



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by University of Sussex 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 Sussex's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

The University's Strategic Framework 2025 and the core strategies upon which the Strategic Framework rests provide an opportunity to ensure an evidence based and strategic approach to our Access and Participation work continues.

We aim to promote and celebrate the diversity on our campus and will put collaborative working at the heart of what we do. Through our Framework we aim to build on our success in widening participation and to ensure:

- meaningful student participation
- that the diversity of our student and academic body is celebrated
- the individual needs of our students are both respected and supported through a personalised, holistic and inclusive approach.

Our Access and Participation Plan is underpinned by four principles which both reflect and support the institutional strategy.

Principle One - to adopt an evidence-based approach. We will ensure our Access, Success and Progress work is of a high standard and evidence-led so that resource is directed to where it has most impact.

Principle Two - to continue to support students most in need. Over the course of the Strategic Plan we will achieve this, by ensuring a) our Access and Participation Plan focusses on those most in need; and b) by developing a recognised programme to promote positive student physical and mental health and wellbeing. We will be known as a University that promotes good health and wellbeing throughout - and beyond - our students' education.

Principle Three - our approach to Access will take into account feedback from our students, expert practitioners and the needs of the wider community. The University prides itself in being a listening organisation and, co-delivering projects on the ground in local communities to encourage students from under-represented groups to participate in Higher Education. We will strive to be recognised as an anchor institution in our locale and region, which convenes community dialogue and encourages social cohesion.

Principle Four - to provide the best possible student experience. We will ensure that activities and programmes that support student retention and attainment will be embedded and will be accessible for all students alongside targeted support for specific groups of students. We recognise that our activity will need to be responsive to the differing needs of students throughout their time at Sussex.

The University has carefully sought out and cultivated collaborations and partnerships with other universities and with community and third sector organisations, recognising a cumulative benefit in strategically combined effort. Through our outreach programmes we will endeavour to prepare participants for student life – academic, social, and cultural – contributing to their success and progression whichever university they choose to go to.

One of our key priorities is reducing the gaps in outcomes between different groups of students. We recognise the importance of better understanding the causes of differential outcomes but also the challenge of that work. We seek to understand what interventions will have the most impact and deliver strategies to address these. We have included targets in our resource plan to drive our work in this area.

Our data analyst will take steps to ensure that our activities and services are carefully monitored in order to understand the engagement of different groups of students with this support. Where gaps in engagement are identified, particularly where correlated with differential outcomes, clear strategies will be developed to effectively communicate the range of activities available and improve uptake.

For further information please see the University of Sussex's Access and Participation Plan 2019-20.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by University of Sussex 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 Sussex'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)	To ensure we remain 2% above Location Adjusted Benchmark	2014-15	86.7%	2% above LAB	2% above LAB	Percentage	2019-20	89	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	To increase the proportion of NS-SEC groups 4-7 from 22.5% to 25%	2014-15	22.5%	NA	NA	Percentage	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	To increase the proportion of entrants from LPN from 7.8% to 9%	2014-15	7.8%	8.2%	8.5%	Percentage	2019-20	7.9	Limited progress
T16a_04 (Access)	To increase the proportion of entrants from BAME groups from 18.3% to 20%	2014-15	18.3%	19.2%	19.5%	Percentage	2019-20	26.2	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Student success)	To reduce the proportion of non-continuation following 1st year of entry from 3.9% to 3%	2014-15	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	Percentage	2019-20	3	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Access)	To raise within the national top quartile	2014-15	11.3%	12.2%	12.2%	Percentage	2019-20	10.7	Limited progress
T16a_07 (Progression)	To maintain 80% graduate highly skilled destinations	2014-15	80%	80%	80%	Percentage	2019-20	70	Limited progress
T16a_08 (Progression)	To maintain 30% progression to further study	2014-15	30%	30%	30%	Percentage	2019-20	17	Limited progress
T16a_09 (Access)	To increase the proportion of POLAR 3 QUINTILE 1 AND 2 from 21% to 25% (REPLACE nssec)	2016-17	21%	22%	23%	Percentage	2019-20	19.6	Limited 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)	To create a network of 40 full, 40 associate and 40 collaborative partner schools and colleges.	2013-14	75	n/a	n/a	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	To raise individual enrolments in our First-Generation Scholars pre-entry scheme from 4000 to 7000 across the scheme	2013-14	4000	7000	7000	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_03 (Access)	School staff engagement of full partner school staff to attend an annual staff development opportunity	2013-14	70%	n/a	n/a	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	Parents / guardians in full partner schools to attend at least one event	2013-14	4364	n/a	n/a	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_05 (Student success)	Study skills, personal development, careers and leadership engagements of First-Generation Scholars involved in one or more of these activities	2013-14	75%	90%	90%	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_06 (Progression)	Funded internships and work placements for First-Generation Scholars involved in one or more opportunities by their final year	2014-15	20%	30%	30%	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_07 (Access)	COLLABORATION: Realising opportunities targets for the progression of RO participants to an RO partner university	2015-16	25%	25%	25%	Percentage	2019-20	38	Expected progress
T16b_08 (Access)	PARTNERSHIP: To develop and maintain a network of 120 schools	2015-16	90	120	120	Headcount	2019-20	123	Expected progress
T16b_09 (Progression)	PARTNERSHIP: To develop and maintain a network of 1500 employers for FGS student and graduate engagement.	2015-16	500	900	1100	Headcount	2019-20	1655	Expected progress

T16b_10 (Student success)	PARTNERSHIP: To widen our existing work shadowing opportunities for Foundation and Yr1 FGS students to look at group engagement with students on programmes of study and encourage participation in a wider basket of developmental outcomes including work-shadowing, internships, extra-curricula activities, volunteering and part-time work.	2015-16	50	310	400	Headcount	2019-20	407	Expected progress
T16b_11 (Access)	OUTCOMES: 50% of students from FGS cohort engaging intensively* to progress to higher education within 3 years of completing a level 3 qualification	2014-15	42%	n/a	50%	Percentage	2019-20	67.4	Expected progress
T16b_12 (Progression)	OUTCOMES: To develop cultural capital and employment opportunities by providing Internships in China for FGS students	2015-16	45	100	100	Headcount	2019-20	168	Expected progress
T16b_13 (Progression)	OUTCOMES: continue to provide level of training and experience which has allowed previous WP interns to move into continuous employment	2014-15	1	1	1	Headcount	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16b_14 (Access)	RESPONSIVENESS: To develop customised mechanisms which allow teaching staff in partner schools to have a guiding input into the programme. All full partners to receive a bespoke package of partnership meetings, stakeholder forum to meet twice yearly or CPD opportunities to be offered to School staff, based on their requirements	2014-15	4700	90%	95%	Percentage	2019-20	95	Expected progress
T16b_15 (Student success)	RESPONSIVENESS: To develop an Academic Partnership Agreement to enable the Careers and Employability Centre to establish curricular embedded version of the Sussex Plus Employability Award in all Schools	2015-16	100 students	400	500	Headcount	2019-20	816	Expected progress

T16b_16 (Progression)	RESPONSIVENESS: To develop stronger channels of communication for academic colleagues to better equip them with information and themed advice sessions about progression opportunities for first-generation scholars	2015-16	limited communications	termly newsletter and 5 advice sessions	termly newsletter and 6 advice sessions	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_17 (Access)	INCLUSIVITY: To develop channels of communication for parents / carers to better equip them with knowledge of the HE sector and the FGS programme. To increase the number of parents / carers reached through targeted communication - newsletters, 2 themed advice sessions to be held at the University, project specific events.	2015-16	4364	5300	5500	Headcount	2019-20	2655	Limited progress
T16b_18 (Student success)	INCLUSIVITY: To develop the Skills Hub on-line resource integrating Study Success at Sussex and InfoSuss the Library resource into a one-stop shop resource and further develop channels of communication with FGS students to foster academic/study skill success.	2015-16	none	2000 stuents tracked	2500 students tracked	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_19 (Progression)	INCLUSIVITY: to maintain the number of student ambassadors from recruited FGS backgrounds to develop employability	2014-15	75%	75%	75%	Percentage	2019-20	100	Expected progress
T16b_20 (Access)	ATTAINMENT: To ensure 50% of Villiers Park Crawley Scholars achieve 3 A*-B A levels	2016-17	First year of activity	50%	50%	Percentage	2019-20	48	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	£2,480,000.00	£1,830,000.00	-26%
Financial Support	£6,204,965.00	£5,901,000.00	-5%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected University of Sussex 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_03	N/A
T16a_06	We will continue with our support programme for mature applicants in 20-21. Applicants are also eligible for a place on our Sussex Access programme which is currently being delivered on line. We have also started project work, specifically supporting adults in to higher education, with relevant community groups in the local area such as Gingerbread a charity focused on the support of single parents.
T16a_07	As Column W
T16a_08	As Column W
T16a_09	Please see target T16a_03 commentary
T16b_17	We are also looking to develop this work further and are engaging in a sector wide working group with NERUPI in developing parent/carers resources. We hope to establish a parent/carers ambassador group after the current pandemic.
T16b_20	The partnership with Villiers Park was ceased in 2019 so we no longer have cohorts of students attached to this programme.

5. Confirmation

University of Sussex confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
No	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
University of Sussex 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	Adam Tickell
Position	Vice Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

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

Target reference number: T16a_03
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>We have in 19/20 reviewed all our Access programmes and provision and as a consequence launched a new Access Programme for students from POLAR 4 Q1 and IMD Q1 areas and students from OfS underrepresented groups. This programme includes information and guidance, academic enrichment and support, mentoring, opportunities for catch up support in A level subjects and when we are able a residential programme on campus. Completion of the programme also qualifies students for a reduced grade offer as part of our contextual offer at Sussex. We have also produced online information and guidance resources across the key stages 3-5 and met our commitments of delivering both year 10 and year 12 WP targeted summer schools virtually. Evaluation has demonstrated successful outcomes in improved motivation and expectation to apply to university and also enhanced key academic skills.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>Due to lockdown we have engaged with schools and colleges via online teachers groups, promoting our programmes. We reviewed our schools and colleges strategy identifying new regional areas of work and built on developing new partnerships in those areas. We held an online conference for teachers and WP practitioners to promote awareness, develop CPD for teachers and promote the new programmes available for underrepresented students across our regions. We have since this conference worked collaboratively with UniConnects within our new target areas.</p>

Target reference number: T16a_06
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>In 18/19 we carried out focus group research with current UG students to establish the type of support that would be most beneficial for mature students. We also carried out consultation with a local FE college to see what support Access to HE course students required. In 18/19 we ran a mature student applicant support programme that provided tailored on campus events, support from our admissions team on entry requirements, personal statement support and also a successful call centre where Sussex undergraduate mature students gave support and guidance and answered the queries and concerns of mature applicants. We have continued to support mature students in the same way in 19-20, however have replaced the on campus events with online zoom calls with members of the Access team.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
N/A

Target reference number: T16a_07

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
70% of UK FT UG graduates were in highly skilled employment 15 months after graduation according to findings from HESA's first Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) of 2017/18 leavers. This is 10% below target and we have taken significant action, outlined in Column W, to return performance to 80% by 2025 or earlier. However, it should be noted that the 80% target was set in the context of the trajectory of results from GOS's predecessor, the Destination of Leavers from HE Survey (DLHE). The two surveys are recognised to be significantly different in their methodology and administration, making it statistically inappropriate to compare performance between the two. We have evidence that this drop in performance relates, to some considerable extent, to process rather than performance change. Evidence captured through our Graduate Outcomes Improvement Project indicates, for example, that the 27% fall in response rate between DLHE and GOS had a disproportionately negative impact on the number of returns from Sussex graduates in further study, which dropped from c. 30% in the DLHE to 17% in the GOS.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Significant additional action was taken in 2019/20 to drive a return to 80% performance by 2025 or earlier. The University developed a Graduate Outcomes Improvement Project with associated KPIs. We also launched a new 2025 World Readiness and Employability Strategy. The new Strategy marks a change in direction, committing the University to: embedding employability and enterprise into the curriculum; reviewing all extra-curricular support; co-creating support with students; and significantly expanding the real world offer to students, which now includes double the number of internships, a student consultancy to business and a new provision for student entrepreneurs. As an early indicator of success, at the year-1 mid-year point, the Operating Plan for this new Strategy has already delivered 9% (black students) and 6% (IMDQ1 students) growth in engagement with careers support programmes from students in our APP Progress target groups.

Target reference number: T16a_08
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
17% of UK FT UG graduates were in further study 15 months after graduation according to findings from HESA's first Graduate Outcomes Survey (GOS) of 2017/18 leavers. This is 13% below target and we have taken significant action, outlined in Column W, to return performance to 30% by 2025 or earlier. However, it should be noted that the 30% target was set in the context of the trajectory of results from GOS's predecessor, the Destination of Leavers from HE Survey (DLHE). The two surveys are recognised to be significantly different in their methodology and administration, making it statistically inappropriate to compare performance between the two. We have evidence that this drop in performance relates, to some considerable extent, to process rather than performance change. Evidence captured through our Graduate Outcomes Improvement Project indicates, for example, that the 27% fall in response rate between DLHE and GOS had a disproportionately negative impact on the number of returns from Sussex graduates in further study.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Significant additional action was taken in 2019/20 to drive a return to 30% performance by 2025 or earlier. The University developed a Graduate Outcomes Improvement Project with

associated KPIs. We also launched a new 2025 World Readiness and Employability Strategy. The new Strategy marks a change in direction, committing the University to: embedding employability and enterprise into the curriculum; reviewing all extra-curricular support; co-creating support with students; and significantly expanding the real world offer to students, which now includes double the number of internships, a student consultancy to business and a new provision for student entrepreneurs. As an early indicator of success, at the year-1 mid-year point, the Operating Plan for this new Strategy has already delivered 9% (black students) and 6% (IMDQ1 students) growth in engagement with careers support programmes from students in our APP Progress target groups.

Target reference number: T16a_09

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Please see target T16a_03 commentary

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Please see target T16a_03 commentary

Target reference number: T16b_17

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

Our progress against target has been curtailed by the onset of COVID and the Access teams limited ability to engage with parents/carers via our normal channel of attendance at parents evenings in schools and our on campus events. We have sought where possible to send information and guidance newsletters out to parents where we have email addresses and where possible our school contacts have forwarded on the parent communications, however, this has been a challenge due to school lockdowns. It is difficult to report against the figure as we are unclear on the number of newsletters that will have reached parents/carers. We did however, have two online parents sessions that supported their child's attendance at the summer schools, where parents and carers were able to ask questions about life at University and supporting their child through application to University.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

We have developed a specific online resource for parents and carers and will be offering a webinar event for those parents where their child is participating in the new Sussex Access programme.

Target reference number: T16b_20

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

The work with the cohort of 26 students had been undertaken since year 10 however, the impact of the final year of study was significant and will have undoubtedly affected their centre assessed grades.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

Students were contacted during lockdown with online mentoring and motivational sessions.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

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

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	
T16a_02	Target removed 18-19
T16a_03	The POLAR 3 Q1 target data is no longer applicable or measurable due to this data being unavailable. The actual access data included in the return is POLAR 4 Q1. Our POLAR 4 Q5:Q1 ratio in 18-19 was 5.8:1. This narrowed to our smallest ratio in 5 years in 19-20 to 5.3:1. Our target for 20-21 is 4.9:1 so we feel confident of progress in the right direction. Furthermore, although only an indicator, the recent UCAS end of cycle report for 2020 states the % placed applicants from POLAR 4 Q1 is 8.6% indicating progress against the % placed applicants in 2019 of 6.9%. We await confirmation of the final data when our HESA return is submitted. We consider that work as outlined in our 2020-2025 plan is still on track to achieve POLAR 4 Q1 gap reductions.
T16a_04	
T16a_05	
T16a_06	Our data shows a 1% increase in mature students from 18/19 to 19/20 indicating progression in the right direction.
T16a_07	
T16a_08	
T16a_09	Please see target T16a_03 commentary
T16b_01	Target removed
T16b_02	Target removed
T16b_03	Target removed
T16b_04	Target removed
T16b_05	Target removed
T16b_06	Target removed
T16b_07	
T16b_08	
T16b_09	
T16b_10	
T16b_11	

T16b_12	
T16b_13	
T16b_14	
T16b_15	
T16b_16	<p>In 19/20, the University launched its Five World Readiness and Employability Strategic Objectives for 2025. The first of these commits to embedding employability and enterprise into the curriculum. To facilitate delivery of this objective, a new 'business partner' approach has been enacted. Each academic school now has a 'business partner' careers consultant to work alongside them. This new structure supports the new five-year strategy by enabling the close partnership between CEC and academic schools required to successfully embed employability into the curriculum. In 19/20, this new structure has already achieved stronger channels of communication with academic colleagues, removing the need for newsletters (to which the 19/20 target relates).</p>
T16b_17	
T16b_18	<p>In 19/20, a team of student 'Academic Skills Connectors' – all First Generation Scholars themselves – were recruited into the Academic Skills Team. This co-working with Connectors has led to a complete review of the University's approach to academic skills and a new 2025 Academic Skills Strategy. In 19/20, in line with the new strategic direction, student mentors have begun to provide peer-to-peer support and a major redevelopment of the Skills Hub resource is underway (due for completion in 2021/22). The new Skills Hub will provide engaging, interactive skills learning for students. Importantly, the new Skills Hub will ensure that all students complete academic skills learning by providing a bank of reusable learning objects that teaching staff can draw into their teaching material to root learning in a discipline context. Student usage will be trackable via the new Skills Hub which is no longer possible through the current platform, making it impossible to directly report on the stated 19/20 target.</p>
T16b_19	
T16b_20	