

# *Access to Higher Education Diploma Provision in the East of England*

*A study of provision, progression and attitudes*

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October 2008



## Introduction

MOVE is an organisation funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to maximise opportunities for learners in the East of England to progress to higher education through vocational routes and to support and promote an increase in participation in higher education. This aim, to widen participation and increase workforce skills through 'targeting students from non-traditional backgrounds and build new and improved progression routes', is reflected in the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) *Shared Vision* document<sup>1</sup>. The East of England region consists of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

The percentage of working adults qualified to at least level 4 in the East of England is below the national average<sup>2</sup>. The *Working Futures*<sup>3</sup> document sets out employment projections which highlight a dramatic need to increase workforce skills in the East of England as there will be a declining share of employment for those with no qualifications or qualifications below level 2 and a significant increase in employment opportunities for workers at level 3 and above. *The Leitch report*<sup>4</sup> also highlighted the need for a more highly skilled workforce to meet the needs of a globalised economy in the 21st century.

One of the initiatives in the East of England which has helped address the problem of low skill levels and facilitated progression into higher education has been the continuing development of Access courses. Access courses have provided 'a valuable entry route to Higher Education for many students, particularly those mature learners who missed out at 18'<sup>5</sup>. This view is supported by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Balance and Mix document in 2007 which highlighted Access to HE provision as a 'critical and important component of progression'. The potential for progression that Access provision offers to MOVE's key learner constituents, non-traditional and 'return to study' learners, is therefore very evident.

There are now currently 128 QAA-recognised Access to HE Diploma courses<sup>6</sup> offered in the East of England by three Access Validating Agencies (AVA) licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to validate Access to HE programmes. The Cambridge Access Validating Agency (CAVA) and Open College Network Oxford, Thames and Chiltern (OCNOTC) are members of the Federation of Access Validation Agencies and the Open College Network Eastern Region (OCNER) is a licensed member of the National Open College Network (NOCN) as well as being licensed as an AVA by the QAA. In addition to Access to HE Diplomas, there are other validated and non-validated courses which provide opportunities to progress to higher education. These courses can be delivered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) themselves or by other providers and may commonly be referred to as 'access' or 'bridging' courses.

A number of proposals were made to the MOVE Development Fund to establish new Access to HE programmes. As a result, it became apparent that, although the availability of Access courses across the region is excellent, there is a lack of awareness about the provision that already exists and accurate information regarding the programme is not always accessible to learners, providers or stakeholders. The situation is further complicated because terms such as 'access' and 'bridging' are used to describe a variety of courses designed for disparate purposes. The research completed for the Access to HE Diploma Course Information Report<sup>7</sup>, highlighted the need for more curriculum development collaboration between Further Education Colleges (FECs) and providers of higher education in order to provide better progression opportunities from the level 3 Access to HE Diploma into higher education.

Following discussion and with the cooperation and collaboration of AVAs, HEIs, FECs<sup>8</sup> and students on Access to HE courses across the region, it was agreed to initiate this research project to highlight some of these issues and provide an accessible source of information for all stakeholders. It is hoped that this report will offer greater clarity about the terms used, give useful information about the purpose and nature of Access provision and provide a clear and holistic picture of Access provision in the East of England. This will help individual learners and their advisers when making career and professional development decisions and support employers and providers to plan future curriculum developments which reflect the specific needs for professional, personal and business development.

## Aims of the project

The original aims<sup>9</sup> of the project were (a) to research and analyse the availability and suitability of bridging and Access provision across the East of England and (b) to commission the design and accreditation of provision necessary to fill identified gaps and support curriculum change to existing provision where appropriate.

## Objectives of the project

In order to achieve these aims, the following objectives were agreed:

- To clarify the availability of Access courses across the East of England
- To research attitudes towards learners progressing from Access into higher education
- To gather statistical data which would examine the retention and progression of Access students
- To suggest ways of improving the information, advice and guidance available to learners who wish to progress to and from an Access course
- To define the terms 'Access', 'access' and 'bridging' to help clarify practice and facilitate curriculum development

The project team consider that these objectives have been addressed and are considered in detail in the main body of the report.

## Methodology

The project took an action research approach, using a rigorous and systematic process of research and review to facilitate reflection on the availability, delivery, suitability and success of Access provision in the East of England. Regular project team meetings enabled reflection on formative findings and activity and provided a forum to monitor progress and review original aims and objectives to inform ongoing strategy.

A combination of desk and field research was undertaken. Desk research was essential to begin the process and this information was confirmed and developed through field research, including interviews with AVAs and questionnaires<sup>10</sup> to colleges, tutors delivering Access courses, students studying on Access courses and higher education institutions. The questionnaires were developed following discussion with colleagues, colleges and validating agencies and were disseminated in various ways, for example, in person, via the MOVE website and by email.

As a result of the research, and as further information was requested by partners, this dynamic approach to the project's focus led to positive changes which added value to the results but did not substantially affect the original aims and objectives of the project. The amendments were tracked through an Action Plan<sup>11</sup>, which was considered and updated at every meeting.

For example, it was agreed (Minutes 12 December 2007) that objectives relating to the approach taken by HEIs towards Access students and colleges delivering Access and the amount of information, advice and guidance (IAG) which was available to learners could be achieved within the scope of the project and should be added but that approaching Access students now studying higher education in FECs and HEIs would prove to be too difficult within the time constraints of the project and lack of resource to support this element. Questions relating to information, advice and guidance were therefore included in questionnaires to Colleges, HE in FE and HEIs to ascertain how relationships were developing between colleges and institutions to inform Access students about progression and to improve progression opportunities. Furthermore, an analysis of information, advice and guidance currently available on Access to HE provision and progression into HE/employment might provide an insight into some of the trends in subject uptake/withdrawal and learner achievement.

Although initially the project intended to focus on the sectors within our remit, which are Health and Social Care (HSC), Creative and Cultural Industries (CCI), Sustainable Built Environment (SBE) and Land-based Indus-

tries (LBI), it became obvious that this was not possible as Access students on Humanities and other courses often progressed to vocational courses and those on vocational Access courses progressed to non-vocational courses in higher education. It was therefore agreed that the research would include all Access courses and would not concentrate on HSC, CCI, SBE and LBI, as originally intended.

## Understanding and use of terminology

In the initial stages of the project web-based research was undertaken to try to find out what provision existed across the region which was not accredited as a QAA recognised Access to HE Diploma (60 credits) but could be used as an access to higher education or a bridging or foundation course which facilitated progression into higher education. This research proved that there was no accepted consistency of use of terminology and therefore web research on individual institutions' and other websites was difficult. There also seemed to be no internal exchange of information which would facilitate a web search to interested learners.

Debate surrounding the purpose, nature and content of this provision, together with these research findings, highlighted the need to clarify the phraseology used in this field, because access and bridging are terms used in varying contexts and to describe very different levels and volumes of learning. Information on the findings of this research is included in Appendix 5.

To address the need for clarification, the definitions offered below were developed and agreed with participants in the project. It is hoped that these definitions will stimulate further debate and lead to a better understanding and more consistent use of the terminology in this area.

### QAA-recognised Access to HE Diploma (formerly known as Access Certificates)

An Access to HE Diploma is a level 3 qualification to prepare learners who may have no formal qualifications for entry to higher education courses. Some Access to HE Diploma courses are subject-specific, allowing progression to a particular higher education course, while others provide general preparation for higher education. Most full-time Access to HE Diploma courses take one year to complete, with part-time study often available. All Access courses are now validated as Access to HE Diploma with the title in brackets. To be awarded the Diploma learners must achieve 60 credits, of which a minimum of 45 credits must be gained at level 3.

### Other 'access' or 'bridging' courses

In general terms, a bridging course is a short, intensive skills upgrade course to bridge the gap between a learner's existing qualification and the entry level set for a particular course. Examples of bridging courses include: a summer/preparatory course to bring learners to a uniform starting level prior to a higher education

course, a two-week module to assist learners progressing from an HNC/HND/NVQ to a degree course or a workshop to allow learners to progress from a level 3 to a level 4 qualification.

More specifically, bridging provision could also be categorised into the following types:

- Preparatory bridging provision – designed to ensure learners are performing competently at level 3 and have the study skills necessary in order to move successfully to level 4
- Conversion bridging provision – bridging to a higher award or change of discipline or both, for example from HNC to Degree, from a Building to a Surveying Degree, from an undergraduate degree in Business to a Masters in IT respectively or a vocational award at level 3 into an undergraduate award at level 4
- Development bridging provision – where some units of a higher level are built into a qualification at a lower level in preparation for progression to the higher level

The decision was made following this debate to focus this project on Access to HE courses that are QAA-recognised. This developed from a growing awareness that access provision falling outside the QAA-recognised awards is difficult to define since the parameters are unknown and are usually the result of a specific set of circumstances. For the purposes of this report, therefore, the term 'Access to HE' refers solely to QAA-recognised Diplomas as this term is kitemarked by the QAA.

## National policy and Access to HE Diplomas

The first Access to HE courses were developed in the 1970s, originally to widen participation into teacher training. Their success led to courses being established in other vocational and general subject areas and, in 1989, a national framework was adopted. This framework has been the responsibility of the QAA since 1997.

As a level 3 qualification, designed to enable matriculation into higher education, which is quality assured by the QAA but funded by the LSC, Access to HE Diplomas present something of an anomaly. Many saw the parallel processes of the standardisation of the Access Diploma as a credit based award alongside the development and emergence of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), which uses the same metric as higher education (the 10 hour credit) to quantify learning, as an opportunity to address this.

There is a clear case for Access to HE Diplomas to be within the remit of the QCF alongside all other level 3 qualifications from which learners may progress to higher education. However, at the time of writing, although this anomaly is generally acknowledged, there are no immediate plans for Access to HE Diplomas to migrate to the QCF. It would be helpful if this issue were to be resolved before the full implementation of the QCF in 2010.

In addition, government policy on funding issues and the difference in funding systems between further education courses (funded by the LSC) and higher education courses (funded by HEFCE) can be confusing and misleading for both learners and providers. The complexities arising from different funding strategies can cause misunderstandings and may lead to Access provision not being fully exploited to stimulate and respond to student demand.

Many changes are being implemented during 2008/9 and 2009/10 which will impact on funding of Access to HE Diplomas and the effect on Access provision is not yet clear. The LSC funding framework<sup>12</sup> has three funding streams: 16 – 18 year old learners; the adult learner-responsive model and the employer-responsive model. The Access to HE Diploma is included in the Adult Learner-Responsive category which includes provision branded in 2007/8 as further education adult provision. Within this group Access is categorised as one of the high priority groups, although not the highest priority category, attracting full fee remission for:

- Adult learners without a full level 2 qualification
- 19 – 24 year old Adult Learners without a full level 3 qualification.

There was a general view that being omitted from the highest priority category had not impacted on the numbers of adult learners registering for the Access to HE Diploma. However, there is a problem for those learners under 19 years of age who may wish to apply for Access because the Access to HE Diploma is not accredited by QCA nor approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Therefore, although applications from 16+ learners are possible, under the current legislation these learners are deemed ineligible for funding on Access and the LSC has other preferred qualifications for under-19s.

Other issues arising from the implementation of this funding strategy, which may affect the future of Access to HE Diploma provision, include work-based learning which cannot be included within the adult learner-responsive category as it is funded through the employer-responsive category and future arrangements agreed in the context of the UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (UKVQRP)<sup>13</sup>. The government is undertaking a radical reform of vocational qualifications in the UK through the UKVQRP which is coordinated through a programme board and managed by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).

The LSC has also asked providers to limit the numbers of part-time courses where retention is lower and this has also impacted on numbers of learners. In addition, there is now only one census date per year (1 October) for registration of student numbers and students will need to have been registered for six weeks to be included. This will have an impact on providers because it is no longer possible to claim partial completion funding.

A further issue is the lack of funding for pre-Access programmes which have always provided a clear progression route into Access to HE Diplomas. This is now impacting on Access courses because learners may not have sufficient preparation for level 3 study and therefore are more likely to fail and drop out before completion. Even those with prior experience of studying in higher education face funding problems. If learners wish to change career and take a vocational Access to HE Diploma as preparation for a second degree, funding is only available in certain areas where there are skills shortages and these may change from year to year.

The LSC recognises 'the importance of Access to HE provision as a critical part of the DIUS, HEFCE and LSC Joint Progression Strategy' and identifies it as 'a critical and important component of progression' which 'should be secured and consolidated'<sup>14</sup>. However, if the Leitch agenda is to be achieved and these principles adhered to, action needs to be taken to ensure that opportunities to study the Access to HE Diploma are increased and facilitated. As one of the main reasons for students leaving or not progressing into higher education is financial, resolving issues surrounding funding of both colleges and individuals will make Access to HE study more accessible.

## Discussion, reflection and analysis

### Access to HE provision in the East of England

An analysis of Access to HE provision currently available in the East of England shows that, of the seven level 2 and level 3 sectors identified by the East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership (EESCP), only one sector (Health and Social Care) has specific Access to HE Diplomas designed to meet its needs.

The priority sectors<sup>15</sup> include:

- Construction /Built Environment
- Retail
- Logistics
- Health and Social Care
- Hospitality
- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Land-based Industries

The majority of Diplomas are within the Humanities and Social Sciences and Combined Studies (31%) sectors. These enable access to a wide range of degree courses. Twenty-seven per cent of courses are in Health & Social Care, Medicine and Nursing and this reflects the NHS strategy of recruiting and training local staff. This strategy has resulted in HEIs recruiting from within the region and actively targeting local colleges, including Access courses, to maximise recruitment from the local pool, as this is seen as providing the stable workforce

required by healthcare delivery services. There are also a number of MOVE Progressions Accords and other agreements in place which facilitate progression through to higher education within this sector.

The remaining sectors do not have linked Access courses, although the newly developed Access to HE Diploma (Land-based Studies) developed by CAVA<sup>16</sup> and partner colleges with the help of funds from MOVE will be delivered at several colleges across the region (see case study) and an Access to HE Diploma (Popular Culture and Heritage) has been validated for delivery in the region.

Other subject and vocational Access to HE Diploma currently available include the Sciences (13%), Education and Creative and Cultural, each at 8%, Business (5%), Computing 2% and Law 1%.

Analysis of these statistics shows that, although the needs of some priority sectors are being addressed, there is a need for higher education institutions, Access providers and the validating agencies to continue to work closely together to ensure that there is synergy between employer needs, Access provision at level 3 and the higher education programmes identified as progression from them. Progress is being made and some research is being carried out. For instance, fdf undertook research on the extent to which Foundation degrees are explicitly referenced as potential progression routes or work-based learning. As part of this research, guidance on the curriculum design and content of work-based Access to Higher Education courses (WBAHE) is being produced which will be available on the web and as a printed document when finalised. This research project does not therefore include any analysis of the curriculum content, assessment and management of the Access to HE Diploma.

### Analysis of the learner profile in the East of England

The total number of learners registered on Access to HE courses in 2006-7 in the Eastern region represents approximately 13% of the total number of learners registered on QAA-recognised courses in England.

The learner profile analysis is based on statistics relating to students on QAA-recognised Access to HE programmes in the East of England during 2006-7 and is derived from data provided by annual reports for CAVA and OCNER and national Access to HE statistics provided by QAA<sup>17</sup>.

In order to bring a more personal perspective to the statistics, information relating to students studying Access to HE diplomas in the East of England during 2007-8 was also obtained from a student questionnaire<sup>18</sup> disseminated to all colleges across the region.





It was difficult to draw specific regional conclusions from the information received from HE providers. This was partly due to the fact that of the HEIs and HE in FE colleges approached only a small proportion replied. It was further complicated by the structure of some HE providers who were unable to give overall admission figures for Access learners. In some cases, HEIs included partner college admissions figures within their own records.

The results of the questionnaires suggest that, whilst showing caution in accepting applications to some courses, the figures do not reflect a high rejection rate into their programmes. Of the HEIs who responded, all stated that they accepted Access students into their undergraduate awards and most treated them no differently from any other applicants. For certain programmes of study applicants from Access courses were more likely to be admitted following an interview. Several institutions guaranteed interviews for successful Access students. One made conditional offers based on successful completion of the Access course. However, all institutions offering higher education are subject to the Fair Access legislation, overseen by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) which aims to promote and safeguard fair access to higher education for under-represented groups, and this should ensure that Access learners are treated with fairness and equity. Additional qualifications were required into specific awards at some universities including Maths and English at GCSE or equivalent and in some highly technical subjects an A level in Mathematics may be a requirement. Only one University named a specific course to which an Access qualification was insufficient to gain entry.

AVAs have worked hard to address issues where specific academic requirements are requested and the new Access to HE Diplomas are designed to meet the requirements of HEIs, professional bodies and employers. Furthermore, cooperation and collaboration have resulted in universities becoming more aware of the needs of applicants and several institutions delivering higher education courses now have specific familiarisation courses to support Access students.

The information received from higher education institutions indicated that most have informal arrangements with providers of Access and several indicated that more formal agreements had been agreed or were under negotiation. This was supported by the analysis of the responses from the Access tutors from the 31 colleges delivering Access courses which showed that although only 3 had formal Progression Accords with HE in place, some were in the process of negotiating agreements and the majority (26 of the respondents) thought that Progression Accords would be useful.

#### **Information, advice and guidance**

Students confirmed that word of mouth is still the most common way of learning about Access (33%) with the Web (20%) growing in prominence and college visits (16%) also a significant factor. Specific adviser centres such as Careers Centre/Next Step/Connexions/Adult Learning Centres accounted for only 5% of students being advised about Access. One of the most innovative sources was a leaflet from a child's school.

Colleges reported that they worked closely with the validating agencies to ensure that programmes were monitored and evaluated on a regular basis and most meet regularly. Colleges did not often meet with each other or advertise each other's courses, but one college did advertise courses delivered at other colleges which they did not offer themselves. This highlights that although colleges and validating agencies collaborate and are well informed about Access to HE Diploma, there seems to be no direct link between colleges, AVAs and the prospective student.

The project team has monitored the availability of information about Access to HE Diploma throughout the project. This monitoring process has shown that information about Access is improving and is becoming more accessible through providers' websites and prospectuses. However, there seems to be little marketing and publicity about the availability of Access study and from statements made by tutors and validating agencies this may be due to lack of funding for marketing purposes.

A significant development is that since compiling the Access Diploma Course Information Report for this project, QAA has launched a new Access website <https://ava.qaa.ac.uk/SubSites/PublicSearch/search.aspx> which provides comprehensive, clear and accurate information and advice to learners considering an Access to HE Diploma that includes a definitive list of Access to HE Diploma courses available both nationally and in the East of England. It is hoped that alternative formats based on the information available on the website become more widely disseminated and that the Access to HE Diploma achieves a higher profile as a consequence.

## **Conclusions and next steps**

This study of the Access to HE Diploma in the East of England reflects a very positive learner appreciation of the opportunities for personal and career development that an Access to HE Diploma provides. However, there are several areas of concern relating to government strategy, especially in relation to funding for both colleges and individuals, which could undermine opportunities for learners from non-traditional backgrounds, who are the main targeted audience for Access to HE Diplomas.

If the government wishes to achieve its declared aim of developing a highly skilled workforce then investment must be increased for those learners who are either seeking to change career or who missed out on higher education first time around. An Access to HE Diploma provides a proven route into higher education. It is both demanding of, and designed for, non-traditional learners who are seeking a more flexible and innovative route into higher education.

Lack of funding for part-time Access to HE Diplomas may also impact on learners, providers and other stakeholders who are more likely to be attracted to a part-time Access Diploma which enables them to work and retain staff whilst encouraging personal and career development.

Funding should also be made available for additional marketing of Access to HE Diplomas across the region as a means of progressing into higher education. Although college websites and prospectuses now give a higher profile to Access to HE Diplomas, there seems very little additional marketing to the wider public. 'Word of mouth', although effective, is not the most efficient way of ensuring that the possibilities available through an Access to HE Diploma reach the appropriate audience.

One of the challenges when researching this project was whether courses could be recognised as one course with several pathways or several different individual courses. Course recognition has become easier with the review and revalidation of Access to HE Diplomas which now specify the pathway in brackets. This should help learners and advisers trying to identify appropriate courses. Additionally, more clarity in the use of terminology relating to Access and bridging provision will make it easier for learners to research available opportunities.

A further issue was lack of consistency in the information available from various sources and how this could be interpreted in a logical and meaningful way. Templates and the information provided by colleges and AVAs for monitoring purposes differed and made reconciling the figures and statistics difficult at times. However, the QAA revalidation process has brought clarity and consistency to the monitoring of the Access to HE Diploma. All Access to HE Diplomas must meet the common criteria stipulated by QAA in curriculum design. The revalidation process has also ensured that academic standards are maintained and that management of information meets QAA requirements for quality assurance and monitoring.

Most learners were extremely satisfied and confirmed that the course on which they were studying was meeting their needs, giving them confidence and preparing them well for future study at a higher level. Individual criticism related to lack of organisation, changes in tutors and rooms and not being sure that all elements of the course were relevant to their future plans. However, it would be useful to have been able to follow this through with a further project and to contact the learners who had replied to our questionnaire during 2008/9 to determine (a) if they had progressed into higher education (b) if not, why not (c) if they had progressed, where to and on what course and (d) if they still feel that the Access to HE Diploma had fully prepared them for further study.

A project based on information gained from these Access learners could facilitate further analysis of information on Access to HE provision and progression into HE/employment and might provide an insight into some

of the trends in subject uptake/withdrawal and learner achievement. A further gap in the knowledge about learner achievement is whether Access learners stay within the education system, achieve Honours awards and move into rewarding jobs as a result.

This study highlights how colleges and universities, supported by organisations such as MOVE, are increasingly working together to meet the changing needs of a global economy in the twenty-first century. However, more collaboration between employers, providers and validating agencies is essential to ensure that progression routes exist in priority sectors through all levels. MOVE development funding and Progression Accords and other developments across the region have made significant inroads into this need but if the Leitch aims are to be met, continued effort and resource from all stakeholders will be required.

In conclusion, we believe that the Access to HE Diploma has a continuing role to play in lifelong learning and vocational progression and it is hoped that this report will be used to support future developments and encourage a regional, strategic perspective. MOVE has provided development funds, brokered Progression Accords, improved clarity in the use of credit and provided accurate information and guidance about progression opportunities arising from Access to HE Diplomas. It is hoped that this report will highlight the work undertaken by the validating agencies, colleges, and learners and help to guarantee the continuing success of Access to HE Diplomas in the East of England.

#### **Acknowledgement**

The authors of this study would like to thank members of partner colleges, higher education institutions, tutors, students and validating agencies in the East of England who completed questionnaires and provided information and without whose help and support this study could not have been completed.



# Appendix 1

## Access to HE Diploma course information report

Provider name	Delivery venue	Awarding body	Course title	Subject Area	MOVE Progression Accord (PA)
Adult Community Learning Essex	Essex	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Barrfield College	Barrfield	OCNER	Access to HE (Health Studies)	Health and Social Care	
Barrfield College	Luton	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Barrfield College	Luton	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Social Studies)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Bedford College	Bedford	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Bedford College	Bedford	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Health Care Professions)	Health and Social Care	
Bedford College	Bedford	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
Bedford College	Bedford	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Teacher Education)	Education	
Bedford College	Bedford	OCNOTC	Access to HE (Social Sciences)	Sciences	
Braintree College	Braintree	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Art & Design)	Art and Design	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Business Management)	Business	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Nursing)	Nursing	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Social Work)	Health and Social Care	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Teaching)	Education	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Environmental Science)	Sciences	
Cambridge Regional College	Cambridge	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Chelmsford College	Chelmsford	OCNER	Access to HE (Health and Care Professions)	Health and Social Care	Progression Accords to BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing, Dip HE Nursing and BSc (Hons) Midwifery at Anglia Ruskin University
Chelmsford College	Chelmsford	OCNER	Access to HE (Humanities)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Chelmsford College	Chelmsford	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Science)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Chelmsford College	Chelmsford	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Chelmsford College	Chelmsford	OCNER	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Art & Design)	Art and Design	Progression Accord to FD Arts and Wellbeing at City College Norwich
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Science for Health Practitioners)	Health and Social Care	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Medicine)	Medicine	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Social Work)	Health and Social Care	
City College Norwich	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Business Computing)	Business	
Colchester Institute	Colchester	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	Progression Accords to BSc (Hons) Nursing and Dip HE Operating Department Practitioner at Anglia Ruskin University
College of West Anglia	Kings Lynn	CAVA	Access to HE (Art & Design)	Art and Design	
College of West Anglia	Kings Lynn	CAVA	Access to HE (Medicine)	Medicine	
College of West Anglia	Kings Lynn	CAVA	Access to HE (Dentistry)	Medicine	
College of West Anglia	Kings Lynn	CAVA	Access to HE (Land-based Studies)	Land-based	
College of West Anglia	Lowestoft	CAVA	Access to HE (Science and Nursing)	Nursing	
College of West Anglia	Kings Lynn	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities & Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Dunstable College	Dunstable	OCNER	Access to HE (Humanities and Social Science)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Dunstable College	Dunstable	OCNER	Access to HE (Teacher Education)	Education	
Dunstable College	Dunstable	OCNER	Access to HE (Nursing, Midwifery & Professions Allied to Medicine)	Nursing	
Easton College	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (3D and Interior Design)	Art and Design	
Easton College	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Land-based Studies)	Land-based	Progression Accord to FdSc Sustainable Engineering at Easton College
Easton College	Norwich	CAVA	Access to HE (Landscape Design)	Land-based	
Epping Forest College	Epping	OCNER	Access to HE (Health Studies)	Health and Social Care	
Epping Forest College	Epping	OCNER	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	

Provider name	Delivery venue	Awarding body	Course title	Subject Area	MOVE Progression Accord (PA)
Epping Forest College	Epping	OCNER	Access to HE (Education)	Education	
Epping Forest College	Epping	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Science)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Great Yarmouth College	Great Yarmouth	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities & Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Great Yarmouth College	Great Yarmouth	CAVA	Access to HE (Life Sciences)	Sciences	
Great Yarmouth College	Great Yarmouth	CAVA	Access to HE (Social Work)	Health and Social Care	
Great Yarmouth College	Great Yarmouth	CAVA	Access to HE (Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Life Science)	Sciences	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Science)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Health and Social Care Professions)	Health and Social Care	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Education Professions)	Education	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Computing)	Computing	
Harlow College	Harlow	OCNER	Access to HE (Humanities)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Herford Regional College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
Herford Regional College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (English & Humanities)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Herford Regional College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Nursing & Health Studies)	Nursing	
Herford Regional College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
Herford Regional College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Studies)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Herford Regional College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Teaching)	Education	
Huntingdonshire Regional College	Huntingdon	CAVA	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
Huntingdonshire Regional College	Huntingdon	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities and Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	Progression Accord to BA (Hons) Social Work at Anglia Ruskin University
Huntingdonshire Regional College	Huntingdon	CAVA	Access to HE (Nursing and Healthcare)	Nursing	Progression Accords to Dip HE Operating Department Practice, Dip HE Nursing (Adult, Mental Health or Learning Disabilities) and BSc (Hons) Midwifery and BSc Nursing (Adult, Mental Health or Learning Disabilities) at Anglia Ruskin University
Lowestoft College	Lowestoft	CAVA	Access to HE (Art & Design)	Art and Design	
Lowestoft College	Lowestoft	CAVA	Access to HE (Life Sciences)	Sciences	
Norfolk Adult Education Service	Norfolk	OCNER	Access to HE (Health Professions)	Health and Social Care	
Norfolk Adult Education Service	Norfolk	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Professions)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
North Herts College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
North Herts College	Herford	OCNER	Access to HE (Health Professions)	Health and Social Care	
Oaklands College	Oaklands	OCNER	Access to HE (Art & Design)	Art and Design	
Oaklands College	Oaklands	OCNER	Access to HE (Health Professions)	Health and Social Care	
Oaklands College	Oaklands	OCNER	Access to HE (Biological Science)	Sciences	
Oaklands College	Oaklands	OCNER	Access to HE (Health Studies)	Health and Social Care	
Oaklands College	Oaklands	OCNER	Access to HE (Humanities & Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
Otley College	Otley	CAVA	Access to HE (Land-based Studies)	Land-based	Progression Accords to FdSc-Agriculture (Crop Production, FdSc Horticulture (Plantsmanship, Tree Culture) at Writtle College and FdSc Sustainable Land Use Management at Otley College
Otley College	Otley	CAVA	Access to HE (Landscape Design)	Land-based	Progression Accord to FdA Landscape and Garden Design at Otley College
Peterborough Regional College	Peterborough	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities and Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	Progression Accord to BA (Hons) Social Work at Anglia Ruskin University
Peterborough Regional College	Peterborough	CAVA	Access to HE (Professional Social Care)	Health and Social Care	Progression Accord to BA (Hons) Social Work at Anglia Ruskin University
Peterborough Regional College	Peterborough	CAVA	Access to HE (Professional Health Studies)	Health and Social Care	Progression Accords to Dip HE Operating Department Practice, Dip HE Nursing (Adult, Mental Health or Learning Disabilities) and BSc (Hons) Midwifery and BSc Nursing (Adult, Mental Health or Learning Disabilities) at Anglia Ruskin University
Peterborough Regional College	Peterborough	CAVA	Access to HE (Computing with Business)	Computing	
Peterborough Regional College	Peterborough	CAVA	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	



Provider name	Delivery venue	Awarding body	Course title	Subject Area	MOVE Progression Accord (PA)
SE Essex Partnership NHS Trust	Essex	OCNER	Access to HE (Mental Health Studies)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Health & Social Care)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Humanities)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Midwifery)	Nursing	Progression Accord to BSc (Hons) Midwifery at Anglia Ruskin University
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Nursing and Health-related Applications)	Nursing	Progression Accords to BSc (Hons) Nursing, Dip HE Nursing at Anglia Ruskin University
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Work)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	Bentley	OCNER	Access to HE (Teaching)	Education	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Media)	Art and Design	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Art & Design)	Art and Design	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Studies)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Health & Nursing)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Teaching)	Education	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Work)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
SEEVIC	South East Essex College	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
SEEVIC	Ipswich	OCNER	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
SEEVIC	Thurrock	OCNER	Access to HE (Teaching)	Education	
SEEVIC	Thurrock	OCNER	Access to HE (Health and Social Care)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	Thurrock	OCNER	Access to HE (Nursing and Midwifery)	Nursing	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Science & Health Professions)	Sciences	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Business Studies)	Business	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Computer Studies and ICT)	Computing	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Work and related professions)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Art and Design)	Art and Design	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Law)	Law	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Social Science)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Business and Law)	Business	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Business Studies)	Business	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Business and Computer Studies)	Business	
SEEVIC	West Herts College	OCNER	Access to HE (Primary Teaching)	Education	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Combined Studies)	General	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Humanities & Social Sciences)	Humanities and Social Sciences	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Nursing)	Nursing	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Counselling)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Sport, Health and Exercise)	Health and Social Care	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Science)	Sciences	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Land-based Studies)	Land-based	Progression Accord to FdSc Sustainable Engineering at Easton College
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE (Popular Culture and Heritage)	Creative and Cultural Industries	
SEEVIC	Bury St Edmunds	CAVA	Access to HE	General	
SEEVIC	Writtle College	CAVA	Access to HE (Land-based Studies)	Land-based	Progression Accord to FdSc Garden Design at Writtle College

## Appendix 2 MOVE Access and Bridging Project Plan

### Aims

1. To research and analyse the availability and suitability of bridging and access provision to enable vocational progression in the East of England
2. To commission the design and accreditation/validation of provision necessary to fill identified gaps and support curriculum change to existing provision where appropriate

### Objectives

1. To conduct detailed desk research to map all existing provision from FE, HE, private providers and validating agencies (e.g. CAVA, OCNER)
2. To conduct detailed field research with all types of provider/agency to determine inter alia curriculum content, design, level and credit volume, delivery methods, intended learners, intended and/or available progression routes
3. To gather statistical data and other relevant information about student throughput and progression to HE on existing programmes
4. To conduct field research with current, intending and completed students on existing provision to determine qualitative data about the perceived purposes and fitness for purpose of existing provision
5. To identify gaps that may exist in existing provision
6. To identify duplication and overlap in existing provision and propose rationalisation and/or collaborative development activity
7. To propose and support the formal accreditation/validation of all provision that is currently not accredited
8. To propose models and make recommendations for the development of new provision
9. To support collaborative regional activity in commissioning and developing new provision
10. To produce a range of outputs consistent with the project aims and objectives above based on research findings and emerging needs in the area including a full glossary and clear definitions and information about all courses available
11. To ensure Access and Bridging information is included in MOVE information to learners
12. To identify HEI attitudes to Access courses and access students at both corporate and Faculty/School level
13. To support the development of vocational Access provision across the region where appropriate
14. To conduct an analysis of Access Information and Guidance provision and undertake field research to determine fitness for purpose from a student perspective













## Appendix 9 Case studies



### Access to HE student case study

**Mrs Keeley Knowles**, *Access Main Course, Colchester Institute, Essex*

Before I started the Access to HE course I was working on a part-time basis for a solicitor's and studying part-time for an AS Level Psychology at the Friary Adult Community College, Maldon. I had nine GCSEs, a Personal Assistant's Diploma, an NNEB Diploma and AS Level Psychology.

I was recommended an Access course by the Friary and by the University of Essex. It was an entry requirement of the University of Essex to have completed an accredited Access course and was therefore necessary for me to undertake it to go on to higher education.

Through the Access experience I have enjoyed meeting other people who are in a similar position to me, managing work, study and family life, and being encouraged by the tutors to believe in myself and to strive to reach my full potential. The structure of the course has prepared me well for the pressures and demands of higher education whilst greatly increasing my self-confidence. The hardest aspect was adjusting to studying at A Level standard and re-arranging my life to accommodate work and study whilst bringing up my two boys, but this all worked out well.

Since starting the course, I have accepted an offer for a Sociology degree at the University of Essex to start in September 2008 and am considering teaching at secondary school level in the future.

In ten years time, I hope to be enjoying a career in education.

I would like to add that the dedication and support of the Access Curriculum Managers has been inspirational and I would recommend the Colchester Institute to mature individuals of all ages who are serious about returning to study, because although it is challenging and overwhelming at times, the tutors give you lots of encouragement, guidance and reassurance to help you to succeed. Overall, it has been a very positive experience that has prepared me better than I had hoped for university life.

### Access to HE student case study

**Antoinette Theresa Hewitt**, *Access to higher education course, including GCSE maths, English and science. Specialist subject taken; English language and literature, psychology, communications and media studies. Studied at Colchester Institute, Essex*

Before I started the Access to HE course I worked in a primary school as a teaching assistant and midday assistant. I did not have any qualifications. I found out about Access to HE courses through a friend. I have always wanted to gain some qualifications and, whilst working in the school, I realised I wanted to be a teacher.

Once the access course has finished, I plan to go to Essex University to study for a Humanities degree. The disciplines I would like to choose are English Literature, History of art and Italian language. What I have gained most from the Access experience so far is the realisation that I am an intelligent person and realising my potential; the courage, confidence and self-esteem I have developed; the many friends I have made.

The hardest aspect is that I am a single parent with four children, and although I am a disciplined person, the time constraints put upon me, due to assignment deadline and amount of work, has left little, or no time for leisure or relaxation.

In 10 years time I see myself as either a deputy head teacher or a head of department.

If anyone was wondering if they should embark on an access course, I would advise them to do so. It has been one of the turning points in my life and one of the best things I have ever done.

## CAVA land-based Access to HE supported by MOVE development funding

Jill Cox, Quality Assurance and Development Officer, CAVA

### Overview

Previously there were no Access to Higher Education courses in the land based sector amongst our members in the Eastern Region. CAVA was initially approached by Otley College to discuss the possibilities of creating this new progression route through to their existing Foundation Degrees at Otley. Following meetings with staff at Otley College, and initial research in the area CAVA felt that a progression route gap had presented itself. In response to this identified need CAVA bid for MOVE development funding to create and validate a new land based Access to HE course.

### Context and rationale

The land-based sector is served by a wealth of education programmes in both FE and HE delivered at specialist institutions in both sectors that have a strong record of widening participation. In the Eastern region, land-based colleges have a long history of working together to create access and progression opportunities. As part of what is now the Aimhigher initiative, the LandLearn Partnership was established between Writtle, Otley, Easton and the College of West Anglia to raise the profile of land-based courses and promote land-related industries as employment opportunities. This is now being reinvigorated as part of the MOVE Lifelong Learning Network. Work on curriculum alignment will facilitate FE to HE, and Foundation to Honours degree progression for vocational learners in key areas such as Agriculture, Horticulture, Design, Equine Studies, Animal Management and Environmental Conservation.

The development of a common Access course has created an additional progression route to HE for non-traditional learners wishing to access land-based HE programmes, thus extending the range of Lifelong Learning opportunities within the sector across the Eastern region.

Statement of objectives and outcomes

The key objectives were:

- To design bespoke land-based Access to HE provision to meet the needs of existing and new Foundation Degrees.
- To facilitate progression from this provision on to the aforementioned FDs.
- To increase recruitment into the sector by attracting both part-time and full-time non-traditional learners.

The minimum target of learners in Year 1 for each college offering the new provision

Recruitment: 14 FTEs

Achievement: 8

## Appendix 10 Glossary of acronyms

AVAs	<b>Authorised Validating Agencies</b> develop Access to HE Diplomas for delivery in Further Education Colleges. AVAs in the East of England include CAVA, OCNER and OCNOTC.
CAVA	<b>The Cambridge Access Validating Agency</b> is approved by QAA as an Authorised Validating Agency. CAVA validates Access courses in the East of England region and particularly in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. <a href="http://www.cava.ac.uk">www.cava.ac.uk</a> .
CCI	<b>Creative and Cultural Industries</b> is one of the four employment sectors that form MOVE's current constituency.
CPE	<b>Credit, Progression and Equivalence</b> – a MOVE theme which has facilitated the development of a regional credit agreement (RCA). The aim of the RCA is to increase knowledge and understanding of academic credit and how credit can be used flexibly within the curriculum to support progression into and through higher education.
DCSF	<b>Department for Children Schools and Families</b> <a href="http://www.dcsf.gov.uk">www.dcsf.gov.uk</a>
DIUS	<b>Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills</b> <a href="http://www.dius.gov.uk">www.dius.gov.uk</a>
EEDA	<b>East of England Development Agency</b> is the driving force behind sustainable economic growth and regeneration in the East of England. <a href="http://www.eeda.org.uk">www.eeda.org.uk</a>
EESCP	<b>The East of England Skills and Competitiveness Partnership</b> brings together the people, business and investment needed to create sustainable economic growth, jobs and world-class skills across the region. <a href="http://www.eescp.org.uk">http://www.eescp.org.uk</a>
fdf	<b>Foundation Degree Forward</b> is a national body that supports the development and validation of high quality Foundation degrees. <a href="http://www.fdf.ac.uk">http://www.fdf.ac.uk</a>
FECs	<b>Further Education Colleges</b> deliver courses for learners from entry level to QCF level 3. Some FECs also offer Higher Education provision from QCF level 4 to level 8.

FHEQ	<b>Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.</b> The qualifications framework is designed to ensure a consistent use of qualification titles, levels and level descriptors. <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq">www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/fheq</a>
HEFCE	<b>Higher Education Funding Council for England</b> promotes and funds high-quality, cost-effective teaching and research in universities and colleges. <a href="http://www.hefce.ac.uk">www.hefce.ac.uk</a>
HEIs	<b>Higher Education Institutions.</b> There are 11 HEIs across the East of England delivering programmes of study at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
HSC	<b>Health and Social Care</b> is one of the four employment sectors that form MOVE's current constituency.
IAG	<b>Information Advice and Guidance</b> – MOVE has worked with various organisations to facilitate the availability of accurate information about courses and career development for advisers, providers of further and higher education and learners across the region.
LBI	<b>Land-based Industries</b> is one of the four employment sectors that form MOVE's current constituency.
LLN	<b>Lifelong Learning Networks</b> are funded by HEFCE with the objective of improving the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education. <a href="http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln">www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/lln</a> . MOVE is the LLN for the East of England <a href="http://www.move.ac.uk">www.move.ac.uk</a> .
LSC	<b>Learning and Skills Council</b> An organisation established to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure we have a workforce of world-class standard. <a href="http://www.lsc.gov.uk">www.lsc.gov.uk</a>
NOCN	<b>The National Open College Network</b> provides an accreditation service through a national framework of local Open College Networks. <a href="http://www.nocn.org.uk">www.nocn.org.uk</a>
OCNER	<b>The Open College Network for the Eastern Region</b> is a validating agency which operates mainly in Essex, Hertfordshire, East and North London and Norfolk. <a href="http://www.ocner.org.uk">www.ocner.org.uk</a>

OCNOTC	<b>The Open College Network for Oxford, Thames and Chilterns</b> is a validating agency operating mainly in Bedfordshire. <a href="http://www.ocnotc.com">www.ocnotc.com</a>
OFFA	<b>The Office for Fair Access</b> promotes and safeguards fair access to higher education. <a href="http://www.offa.org.uk">www.offa.org.uk</a>
PMC	<b>Progression Magnet Coordinator</b> – a 'field officer' working at MOVE with employment sector and geographical responsibility. See 'About Us/MOVE People' at <a href="http://www.move.ac.uk">www.move.ac.uk</a> .
PA	<b>MOVE Progression Accords</b> are formal detailed agreements between educational institutions and /or employer organisations to support progression to higher education.
QAA	<b>The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.</b> The core business of the QAA is to review the quality and standards of higher education in universities and colleges in the UK. <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk">www.qaa.ac.uk</a>
QCA	<b>The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority</b> is the regulatory body for public examinations and publicly funded qualifications. <a href="http://www.qca.org.uk">www.qca.org.uk</a>
QCF	<b>The Qualifications and Credit Framework</b> is a new way of recognising achievement through the award of credit for units and qualifications. All qualifications and awards will be included in the QCF by 2010.
SBE	<b>Sustainable Built Environment</b> is one of the four employment sectors that form MOVE's current constituency.
UCAS	<b>The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service</b> is responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK. <a href="http://www.ucas.ac.uk">www.ucas.ac.uk</a>
UKVQRP	<b>The UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme</b> is undertaking a radical reform of vocational qualifications in the UK.

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