) Name of Programme/Project | Moving on Up at the Met | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | All target groups currently undertaking Level 3 programmes of study at Belfast Met. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £15,000.00 | See Appendix: | A |
| Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | See 1.4 | | |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To increase the numbers of students from WP target group backgrounds enrolling on Belfast Met HE programmes. | | |
| Activity: New or Ongoing i.e undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate in either the NEW or ONGOING box |
| | Ongoing | X | |
| Other Activity type | | | |
| Name of any collaborative partner | Belfast Met curriculum delivery teams. | | |

| | | | | |
|------|--|---|----------------------|--|
| (iv) | Name of Programme/Project | Wellbeing/Inclusive Learning Outreach Programmes | | |
| | Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Aspiration Raising | | |
| | Target Groups | Quintile 1 Learners; Students with disabilities; Young Males from Quintile 1. | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £39,000.00 | See Appendix: | A |
| | Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | Wellbeing and Inclusive Learning Teams deliver a range of outreach activities to engage with stakeholders and prospective target group students to promote College courses. | | |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To develop outreach networks and direct engagement opportunities with target groups to enhance recruitment amongst these cohorts. | | |
| | Activity: New or Ongoing i.e. undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate in either the NEW or ONGOING box |
| | | Ongoing | X | |
| | Other Activity type | | | |
| | Name of any collaborative partner | Extern, Cara Friend, H&SC Trust, MACS, Women's Aid, St Vincent De Paul, Cedar Foundation, Belfast Adult Advice Service, Belfast Autism Forum | | |

| | | | | |
|-----|--|----------------|----------------------|--|
| (v) | Name of Programme/Project | | | |
| | Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | | | |
| | Target Groups | | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £0.00 | See Appendix: | |
| | Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | | | |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| | Activity: New or Ongoing i.e. undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate in either the NEW or ONGOING box |
| | | Ongoing | | |
| | Other Activity type | | | |
| | Name of any collaborative partner | | | |

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

| | | | | |
|------|--|---|----------------------|--|
| (i) | Name of Programme/Project | Student Resilience Building Project - facilitated by Wellbeing Team | | |
| | Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Attainment Raising | | |
| | Target Groups | All Target Groups | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £39,000.00 | See Appendix: | A |
| | Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | See 1.4 | | |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To enhance retention amongst WP target groups on Level 3 programmes by building resilience in order to facilitate transition to HE. To ensure that every HE student in need of support has access to Resilience Building Workshops. | | |
| | Activity: New or Ongoing i.e undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate in either the NEW or ONGOING box |
| | | Ongoing | X | |
| | Other Activity type | | | |
| | Name of any collaborative partner | Curriculum delivery teams; Inspire Counselling. | | |
| (ii) | Name of Programme/Project | Disability support for HE learners who are not in receipt of DSA funding. | | |
| | Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Attainment Raising | | |
| | Target Groups | | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £49,500.00 | See Appendix: | A |
| | Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | See 1.4. Approximately 90 HE02 students who do not receive DSA are supported annually by the Inclusive Learning team at a cost of £550 per student. | | |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To ensure successful completion of HE programmes by students affected by disability and/or long-term medical conditions but who do not qualify for DSA. | | |
| | Activity: New or Ongoing i.e undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate |
| | | Ongoing | X | |
| | Name of any collaborative partner | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|---|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (iii) | Name of Programme/Project | | | |
| | Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiraton Raising, Attainment Raising | | | |
| | Target Groups | | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £0.00 | See Appendix: | |
| | Brief description of activity <i>If not already included in Section 1.4</i> | | | |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| | Activity: New or Ongoing i.e undertaken last year | New | | Please insert an 'X' as appropriate |
| | | Ongoing | | |
| | Name of any collaborative partner | | | |

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

| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|----------------------|---|
| (i) | Title of Research Activity | Widening Participation - Student Voice | | |
| | Research Target Group | All WP Target Groups | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £5,000.00 | See Appendix: | A |
| | Description Brief description of research programme | Annual College Student Satisfaction Survey; annual Inclusive Learning survey; Class Representative meetings and feedback/responses from curriculum & support staff. | | |
| | Expected Research Outcomes | These mechanisms provide a framework for WP students to voice concerns, identify good practice and inform operational planning to support target groups in-year and going forward. | | |

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 | £25,000.00 |
| Estimated 'other' costs please specify below | |
| | |
| | |
| Total: | £25,000.00 |

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>i.e this will be a total that detailed at 2.3(a)</i> | £109,850.00 |
| Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on scholarships <i>i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.3(b)</i> | £0.00 |
| Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on 'other financial support' to students <i>i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.3(c)</i> | £0.00 |
| Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on outreach <i>i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.4</i> | £61,500.00 |
| Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on post entry retention activities <i>i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.5</i> | £88,500.00 |
| Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on research activity <i>i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.6</i> | £5,000.00 |
| Estimated amount of additional fee income to be spent on Staffing and Administration <i>i.e this will be a total of that detailed at 2.7</i> | £25,000.00 |
| Total estimated direct expenditure(£) | £289,850.00 |
| Total estimated direct expenditure as a proportion of additional fee income % | 17.99% |

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 (£) |
|--|-------------------|
| Inspire Counselling (students) contract. | £75,000.00 |
| | |
| | |
| Total Expenditure (£) | £75,000.00 |

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO PROVIDE ESTIMATED FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26

IN PART 3, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ACTUAL EXPENDITURE ON WIDENING PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/23

PART THREE**WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN****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 (£) | £1,116,400.00 |
| Estimated additional fee income (£) | £1,361,610.00 |
| Variance | (£245,210.00) |

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

Projected intake for 2022-23 was 1,242 for specified courses. Actual enrolment was 1,025.

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 | £4,630.00 | £2,845.00 | 60 | £170,700.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| | | | | £0.00 |
| Additional fee income from students charged the maximum higher fee (£) | | | 60 | £170,700.00 |

(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 |
|---|-----------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| BSc Fashion | £2,765.00 | £980.00 | 34 | £33,320.00 |
| Foundation Degree | £2,765.00 | £980.00 | 451 | £441,980.00 |
| HND | £2,765.00 | £980.00 | 480 | £470,400.00 |
| Additional fee income from students charged the maximum higher fee (£) | | | 965 | £945,700.00 |

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 <i>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</i> | BSC Social Work | 34 | £463.00 | £15,742.00 |
| | BSC Other | 11 | £277.00 | £3,047.00 |
| | Foundation Degree | 72 | £277.00 | £19,944.00 |
| | HND/HNC | 91 | £277.00 | £25,207.00 |
| | Diploma in HE | 9 | £277.00 | £2,493.00 |
| | | | | |
| Other low income groups <i>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</i> | BSC Social Work | 1 | £463.00 | £463.00 |
| | BSC Other | 2 | £277.00 | £554.00 |
| | Foundation Degree | 11 | £277.00 | £3,047.00 |
| | HND/HNC | 15 | £277.00 | £4,155.00 |
| | Diploma in HE | 3 | £277.00 | £831.00 |
| Adult Learners | | | | £0.00 |
| Students with Disabilities | | | | £0.00 |
| Young Males from low | | | | £0.00 |
| Other -eg Care Leavers | | | | £0.00 |
| Other -please insert | | | | £0.00 |
| Total | | 249 | | £75,483.00 |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Estimated bursary expenditure as detailed in your 2022/23 WAPP (£) | £116,170.00 |
| Actual bursary expenditure for 2022/23 (£) | £75,483.00 |
| Variance between estimated and actual bursary spend | (£40,687.00) |
| | -35.02% |

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

Recruitment for FT Higher Education courses in 2022-23 was significantly below target, as detailed above. Consequently, expenditure on bursaries was also below target.

(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 | | | £0.00 |
| 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 | 0 | | £0.00 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Estimated Scholarship expenditure as detailed in your 2022/23 WAPP (£) | £0.00 |
| Actual Scholarship expenditure for 2022/23 (£) | £0.00 |
| Variance between estimated and actual Scholarship spend | £0.00 |
| | #DIV/0! |

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

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

(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 |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Estimated Other expenditure as detailed in your 2022/23 WAPP (£) | £0.00 |
| Actual Other expenditure for 2022/23 (£) | £0.00 |
| Variance between estimated and actual Other spend | £0.00 |
| | #DIV/0! |

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

| |
|--|
| |
|--|



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.

0

Outreach Activities

(i)

| | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Name of Programme/ Project | Pathways to Education | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Outreach - Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | Community and Voluntary sector professionals working with marginalised groups. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £1,000.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £1,000.00 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To facilitate engagement with professionals who can encourage participation in HE by members of marginalised groups. | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Covid limitations prevented event from going ahead - resources diverted to engagement with ALCs. | | |
| Variance | | | £0.00 |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

(ii)

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Name of Programme/ Project | CES Outreach strategy. | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Outreach - Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | Marginalised members of society who do not see HE as a realistic option. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £6,000.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £6,000.00 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To deliver 6 or more Taster Workshops. | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Campus "Roadshows" held to encourage engagement by existing Level 3 learners with staff delivering HE programmes. | | |
| Variance | | | £0.00 |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

(iii)

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Name of Programme/ Project | Wellbeing Outreach | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Outreach - Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | All WP groups. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £48,000.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £48,000.00 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Wellbeing Team members engage with WP target groups to support them through the application process and transition to college. Mainly responsible for outreach and engagement activities over summer months. | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Some in-person activities curtailed by Covid restrictions but team members engaged extensively online with prospective HE students from WP backgrounds. | | |
| | | | Variance £0.00 |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

(iv)

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Name of Programme/ Project | Good Relations Programme | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Outreach - Aspiration Raising | | |
| Target Groups | Community and Voluntary sector professionals working with WP groups. | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £12,859.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £12,859.00 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | College Good Relations and Equality Officer to engage throughout the year with with external stakeholders to promote HE opportunities and pathways to WP groups. Expenditure calculated as 25% of salary costs. | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Engagement with a broad range of stakeholders took place throughout the year. | | |
| | | | Variance £0.00 |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

(v)

| | | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------------|-------|
| 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 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Variance | £0.00 |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | |
| | |

(vi)

| | | | |
|--|-------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Name of Programme/ Project | | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Target Groups | | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £0.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £0.00 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| Variance | | £0.00 | |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

(vii)

| | | | |
|--|-------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Name of Programme/ Project | | | |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Target Groups | | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £0.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £0.00 |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| Variance | | £0.00 | |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

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 | Student Wellbeing - Student Resilience Building Project. | | | 0 |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Attainment Raising | | | |
| Target Groups | All WP cohorts | | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £48,000.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £48,000.00 | |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To continue to increase the % of HE WP students supported by the Student Wellbeing Team. To ensure that all WP HE students have access to a place on Resilience Building Workshops. Expenditure calculated as 20% of salary costs over a ten-month period. | | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Comparable % of WP HE students were supported by Wellbeing in 22/23 as were supported in previous year. | | | |
| | | | Variance | |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------|-----------------|---|
| (ii) Name of Programme/ Project | Digital Readiness - Device Allocation Scheme | | | 0 |
| Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Attainment Raising | | | |
| Target Groups | Low income cohorts | | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £26,000.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £26,000.00 | |
| Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | Provide free devices to students who meet criteria in order to boost retention on Level 3 and HE programmes. | | | |
| Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | All devices issued. Expenditure target met through combination of human and digital resource costs. | | | |
| | | | Variance | |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|--|--|-------------------------------|------------|
| (iii) | Name of Programme/ Project | Inclusive Learning Support for HE Learners with a disability who are not in receipt of DSA funding. | | |
| | Activity type/s: Pre-Entry e.g. Aspiration Raising, Attainment Raising | Attainment Raising. | | |
| | Target Groups | Students with disabilities. | | |
| | Estimated Expenditure (£) | £33,000.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £50,050.00 |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | To enhance retention among WP HE students who experience barriers to learning but who cannot access DSA funding. | | |
| | Actual Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | 91 students, rather than 60, were supported in 22/23 at an estimated cost of £550 per student. | | |
| | | | Variance | £17,050.00 |
| | Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | The higher than estimated total arises from the steady and sustained growth in the numbers of HE students who present with disabilities but who do not meet the threshold for DSA. | | | |

| | | | | |
|------|---|-------|-------------------------------|-------|
| (iv) | 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 |
| | Target Outcomes (Should be quantifiable) | | | |
| | Name of any collaborative partner | | | |
| | | | Variance | £0.00 |
| | Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | | |



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

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Title of Research Activity | Student Voice surveys | | |
| Research Target Group | HE Learner from WP backgrounds | | |
| Estimated Expenditure (£) | £2,571.00 | Actual Expenditure (£) | £2,571.00 |
| Target Research Outcomes | Annual College Student Satisfaction Survey; Inclusive Learning (disabilities) Survey; Student Wellbeing Survey; | | |
| Actual Research Outcomes | Surveys undertaken and responses used to inform service delivery plans with focus on needs of WP students. | | |
| | | | Variance |
| | | | £0.00 |
| Explanation of any variance identified (if less than/greater than 10%): | | | |
| | | | |

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 | £19,425.00 | £19,425.00 |
| Total Actual Direct expenditure (£) | £19,425.00 | £19,425.00 |

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

| Actual Direct Expenditure | Estimated (£) | Actual (£) |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| Actual spend on bursary support to students (£) <i>this will be a total of that detailed at table 3.3(a)</i> | £116,170.00 | £75,483.00 |
| Actual amount of additional fee income spent on scholarships (£) <i>this will be a total of that detailed at 3.3(b)</i> | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Actual amount of additional fee income spent on other direct support (£) <i>this will be a total of that detailed at table 3.3(c)</i> | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Actual amount of additional fee income spent on outreach (£) <i>this will be a total of that detailed at table 3.4</i> | £67,859.00 | £67,859.00 |
| Actual amount of additional fee income spent on retention and success (£) <i>see table 3.5</i> | £107,000.00 | £124,050.00 |
| Actual amount of additional fee income spent on research (£) <i>see table 3.6</i> | £2,571.00 | £2,571.00 |
| Actual amount of additional fee income spent on Staffing and Administration (£) <i>see table 3.7</i> | £19,425.00 | £19,425.00 |
| Total Direct expenditure committed in 2022/23 (£) | £313,025.00 | £289,388.00 |
| Total Direct expenditure committed in 2022/23 (%) | 22.99% | 25.92% |
| Total Underspend in 2022/23 (£) <i>(if appropriate)</i> | | £0 |
| Total Underspend carried forward from 2022/23 (£) <i>(if appropriate)</i> | | £0.00 |
| Total Underspend to be reallocated in 2022/23 (£) | | £0.00 |

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.

| Description of Expenditure | Amount (£) |
|--|--------------------|
| College contract with Inspire Counselling (Students) | £100,000.00 |
| | |
| | |
| Total Actual Indirect Expenditure (£) | £100,000.00 |

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 | Actual enrolment only slightly below target set. |
| 500 | 485 | |

(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 | Above target recruitment indicates increased HE participation rates by students disclosing disability. |
| 225 | 265 | |

(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 | Target surpassed due to ongoing and sustained growth in numbers of students with disabilities joining HE programmes. |
| 92 | 123 | |

(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 | Falling HE enrolment figures post-Covid (and prior to the return to a full examinations and assessment regime) has had a significant adverse impact on our recruitment of this target group. |
| 140 | 110 | |

(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 | Significantly above target. |
| 950 | 1075 | |

(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 | Data not collated for 2022-23 due to technical reasons. |
| 7 | N/A | |

(vii) Group:
Target/Milestone:

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

(viii) Group:
Target/Milestone:

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

(ix) Group:
Target/Milestone:

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

(x) Group:
Target/Milestone:

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

PART FOUR**WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN
Validation**


In submitting this Widening Access and Participation Plan the Department expects:

- a. Comment from the Student Union Body; and
- b. Confirmation from the institution that all the information has been compiled in accordance with our guidance, that it has been subject to an independent internal validation process.

4.1 Comment by the Student Union Body


This part of the form must be completed by the student body with a signature included from the Student President

Belfast Met is highly active in promoting Higher Education opportunities and pathways to students from Widening Participation backgrounds. The outreach activities and projects outlined in this report are complemented by the advice, encouragement and direction provided by teaching and support staff on a daily basis to students on further education courses who may not have regarded HE as a realistic option before joining Belfast Met. The Students' Union is also encouraged by College staff to reach out to and engage marginalised groups with a view to helping these students to access the support needed to enrol, remain and succeed on HE courses.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Name: | ETHAN KEELTY |
| Position: | Student Sabbatical Officer |
| Signed: |  |
| Date: | 4/2/25 |

4.2 Validation

In signing this form you are confirming that all of the information you have compiled in accordance with our guidance, has been subject to an independent internal validation process and has been signed off and approved as correct prior to any submission to DfE.

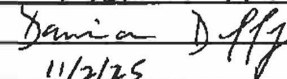
| | |
|-----------|---|
| Name: | DAVID MC DOWELL |
| Position: | HEAD OF LEARNER SUCCESS |
| Signed: |  |
| Date: | 4/2/2025 |

4.3 WIDENING ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN 2025/26 - 2027/28

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Institution: | |
|--------------|--|

Sign-off (to be completed on paper copy only, by head of institution, or appropriate deputy)

I enclose the Widening Access and Participation plan for the above named institution.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Name: | DAMIAN DUFFY |
| Position: | INTERIM PRINCIPAL / CHIEF EXECUTIVE |
| Signed: |  |
| Date: | 11/2/25 |