**neaco School/ College Commitment – Agreement and Guidance**

The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach (neaco) aims to help young people from East Anglia with little or no experience of university explore the world of higher education We work with students at secondary schools and sixth forms/colleges who live in areas identified by the Government with low rates of progression to higher education and students who are from groups that are under-represented in higher education.

neaco is one of 29 partnerships across England that make up the Uni Connect Programme. Partnerships are funded by the Office for Students (OfS) to deliver impartial, collaborative outreach to equip students to make an informed choice about their options in relation to the full range of routes into and through higher education and to minimise the barriers they may face when choosing the option that will unlock their potential, including barriers relating to academic attainment.

neaco is a partnership of five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and eight Further Education Colleges (FECs) in East Anglia. Outreach activity is delivered by neaco through the Take Your Place programme. The University of Cambridge is the lead institution for the partnership and employs a Central Team to help deliver the project in line with OfS requirements. This agreement will outline who your local neaco key contacts are and the expectations both on you as a school or college and on your partner HEI and neaco staff.

**This agreement comes into effect from 1 September 2023 and replaces any agreement already in place.**

**Key Contacts**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School / College** | Insert name |
| Senior Leadership Team Lead Contact | Insert name and contact details |
| Day to day contact | Insert name and contact details |
| **NEACO** | |
| County Coordinator | Insert name and contact details |
| Higher Education Champion (HEC)\* | Insert name, host location and contact details |
| neaco Central Team | Angela Wright, Deputy Head of Widening Participation and neaco Lead, University of Cambridge. neaco@admin.cam.ac.uk |

**\* There may be occasions when your named HEC may change during the academic year, or unforeseen circumstances prevent your HEC from supporting an activity. In such instances your County Coordinator will work with you to identify whether the wider neaco team can support instead.**

**Aim**

* To identify and deliver a sustained and progressive programme to students from Uni Connect target wards in Years 11-13 and Level 2 and 3 courses enrolled at Further Education Colleges.
* To deliver match-funded activity with students from Year 7 and above if these students share particular characteristics as outlined by Office for Students <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-glossary/>
* To support with raising attainment within Years 7-11, through supporting teacher CPD, tackling non-academic barriers to learning and providing targeted academic support to learners.
* To engage with students, schools and college staff and parents/carers to support students to make well-informed decisions about their future education and to reduce gaps in higher education participation for the least represented groups.
* To signpost to local and national events and resources that support the above aims through our takeyourplace website (www.takeyourplace.ac.uk), social media and newsletters.

**What we can offer you**

neaco has appointed several Higher Education Champions (HECs) who are based in local schools or colleges across East Anglia and are employed by one of our partner HEIs.

Your school has been identified as a neaco school and one of our HECs is assigned to work with and support your school. They have been tasked with working with students alongside teachers and support staff, parents and carers and wider community groups, to deliver Higher Education outreach activities, mapped against our progression framework. Your HEC will deliver and coordinate activity with various partners to raise aspirations, awareness and attainment of target students/students from under-represented groups. Where possible, these activities may be funded by neaco. In some instances, your HEC may discuss match funding an event or activity to enable neaco target students to be involved. Please note that activity for cohorts of students defined as under-represented in higher education and activities to raise attainment must be match funded.

**Expectations of the School/ College**

|  |
| --- |
| **Requirement** |
| 1. A named SLT member with responsibility for the neaco project and Take Your Place activities. |
| 1. A named individual responsible for day-to-day contact with the HEC and coordinating support from the school or college identified. |
| 1. Both of the above contacts to commit to supporting the neaco staff in writing a School /College Action Plan and meeting with the local County Coordinator and HEC at least termly in order to review progress. |
| 1. Give sufficient notice (suggested at least half a term) for requests for attainment raising activities/activities for students under-represented in higher education, so that neaco can find meaningful match funding to enable activities to take place. |
| 1. When an HEC is in the school/college, they should be placed in an appropriate and ‘student-facing’ location, with suitable desk space. |
| 1. Provide the HEC with access to target students/students from under-represented groups for the purpose of carrying out their role. This should include opportunities for repeated engagements, and for HEC to deliver workshops and small group activity. |
| 1. Ensure a member of school staff is present in sessions larger than 1-1 and taking active responsibility for the behaviour of school/college students. |
| 1. Provide HEC with information concerning any reasonable adjustments required for students taking part in activities. |
| 1. Provide the HEC with access to school/ college management information system (e.g., SIMs) for the purpose of carrying out their role. Use the postcode look up tool/school data to identify relevant learners and securely share with the HEC. |
| 1. Support the HEC in the sharing of the Data Protection Notice, collection of personal data from relevant students, and delivery of surveys to enable progression monitoring and evaluation to be undertaken. |
| 1. Securely share a register of attendance for each activity. |
| 1. Promote and support the neaco programme within the school/ college, and support the HEC to engage with target students, staff and parents and carers. |

**Responsibilities of the Partner HEI**

|  |
| --- |
| **Requirement** |
| 1. Provide a named County Coordinator to line manage the HEC and to have oversight of the project within the county. |
| 1. Ensure the County Coordinator is available on a termly basis to meet with named school/college contacts to review progress of School / College Action Plan. |
| 1. Ensure the HEC has satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and receives appropriate safeguarding training. |
| 1. Ensure activities are evaluated effectively as part of local and national evaluation requirements, and evaluation results are shared with school/college as appropriate. |
| 1. Liaise with the neaco Central Team to ensure practice and timescales are compatible with OfS requirements and wider neaco approach and to relay these back to School/College as appropriate. |

**Responsibilities of the Higher Education Champion (HEC)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Requirement** |
| 1. Complete the School / College Action Plan template. Agree approach with school or college lead contact by INSERT DATE |
| 1. Work within the school/ college for a minimum of 1 day per fortnight during term time. |
| 1. Establish relationship with key contact(s) at the school/ college and develop understanding of higher education advice and guidance provision in the school/college. |
| 1. Ascertain specific challenges and needs of individual target students/those from under-represented groups within the school/ college which the neaco project can support. |
| 1. Develop impartial resources and materials to engage and inspire students. Make reasonable adjustments to ensure any additional needs of students (shared in advance by school/college) are met, where possible, within activities. |
| 1. Deliver, and coordinate external partners to deliver, HE related advice and guidance sessions, masterclasses and mentoring within the school/college to meet the needs of specified students. |
| 1. Collect individual level data from students participating in activity funded by neaco |

**School Action Plan**

Schools/colleges are required to agree a School/ College Action Plan (covering the detail of what will take place across the academic year) with their HEC by INSERT DATE. That document will form an appendix to this agreement. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that schools and colleges engage with their HEC and the project in the manner agreed.

Our expectation is that schools and colleges involved in the neaco project commit to working with the wider neaco team to try and achieve our key aims and targets and make every effort to work closely to the agreed School/ College Action Plan. This means that if issues do arise, we expect them to be flagged early, and to work together to remedy them at the first available opportunity.

If either the school/ college or their assigned HEC has concerns about the running of the programme, or if the responsibilities set out in this document or in the School/College Action Plan are not being met, in the first instance contact should be made (in writing) with the County Coordinator listed on page 1. The County Coordinator is authorised to decide on the appropriate way forward. If there is still disagreement, the situation can be escalated to the neaco Project Lead, based at the University of Cambridge, whose decision on next steps is final.

**Agreement Sign Off**

**Once you have read the above agreement and are happy with the details, please sign below. (Please note both the signature field and date field can be updated by ‘right clicking’)**

Senior Leadership Team Lead Contact (please insert name, signature and date)



NEACO County Coordinator (please insert name, signature and date)

