



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by University of Plymouth against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

1. Ambition and strategy

University of Plymouth's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

The University of Plymouth's strategic ambitions for access, success and participation are informed by: OfS' priorities, the analysis of our current population of underrepresented student groups, and our understanding of the South West regional context. The ambitions are embedded within the University's refreshed strategy (Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Lives: Our Refreshed Strategy 2016 –2020), the refreshed Education and Student Experience Strategy (2018 –2023) (co-created with our Students' Union), and the targets (Section 2.3) are translated into KPIs for Faculty and School annual plans. Progress against our targets is formally reviewed by the University Planning Board during our annual academic and business planning cycle.

Our overriding strategic direction is to reduce and minimise the access, attainment and progression gaps that exist in our underrepresented student populations, whilst supporting our inclusive community of students and scholars in order to ensure the success of all.

Our Priorities

Based on the assessment of our current performance and mapping against OfS' priorities we have identified six priorities for our Access and Participation (A&P) activities. These include, continuing to address existing A&P gaps in our underrepresented groups, stabilising our long-term performance, and carrying out more detailed analysis to identify more accurately our A&P gaps:

1. BME students, Success: as indicated by Good Degree outcomes
2. Disabled students, Success: as indicated by Good Degree outcomes
3. Low participation neighbourhoods, males (<21 years), Progression: as measured by DLHE/Graduate Outcomes Record
4. Care leavers, Progression: but note as identified in Table 2, this is a small group of students resulting in large data fluctuations
5. To ensure that any significant declining outputs in our three-year trend data are stabilised and reversed
6. To undertake robust intersectional A&P data analysis to identify any multiply disadvantaged students or groups and points in the student lifecycle that are affected, and use the analysis to set targets and drive action plans.

Financial Resources

The University will spend 21.3% of additional fee income above the basic tuition fee level on access, student success and financial support in 2019-20, with a stable target of 21.3% for 2020-21 and 2021-22 as reflected in the Resource Plan. The proposed funding of financial support has been restructured, with increased investment in access and student success.

Evaluation

Work is in progress to consolidate our approach to evaluating our Access and Participation activities. We have robust methods in place to evaluate our Access activities. In terms of continuous improvement, our recent focus has been on improving our data analysis and also our financial evaluation processes. Over the coming years we will extend this work to encompass both Success and Progression projects creating a holistic framework to evaluate our Access and Participation Plan. Currently, our approach is as follows:

(i) Data analysis

The newly formed Planning and Analytics Office that reports to the Registrar and Secretary provides data analysis to the Widening Access Group, and the same data sets are used for E&D activities, and annual planning.

(ii) Financial evaluation

This evaluation will help us to inform decisions about this provision in the future, enabling us to target support where it is most impactful upon students' academic outcomes.

(iii) Access

We work in partnership with other regional HE providers, further education providers and schools in particular through the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), for which we lead the Next Steps South West consortium. A diverse range of outreach projects are currently being delivered across the consortium, which includes robust evaluation of impact.

(iv) Success and Progression

For Success and Progression, evaluative work on specific projects is undertaken through the University's Pedagogic Research Institute and Observatory (PedRIO), with an evaluation and dissemination plan a pre-condition for funding.

Student Engagement: Our Students as Partners

Our commitment to promoting the student voice is embedded within the "Students as Partners" strategy, which sets out the principles through which the University and students work together to enhance academic standards and the student experience in line with the University's vision, mission and values. Within the context of the University's governance around widening access and the drafting of this plan, students have contributed through representation on the University's Widening Access Group and through active consultation within the Students' Union.

Education Partners

The University has a wide range of academic partners spread across the South West who deliver University approved higher education programmes within a further education context. This set of partnerships facilitates access to higher education opportunities for those who do not have the educational qualifications and/or who are unable to leave their locality due to work and care considerations. Many of the students studying in this HE in FE context are mature, from low participation neighbourhoods, and/or are studying on a part-time basis. Many of these colleges also deliver BTEC, Access to HE and NVQ Awards, and there are advanced plans for the further development and delivery of Higher Education Apprenticeships in partnership with the University.

The University's strategy for working in partnership with its schools reflects both the national evidence base for success in raising attainment and the local context within which these schools operate. We work in partnership with schools to:

- Develop their workforce through the provision of CPD
- Work with school leaders, including parent governors, to develop their leadership skills
- Through the Students' Union Volunteering programme, provide university students with opportunities to support learning activities within schools
- Work with parents and families to help address their social and economic challenges
- Deliver music teaching to enhance attainment in graded music exams, increasing access to Music degrees in Higher Education
- Provide a Maths Enrichment project which builds skills in maths knowledge and application for 9-15 years old, enabling greater performance at GCSE and A-level Maths.
- Deliver the Peninsula Pathways to the Healthcare Professions Programme, which works across a whole year to build attainment and aspiration for year groups 10-13 to access Medicine and Dentistry programmes.

Through the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), now the Uni Connect programme, a diverse range of outreach projects are designed and collaboratively delivered by partners, with robust evaluation of impact throughout. Across the consortium, other benefits of this complementary programme are maximised to add momentum and efficiency to Widening Participation Access programmes.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by University of Plymouth of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of University of Plymouth’s 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	From state schools or colleges	2013-14	93.8%	94%	94.5%	Percentage	2019-20	94.5	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Student success)	All entrants	2013-14	5.5%	5.2%	5.0%	Percentage	2019-20	7.2	Limited progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Based on HESA Disability code 00, 99, 98	2013-14	13.5%	14.4%	14.6%	Percentage	2019-20	21.9	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Access)	% of Undergraduate care leavers	2013-14	0.2%	0.45%	0.5%	Percentage	2019-20	0.9	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Access)	Participation of BAME students	2013-14	8.5%	9.75%	10%	Percentage	2019-20	12.2	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Progression)	Employability - DLHE % of UK and EU leavers in professional occupation	2013-14	62%	65%	66%	Percentage	2016-17	70.8	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Access)	Young, full time, undergraduate, POLAR 3	2013-14	12.2%	12.8%	13%	Percentage	2019-20	15.1	Expected progress
T16a_08 (Access)	Mature, full time undergraduate LPN, using POLAR 3	2013-14	10.3%	11.1%	11.3%	Percentage	2019-20	14.4	Expected progress
T16a_09 (Access)	All, Part Time POLAR 3	2013-14	4.3%	5.3%	5.6%	Percentage	2019-20	1	Limited progress
T16a_10 (Access)	Males into Initial Teacher Training (Primary)	2013-14	24%	31.5%	34%	Percentage	2019-20	19.7	No progress
T16a_11 (Access)	Proportion of pupils attending sponsored schools offering secondary education that achieve at least 5 A* - C grades, including maths and english	2017-18	tbc	tbc	tbc	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	-	No progress

T16a_12 (Access)	Proportion of entrants on BSc (Hons) Nursing pathways that are men	2015-16	9.24%	14.0%	16.0%	Percentage	2019-20	10.8	Limited progress
T16a_13 (Student success)	Proportion of BAME students achieving a 2:1 and above in degree classification	2015-16	56.0%	65.0%	68.0%	Percentage	2019-20	86	Expected progress
T16a_14 (Progression)	Employability - DLHE % of UK and EU disabled leavers in a professional occupation	2015-16	57.3%	64.0%	68.0%	Percentage	2016-17	72.9	Expected progress
T16a_15 (Multiple)	Proportion of disabled students (non-statutory programmes) completing sandwich (6 or 12 month) placements	2017-18	tbc	tbc	tbc	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	21	Expected progress
T16a_16 (Access)	Proportion of entrants to undergraduate study aged 25 and above	2015-16	27.63%	33.0%	34.0%	Percentage	2019-20	24.8	No progress

Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	% of students attending summer schools who enrolled into the University from WP backgrounds	2014-15	18	25%	30%	Percentage	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Number of applications from students engaging in shadowing scheme from WP background	2014-15	6	20	25	Headcount	2019-20	11	No progress
T16b_03 (Access)	Increase the proportion of students applying to HE from 10 targeted regional schools with high WP populations	2014-15	303	380	410	Headcount	2019-20	274	No progress
T16b_04 (Student success)	Number of WP students accessing the Peer Assisted Learning Support scheme	2016-17	tbc	tbc	tbc	Headcount	2019-20	900	Expected progress
T16b_05 (Student success)	Number of WP students completing placements or work based learning	2016-17	tbc	tbc	tbc	Headcount	2019-20	231	Expected progress
T16b_06 (Student success)	Number of students from WP backgrounds becoming Peer Supporters for our Student Counselling and Personal Development Service	2016-17	tbc	tbc	tbc	Headcount	2019-20	147	Expected progress
T16b_07 (Progression)	Number of WP students accessing the Careers Service	2016-17	tbc	tbc	tbc	Headcount	2019-20	3201	Expected progress
T16b_08 (Access)	Number of students from WP backgrounds participating in the Peninsula Pathways to the Healthcare Professions Programme into Medicine and Dentistry (Years 10-13)	2018-19	102	102	107	Headcount	2019-20	369	Expected progress
T16b_09 (Access)	Proportion of students attending Music Academy programme achieving 2 grades in musical tuition and 1 grade in musical theory per academic year.	2018-19	0	4	8	Headcount	2019-20	6	Limited progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£2,250,000.00	£1,895,000.00	-16%
Financial Support	£1,750,000.00	£1,729,000.00	-1%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected University of Plymouth has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_02	Our Theories of Change and Lifecycle Frameworks for success and progression are now live. These are being used in tandem with our subject-level data analysis to identify subjects with significant gaps against the University APP objectives, inform interventions and support their evaluation against the identified barriers.
T16a_09	Where we will continue to have part-time students, our Theory of Change and Lifecycle Framework for Access will be used with our subject-level data analysis to identify and inform interventions and support subjects to make progress against the identified barriers.
T16a_10	We will continue to have male and female student ambassadors at our recruitment events (current students), and during interviews or open evenings will continue to use male and female case studies. We will continue to build on our website material promoting male primary school teachers, for example using student testimonials from male students as to why our male students decided to come into teaching.
T16a_11	We do not currently sponsor any schools

T16a_12	We will continue to actively encourage men to apply to nursing through a number of initiatives. E.g. promoting male case studies, testimonials and examples on all of our advertising and marketing material; maintaining the section on our nursing website about why we need more men in nursing written (from a military point of view as we have a large local current and ex-military service community); and promoting nursing to men at 'Leaving the Military Services' event to promote nursing at UoP to men leaving the navy, army and RAF.
T16a_16	We will continue to use our Theories of Change and Lifecycle Frameworks with our subject-level data analysis to identify to inform interventions for mature students, and support subjects to make progress to minimise the gaps.
T16b_02	Better targeting of students from underrepresented groups.
T16b_03	Earlier outreach interventions in the relevant schools.
T16b_09	An online offer is now available which can partly mitigate the loss of face to face interaction.

5. Confirmation

University of Plymouth confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
University of Plymouth has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Professor Judith Petts CBE
Position	Vice-Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

University of Plymouth's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The HESA PI data needs to be viewed in comparison with a location adjusted benchmark - we are below that benchmark, so we are within the expected non-continuation levels for our group of students.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Data packs which summarise Faculties' and Schools' performance against the University APP objectives are now being used routinely, which include the matrix of WP characteristics across the student lifecycle. The packs include data trends for underperforming areas, as well as a summary of specific courses with the most prevalent gaps.

Target reference number: T16a_09
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The HESA PI data needs to be viewed in comparison with a location adjusted benchmark - we are above that benchmark, so we are within the expected participation levels for our group of students.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have very little part-time provision, as can be see in our HESA data. Given our education portfolio plans, this is unlikely to change in the short term.

Target reference number: T16a_10
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Target no longer relevant in light of the new APP commitments.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Males are strongly encouraged at interview stage, using examples of male and female role models working within education. We do the same at 'train to teach' events and postgraduate evening events. External facing website material features male examples for Primary teaching courses.

Target reference number: T16a_11

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Target no longer relevant in light of the new APP commitments.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We do not currently sponsor any schools

Target reference number: T16a_12
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Target no longer relevant in light of the new APP commitments.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Our target of 18% male students is increasingly looking unachievable, and is not very realistic considering that men have consistently accounted for ~10% of the nursing workforce for decades.

Target reference number: T16a_16
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Target no longer relevant in light of the new APP commitments. This metric looked at proportion of all UG new entrants (all modes, all domiciles), which is not in line with a standard APP population (UK-domiciled, first degree, predominantly full-time). The definition of mature is also incorrect in comparison with APP definitions for UG (21+).
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Nothing to add here

Target reference number: T16b_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No, there was a shortfall in expected numbers.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Additional steps were impacted by Covid.

Target reference number: T16b_03

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No, there was a shortfall in expected numbers.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Additional steps were impacted by Covid.

Target reference number: T16b_09
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No, there was a shortfall in expected numbers.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Additional steps were impacted by Covid.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

University of Plymouth's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	
T16a_02	
T16a_03	
T16a_04	
T16a_05	
T16a_06	DLHE replaced by GO for 2017/18 leavers. The respective GO 2017/18 metric is even more positive 73.7%.
T16a_07	New HESA PI uses POLAR4
T16a_08	
T16a_09	New HESA PI uses POLAR4
T16a_10	
T16a_11	Information not available
T16a_12	
T16a_13	
T16a_14	DLHE replaced by GO for 2017/18 leavers. The respective GO 2017/18 metric is even more positive 75.2%.
T16a_15	
T16a_16	
T16b_01	The Summer Schools were discontinued due to a year on year decline in attendance along with a decline in conversion to applications to university.
T16b_02	There was a reduction in the number of participants due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
T16b_03	There was a reduction in the amount of outreach to the relevant schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
T16b_04	
T16b_05	Although there was expected progress this would have been better without the impact of Covid-19
T16b_06	

T16b_07	Although there was expected progress this would have been better without the impact of Covid-19
T16b_08	The populated figures are actually for the total number of participants but the number from WP backgrounds has increased proportionally.
T16b_09	Between March and October 2020, due to the impact of Covid-19, there were no grade examinations available and the lesson delivery transferred to online.