

Access Agreement: Colchester Institute

1. Context

1.1 The College

Colchester Institute is a large mixed-economy college with approximately 1,030 full time equivalent (FTE) indirectly funded students on prescribed higher education (HE) programmes. It is anticipated that from September 2012 the College will return 220 FTE through a direct numbers allocation and 890 FTE through indirect allocation via the University of Essex; a similar additional change is anticipated for future years.

Following the January 2010 merger with Braintree College, Colchester Institute now operates over four main sites. These are located at Sheepen Road, Colchester, Church Lane, Braintree and at both Church Road and Thomas Road in Clacton-on Sea.

The College has run HE programmes for approximately 45 years, with the aim of providing local opportunities for higher level study. Degree level provision has been consistently recognised as being of high quality, whether through QAA reviews (in partnership or with a direct focus on the College), institutional or programme level reviews by our partner university and through internal student feedback and the College has an established reputation within the sector.

The College has undertaken, through its vision statement, to become better known as a provider of exception, exciting, vocational learning opportunities and has established vocational provision in the context of an HE strategy that underpins widening participation. The College therefore continues to provide opportunities for those students who might otherwise not progress to Higher Education, or for whom the traditional university experience is not appropriate (or desired), in addition to specialist vocational provision that serves local, regional and national industry.

1.2 Access and Admissions

Colchester Institute is a college of further and higher education which welcomes applications for its full and part-time courses from all sections of the community. The College is committed to ensuring that every student is on the most appropriate course relevant to their academic ability and aspirations for their future.

The College aims to ensure that all actual or potential learners are treated in an equivalent fashion, regardless of: age, socio-economic background, disability; family responsibility, marital status, race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, and/or any other irrelevant criteria. The purpose of the Colchester Institute Admissions Policy for Higher Education is to provide a customer-focused framework for admitting applicants and to promote a consistent and fair approach to recruitment.

As a college with a strategic remit of widening participation in higher education, the levels of participation by under-represented groups indicate how successfully the College is meeting that remit. The age and income profiles of higher education students differ markedly from HE sector averages:

- Mature students make up 39% of 2011-12 HE full time new entrants (186 students aged over 21yrs on 30th September 2011).
- 47% of HE full time students in 2010-11 had a verified family income of below £25,000 (433 students reported by SLC).

The proportions of students from post codes with low levels of adult HE qualification or young participation rates (POLAR2) are also well in excess of sector averages (see Appendix 4):

- 43% of full time students in 2011-12 are from the bottom two quintiles of Adult HE Qualification QAHE (213 Q1, 201 Q2)
- 40% of full time students are from the bottom two quintiles for Young Participation (QYPR).

1.3 Partnerships

The College enjoys a strategic and complementary partnership with the University of Essex and offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes validated and quality assured by the University. The College has contributed to the Access Agreement submitted to OFFA by the University. It should be noted that for the majority of our students, the Access arrangements will be underpinned by the information as indicated in the aforementioned agreement. This document refers to the proportion of student numbers allocated directly to the College for 2012-13 and thereafter, assumed to be 220 FTE in the first instance.

Colchester Institute has established strategic partnerships with schools and sixth form providers in Braintree, Colchester and Tendring to increase student access to its provision across the range of further and higher education programmes. 60% of successful level 3 students from the College currently progress directly to Higher Education, a figure which considerably exceeds recorded progression rates from similar institutions, and emphasises the importance of the College's mixed economy environment in effectively widening participation.

The College has also established very positive relationships with local, regional and national employers. These relationships have informed programme development and review, thus underpinning vocational relevance, but also provide the basis for employer sponsorship of degree level study for individuals and groups as part of professional development.

2. Key Objectives

This Access Agreement complements the Colchester Institute Strategic Plan for Higher Education and furthers ongoing activity embraced by the College as an organisation that by its nature supports the widening of access and opportunity to learning.

The activity in this document therefore considers:

- the promotion of higher level study through outreach activity supported by effective information, advice and guidance
- fee levels and discounts that consider the need for financial accessibility and related pre-application and post-enrolment guidance and support
- the improvement of retention, progression and success rates

3. Tuition Fees

Colchester Institute is committed to its degree level students and continually works to improve the student experience. The College has therefore set fees at a level which does not exceed that received in 2010-11 in terms of indirect funding and fee income, with the specific aim of maintaining and further developing the quality of the student experience whilst recognising the barrier that higher fees may erect for potential students.

For undergraduate Home and EU students entering in 2012, to study full-time for a Foundation Degree or Honours Degree validated by the University of Essex, Colchester Institute proposes to charge a fee of £7,500. Students admitted to study full-time for HNC or HND through Edexcel will be charged £6000. It is the intention of the College to charge part-time students studying at 50% (or greater) intensity a pro rata fee level. Benefits indicated in this document will equally apply to these students.

In relation to this agreement, the estimated number of full time students who will be paying the fee of £7,500 is approximately 183 students in 2012-13 increasing to a steady state of almost 500 students in 2014-15; the number of students who will be paying the fee of £6000 is up to 37 students in 2012-13 increasing to a steady state of up to 74 students in 2014-15. Both projections are subject to variation pending the pattern of applications.

For students entering in 2012 the tuition fee is subject to permitted real term increases in subsequent years. The tuition fee for students entering in 2013 onwards will be under review and confirmed in the 2013-14 Access Agreement.

3.1 Expenditure of Additional Income

As specified in Table 3d of Annex B, from 2012, an initial total of 42% of income above the basic fee, rising to over 46% in 2014, will be spent on fee waivers, outreach and retention as described in the following sections. 22% of the income will be allocated to the retention activities listed in section 7.2 below of which the Apple iPad and Pebblepad Personal Learning Systems form the major part. Outreach activities representing over 8% of the extra income are described in Section 4.2 below

4. Outreach

4.1 The target areas

The College works to provide information, advice and guidance on progression to higher levels of study to students attending schools and sixth form colleges within the catchments served by its eleven campuses, particularly within the Braintree, Colchester and Tendring districts.

The Tendring and Braintree areas, in particular, do not enjoy high levels of progression to Higher Education [Appendices 1,2] and it is the intention of the College to raise awareness of and familiarity with progression opportunities through a move to situate shorter sub-degree programmes, such as HNC/D at campuses in these areas. Outreach within this activity is particularly targeted at:

- students from low income backgrounds;
- students from low participation neighbourhoods;

The College aims to continue to pursue existing short-term outreach activity but is also looking to participate in longer term high impact activity through work with primary schools within the immediate College Catchments, active participation in the Children's University, the development of an HE mentoring scheme and, as lead sponsor, close engagement with the Colchester Academy (itself located in a low-participation area). Outreach within this activity is particularly targeted at:

- students from low participation neighbourhoods;
- parents/carers and families of targeted participants;
- teachers and advisers from targeted schools

Pre-application outreach activity will aim to reduce perceived barriers to higher education and to raise awareness of the ways in which study at a higher level can support the holistic development of the individual beyond the development of curriculum specific expertise. It is of particular importance that there is effective promotion of loans available for part-time students. The College will offer ongoing support during the applications process in order to reduce the issues raised for individuals or families when faced with formal procedures such as loan applications. Outreach within this activity is particularly targeted at:

- students from low participation neighbourhoods;
- parents/carers and families of targeted participants;
- part-time students

4.2 Activities

Outreach activity will include:

- a) Development of a team of student ambassadors to continue to support the work started under the AimHigher Scheme in developing the expectations and awareness both within the College and at local schools and sixth forms.
- b) Extension of ongoing school links activity will further develop awareness of progression opportunities to higher education and the support available for such progression. Actions will include direct engagement with the local Information, Advice and Guidance teams, presentations from the HE Management Team to sixth forms within local schools/colleges and engagement with local and regional Careers/Progression Events.
- c) The provision of Open Events specifically targeting progression to Higher Education regionally and locally will complement progression activities designed to inform students who might progress within the College and across all campuses. Such Open Events will, on at least two occasions, include taster activities.
- d) Development of mentoring opportunities. The scheme will be developed to support placement of students, studying at degree level, as mentors in schools without sixth forms. This project will be designed to raise aspirations and provide role models in a range of curriculum areas. The project is intended to start with the allocation of mentors to The Colchester Academy, a school situated in an area of deprivation and for whom Colchester Institute is lead sponsor.
- e) Provision of support for individuals intending to apply to higher education but for whom either the UCAS process or the application for financial support provides a significant barrier. Attendees at open events will be advised that they can contact the College's Financial Advice team for one to one support. The College will also be supporting National Finance Day through distributed events at its two main campuses.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of Outreach Activity:

As a mixed economy college, the admissions profile indicates a high proportion of students progressing from local and regional sixth forms and further education colleges. The College recruits less than 0.25% students from private sector or grammar schools.

Collected intake data [Appendices 1,2] provides the College with the opportunity to assess those areas from which there is a very low intake. It is of particular note that, in September 2011, the intake from Braintree (previously Braintree College) is less than 1% whilst there are no applicants progressing from Clacton or Dovercourt Schools.

Whilst marketing activity and resultant admissions are monitored and reported, and the College continues to work to affect an intake appropriate to its mission and which holistically serves its catchments, there has been insufficient analytical activity undertaken to effectively evaluate the impact of outreach work. The College will therefore move to invest in internal mechanisms to manage outreach targets and monitor progress.

Monitoring mechanisms will be expected to evaluate the following outcomes against activities:

- changes to patterns in application (timing, programmes, mode, level)
- changes in perception of high education for participants in outreach activity
- progression rates from schools, colleges and sixth forms in the region
- changes in patterns of progression by postcode

Recommendations will be used to revise outreach activity for future years.

5. National Scholarship Programme

The College is keen to promote local and internal (College) progression and has indicated, in its contribution to the existing University of Essex Access Agreement, that the National Scholarship Programme should be used to support this aim. The College expects 15 funded scholarships through its partnership with the University of Essex and will fund a further 15 scholarships through that agreement. Awards will comprise a one year benefit comprising of a fee discount of £1500, a £1000 cash bursary plus £500 travel voucher.

It is intended that 15 scholarships will be awarded to promote aspiration and attainment as learners look to progress within the College and that 15 are awarded to students progressing from local sixth forms, thus raising the profile of the HE in FE pathway and the understanding of “Higher Education” in its various forms. This allocation will apply across the combined directly/indirectly allocated student number base with the agreement of the University.

If the bid for direct numbers to which this agreement relates is successful, government funding for 19 scholarships will be awarded which the College will match with a further 19 places. The breakdown will be as described in the two paragraphs above.

6. Discounts

Colchester Institute will provide a discount of £1500 for all students enrolling on the Year 0 or Foundation Year Art and Design programmes and is looking to develop further opportunities for Year 0 entry across the vocational spectrum. The College recognises that subject areas within the genre of Creative Industries can be more expensive for incoming students and will provide a start-up pack for Art and Design students in their first year of study (£200 per student) and an Events Season Ticket (£50 per student) for all incoming students studying within Music and Performing Arts.

Under-represented groups on Level 0 courses appear in similar proportions to the College’s HE population as a whole. Approximately 45% of students have a verified family income below £25,000. More than 40% are from the bottom two quintiles for Adult HE Qualification and Youth Participation and mature students account for almost 50%. See Appendix 4 for further details of under-represented groups on HE courses at Colchester Institute.

2011-12 Level 0 Art, Design and Media enrolments

Polar2 Analysis					
QAHE	Total		QYPR	Total	
1	11	22%	1	8	16%
2	10	20%	2	13	26%
3	21	42%	3	13	26%
4	5	10%	4	13	26%
5	3	6%	5	3	6%
Total	50		Total	50	

QAHE - Adult HE qualification quintile 1(low)-5(high)
QYPR - Young participation quintile 1(low)-5(high)

2011-12 Level 0 Age Distribution 46% Mature

Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	25	26	27	28	29	30	33	34	37	39	41	45	47	53	62	Tot
#	16	7	1	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	50

7. Retention and achievement

7.1 Statistical Context

As an institution with a strategic remit to widening participation in higher education, the College has set entry criteria for its programmes such that admissions tutors can recruit on the basis of threshold ability rather than on the basis of competition for places. Thus the UCAS tariffs required for admission are lower than would be expected at a traditional higher education institution with the tutorial and study support mechanisms being well developed.

The College has developed an analysis of UCAS tariff on entry against continuation/success rates after the first year of study which supports action planning and targeting of retention activity. The analysis for 2010-11 is provided as an example. [Appendix 3]

Target groups for additional support are indicated as young entrants with UCAS points on entry of <200 studying on first degree programmes and entrants of all ages with between 100 and 160 points on other undergraduate provision, the former being the most statistically significant group. This data combined with the analysis of intake by school/college and postcode, indicates the need for an effective skills audit before the start of the first semester and effective personal targeting setting and review through Personal Development Portfolio activity. [7.2d]

Colchester Institute monitors the success rate (combined retention and achievement against designated programme length) of students using internally produced metrics which provide programme level detail for programme management purposes. Senior Management provide summarised statistical data of this type for Corporation Board consideration. Data returned to the Corporation Board measures success from the point of enrolment (rather than against the December census point) and indicates improving trends for full-time and part-time students.

Success*	2008-09 Targets	2008-09 Actuals	2009-10 Targets	2009-10 Actuals	2010-11 Targets	2010-11 Actuals	2011-12 Targets	2012-13 Targets
HE FT Success	65%	74%	75%	75.4%	75.5%	76%	76.5%	77%
HE PT Success	70%	78%	78.5%	78.6%	79%	80%	80.5%	81%

* From point of enrolment

Activity indicated within this document aims to result in an improvement in overall success of 2-4% over the next 3 years.

7.2 Student Consultation

The College has appointed two part-time HE Student Union Officers to a 50/50 job shared role. Both are currently enrolled HE students on Colchester Institute degree programmes. The Officers participate in all College HE committees and provide liaison and support to the elected student class representatives.

The Officers and student reps have been consulted about the Access Agreement in terms of the retention activities described below including the provision of mobile devices to new students and the on-line learning system. Their input has played a key role in the planning and development of the new HE Centre contributing to the specification of wireless networking to support the new devices and assisting in designing the layout and fitting of the new learning and study areas as well as the social spaces.

7.3 Activity

Colchester institute is pleased to follow the advice provided through OFFA that 'additional' income might be used to support retention. In order to effectively pursue targets as agreed by the Corporation Board, the College will be taking the following steps:

- a) Undertake primary research into patterns of student non-progression, both within the College and across the mixed economy sector with resultant development of a Retention Strategy
- b) The provision of an HE Centre, at a development cost of over £1.4 million, to support facilitation of an HE Student Community and provide bespoke HE facilities. These will include a "one-stop-shop" for information and advice; quiet and group study areas and social space together with HE teaching space. Many cohorts have less than 20 students in their learning group and therefore students having difficulties can more easily become isolated. The development of family mentoring groups and interdisciplinary activity through the development of the Centre is seen of particular value. This project has been established as a direct response to this need and following discussion with student representatives.
- c) Provision of mobile technologies (Apple iPads) to all first year students to support a more flexible approach to learning and to meet the need for the increased utilisation of ILT as a means of supporting retention. All students will be supported through Moodle and will be able to access learning materials and activities, participate in personal learning networks and access their own Personal Learning System through the use of this technology. As the College embraces continuing numbers of applications from 'mature' students, our awareness of the pressures of additional work, family needs and the tensions of maintaining pace with student activity has developed. The provision of mobile technologies is aimed to support a fundamental change in the way that learners interact with their peers, tutors and develop their own personal learning network both within and beyond the College
- d) Provision of a Pebblepad Learning System for each student in order to support pre-registration study skills support, on programme target setting and personal development planning, reflexivity and activity that underpins 'My Next Step'. The establishment of study skills support needs prior to arrival at the College will enable a more effective tutorial and learning support process at a time that is often found very daunting for those from a widening participation background. This is particularly relevant for mature students on sub-degree programmes and our younger students on first degrees who join the College with a lower UCAS tariff (below 200 points).

Direct feedback on the HE Centre, the use of mobile technologies and the use of Pebblepad will be sought from student representatives. As each becomes established, there will be the opportunity to refine the use of the facility to enhance the learning experience.

7.3 Monitoring of activity underpinning retention and achievement

Colchester Institute will continue to use the metrics described above. However, the process of being awarded a direct student number allocation will enable the College to join the benchmarking activity being undertaken by the Mixed Economy Group of Colleges. This will allow for evaluation of retention and successful completion against the peer group.

Statistical analysis and associated action plans will be evaluated at all levels. Programme teams undertake analysis of programme levels success data at the HE Board of Study in each academic Centre. This is further considered at the Higher Education Sub-Committee and presented, in the Autumn Term, to the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee of the Corporation Board, before being presented to the Board itself. Institution level targets are set at this stage.

Appendix 1.

Colchester Institute Higher Education Full Time New Entrants 2011-12 Previous School or College

FIRST DEGREE NEW ENTRANTS		OTHER UNDERGRADUATE NEW ENTRANTS	
SCHOOL or COLLEGE	Total	SCHOOL or COLLEGE	Total
COLCHESTER INSTITUTE (CI)	93	STATE SCHOOL	18
OTHER FE COLLEGE	88	COLCHESTER INSTITUTE (CI)	10
STATE SCHOOL	62	OTHER FE COLLEGE	9
COLCHESTER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE (VI)	27	COLCHESTER SIXTH FORM COLLEGE (VI)	9
CHELMSFORD COLLEGE (FC)	10	OTHER SIXTH FORM	4
SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE (FS)	9	SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE (FS)	3
OTHER SIXTH FORM	8	OTHER UNIVERSITY	2
UNIVERSITY	8	CHELMSFORD COLLEGE (FC)	2
OVERSEAS SCHOOL (OS)	7	OVERSEAS SCHOOL (OS)	2
WILSON MARRIAGE ADULT COMMUNITY CENTRE (DV)	5	GOSFIELD SCHOOL (NC)	1
WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE (FW)	4	COLCHESTER ACADEMY (DL)	1
BRAINTREE COLLEGE (FB)	4	BRAINTREE COLLEGE (FB)	1
		WILSON MARRIAGE ADULT COMMUNITY CENTRE (DV)	1
NEW RICKSTONES ACADEMY (JI)	1	TBG LEARNING (GK)	1
ST JOSEPHS COLLEGE (KE)	1	UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX	1
WRITTLE COLLEGE (MY)	1		
THURSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (LT)	1	Grand Total	65
HOME EDUCATED (GG)	1		
MALTINGS ACADEMY (JN)	1		
BOSWELLS SCHOOL (THE) (JC)	1		
SAWYERS HALL COLLEGE (HK)	1		
ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL (LI)	1		
Grand Total	334		

Appendix 2.

Colchester Institute HE Enrolments by Postal Region 2011-2012

ATTENDANCE	REGION	Total	ATTENDANCE	REGION	Total
Full Time	CO	706	Part Time	CO	214
	CM	140		IP	52
	IP	59		CM	43
	SS	17		SS	4
	RM	12		NR	3
	NR	5		CB	3
	ME	3		EN	2
	NW	3		SE	2
	E1	2		SG	2
	CT	2		RM	1
	RH	2		PE	1
	BN	2		AL	1
	SN	2		SL	1
	IG	2		E2	1
	SW	2		E9	1
	PE	2		E7	1
	LU	2		W5	1
	TN	1		NG	1
	BT	1		Part Time Total	334
	EN	1		CO Colchester	
	CW	1		CM Chelmsford, Essex	
	CB	1		IP Ipswich, Suffolk	
	N1	1		SS Southend, Essex	
	WF	1		RM Romford, Essex	
	N2	1			
	SE	1			
	N4	1			
	SO	1			
DL	1				
KT	1				
DN	1				
UB	1				
BR	1				
AL	1				
E7	1				
Full Time Total	981				

Appendix 3.

Colchester Institute New Entrants Continuation Rates 2010 to 2011

COURSE	First Degree	
Age	Young	
Tariff Points	Continued	Continuation
Band	YES	Rate
>0	16	76%
>100	22	71%
>160	11	73%
>200	4	100%
>230	15	83%
>260	7	88%
>290	32	97%
Total	107	82%

COURSE	First Degree	
Age	Mature	
Tariff Points	Continued	Continuation
Band	YES	Rate
>0	5	83%
>100	5	83%
>160	4	80%
>200	1	100%
>230	3	100%
>260	2	100%
>290	4	100%
Grand Total	24	89%

COURSE	Other Under Graduate	
Age	(All)	
Tariff Points	Continued	Continuation
Band	YES	Rate
>0	18	82%
>100	7	64%
>160	5	63%
>200	4	100%
>230	8	80%
>260	2	50%
>290	7	78%
Grand Total	51	75%

Appendix 4 Colchester Institute Enrolments 2011-12 Under-Represented Groups Analysis

QAHE - Adult HE qualification quintile 1(low) - 5(high)			
Attendance	QAHE	Total	%
Full-Time	1	213	22%
	2	201	21%
	3	283	29%
	4	167	17%
	5	108	11%
Full-Time Total		972	
Part-Time	1	63	19%
	2	65	19%
	3	84	25%
	4	75	22%
	5	52	15%
Part-Time Total		339	
Grand Total		1311	

QYPR - Young participation quintile 1(low) - 5(high)			
Attendance	QYPR	Total	%
Full-Time	1	199	20%
	2	195	20%
	3	227	23%
	4	255	26%
	5	96	10%
Full-Time Total		972	
Part-Time	1	55	16%
	2	67	20%
	3	81	24%
	4	96	28%
	5	40	12%
Part-Time Total		339	
Grand Total		1311	

The adult qualification level classification is based on the proportion of people aged 16-74 with HE qualifications from the 2001 Census Key Statistics Table 13

The young participation classification is based the participation in HE of young people who reached 18 between 2000-2004

Sources:

HEFCE Widening Participation Classification File. Postcode lookup of POLAR2 and HE-qualified adults, 2001 Census Area Statistics Wards.

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/polar2>

Colchester Institute Student Records 25/11/2011

Table 5 - Milestones and targets

Table 5a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, UCAS or internal targets)

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Low-income backgrounds	The Tendring and Braintree areas do not enjoy high levels of progression to Higher Education. Tendring contains several of the most deprived wards in England. It is the intention of the College to establish sub-degree programmes including HNC/HND at the colleges Clacton-on-Sea and Braintree campuses.	2011	No HE Provision in Tendring or Braintree	37	74	74	74	74	Subject to the success of the Core/Margin bid, the college intend to offer EdExcel HNC/HND courses in a range of subjects in Clacton-on-Sea and Braintree. The target is the number of students studying on HNC/D programmes at the two campuses. In 2010-11, 47% of full-time HE students at Colchester Institute had a verified family income below £25,000. The targets for the new recruitment from Tendring and Braintree are set to equal or exceed this proportion. The figures for each year represent the rolling total of combined enrolments on all courses.
Other (please give details in the next column)	Colchester Institute monitors the success rate (combined retention and achievement against designated programme length) of students using internally produced metrics which provide programme level detail for programme management purposes. Senior Management provide summarised statistical data of this type for Corporation Board consideration. Data returned to the Corporation Board measures success from the point of enrolment (rather than against the December census point) and indicates improving trends for full-time and part-time students.								
		2010	FT: 76%	76.5%	77%	77.5%	78%	78.5%	
		2010	PT: 80%	80.5%	81%	81.5%	82%	82.5%	

