2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

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

This is taken and paraphrased from the 19-20 Access and Participation Plan.

The University has a long and proud history of supporting students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds, and the 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan builds upon this.

The University will continue to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to access, succeed in and progress from higher education, and are fully supported in doing so.

For Access, the 19-20 strategy includes:

- Nurturing and developing strong and sustained working relationships with schools, colleges and other HEIs as a means of ensuring meaningful learner outcomes.
- Being informed by an evidence-led methodology, where activities and interventions are robustly evaluated, cost-benefit analysis undertaken and opportunities for continuous improvement identified and implemented.
- Target groups for Access include students from the lower POLAR3 quintiles; Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, and Care Leavers.
- Our evaluation strategy involves working closely with Next Steps South West (UniConnect consortium) and using HEAT tracker data.

For Success, the 19-20 strategy includes:

- Supporting mature students to continue in their studies, through using the Personal Development Tutor system, reducing timetable changes, increasing use of Check-In and follow up, changing induction to appeal to mature students, increasing numbers of societies and developing more social study spaces to support commuter students.
- Supporting students from low participation backgrounds to continue in their studies and achieve higher grades, and supporting students without a parent in HE to achieve higher grades, through delivering Studiosity study skills support, delivering IAG for parents, developing additional study skills sessions, and through financial support.
- Supporting students with a specific learning difficulty to achieve higher grades, through major encouragement of students to seek help early and to get diagnosed, and through changes to assessments to be more inclusive.
- Supporting students with a mental health condition to continue in their studies: through a mental health working group, through a new student handbook with additional information, through campaigning on mental health stigma and through developing more spaces on campus for quiet reflection and study.
- Supporting care leavers to access the support available through an increased bursary, mentoring, and a handshake introduction to Futures.
- Supporting allied healthcare students through a part-time Speech and Language Therapy degree.

For Progression, the 19-20 strategy includes:

- Improving attainment levels, recognising that students with both lower attainment and from lower participation backgrounds tend to find it harder to move into graduate level work.
- Developing partnerships with employers, for example with the BBC for our Journalism course.
- Offering job opportunities on campus with high quality training and development.
- Developing digital capabilities of students.
- Extending our international travel bursary.
- Targeting younger males from more deprived backgrounds, through targeted intervention from Futures to these courses, and a focus on the quality of placements achieved; supporting attainment; investing in the Futures online platform, introducing more positive role models and personal invitations to meet the Futures team in the first eight weeks of Year 1; developing a student Change Makers programme; and marketing to young males in disadvantaged areas for courses that lead to high employment outcomes such as teaching and Speech and Language Therapy.
- For those with a learning difficulty, the strategy includes improving attainment and working with “Work Routes”.
- For care leavers, the strategy includes targeted one-to-one work with Futures, including development of role models.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by University of St Mark & St John 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 St Mark & St John'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)	Maintain percentage of young, full-time first degree entrants from state schools at above 95%	Other (please give details in Description column)	97.9%	98%	98%	Percentage	2019-20	98	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	Maintain percentage of students from low participation neighbourhoods	Other (please give details in Description column)	18.0%	18%	18%	Percentage	2019-20	19.3	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Maintain percentage of mature students from underrepresented groups in HE	Other (please give details in Description column)	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	Percentage	2019-20	15.3	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Student success)	Achieve the retention benchmark for young, full-time, first degree entrants	Other (please give details in Description column)	9.3%	8.5%	8%	Percentage	2018-19	12	No progress
T16a_05 (Progression)	Maintain high level of employability	Other (please give details in Description column)	94.6%	95%	95%	Percentage	2018-19	92.1	No progress

T16a_06 (Success)	Achieve the retention benchmark for mature, full-time, first degree entrants	2016-17	18.7%	18%	17%	Percentage	2019-20	17	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Success)	Close the gap in degree results for young students with and without a parent in HE	2016-17	61.2%	62%	62.5%	Percentage	2019-20	81	Expected 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)	University taster and activity days including Discover Day and Aim High events, Masterclasses and Student Shadowing	2011-12	300	300	310	Headcount	2019-20	469	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Student Ambassador recruitment and training	2012-13	50	60	70	Headcount	2019-20	90	Expected progress
T16b_03 (Access)	Mentoring in schools and FEIs	2012-13	60	45	45	Headcount	2019-20	45	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	HE awareness raising work with Primary Schools, delivered in collaboration with other Plymouth based HEIs	2013-14	200	200	200	Headcount	2019-20	200	Expected progress
T16b_05 (Access)	Progression to HE workshops and activities in schools including 'removing barriers to HE' sessions	2013-14	28	30	32	Other	2019-20	26	No progress
T16b_06 (Access)	Sixth Form parents evenings	2013-14	3	3	3	Other	2019-20	4	Expected progress
T16b_07 (Access)	Progression Agreements	Other (please give details in Description column)	10	12	12	Other	2019-20	11	Limited progress
T16b_08 (Access)	4-day residential Summer School event for target WP students open nationally	2013-14	1	1	1	Other	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16b_09 (Student success)	Programmes to improve digital literacy	2015-16	n/a	n/a	n/a	Other	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16b_10 (Progression)	On programme co-ordinated support by academic advisors and student support services	2015-16	n/a	n/a	n/a	Other	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16b_11 (Progression)	Care Leaver Mentoring	2015-16	n/a	n/a	n/a	Other	2019-20	1	Expected progress
T16b_12 (Access)	Admissions support	2014-15	2	2	2	Other	2019-20	2	Expected progress

T16b_13 (Progression)	Foundation Degree and Top-up taster and transition days	2011-12	2	4	4	Other	2019-20	4	Expected progress
T16b_14 (Student success)	Teacher CPD, conferences and training for local teachers	2015-16	40	80	80	Headcount	2019-20	80	Expected progress
T16b_15 (Progression)	Enhanced and extended induction including seamless transition and teaching and student support	2011-12	n/a	n/a	n/a	Other	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_16 (Access)	Residential event for BTEC Sport students at Truro and Penwith College (target expressed as number of students)	2015-16	10	20	20	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16b_17 (Access)	Easter revision school for target students in school year 11 (target expressed as minimum threshold for participating students achieving at least a grade 4 in English and Maths at GCSE level)	2017-18	75%	80%	85%	Percentage points	2019-20	0	No progress
T16b_18 (Access)	Bespoke events for care leaving/looked after children (target expressed as number of students)	Other (please give details in Description column)	10	15	20	Other	2019-20	20	Expected progress
T16b_19 (Progression)	Recruit Employability Ambassadors	2017-18	0	5	12	Headcount	2019-20	0	No 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	£586,831.00	£535,000.00	-9%
Financial Support	£377,000.00	£497,000.00	32%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected University of St Mark & St John 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_04	Ongoing retention targets in 2020-25 A&PP are for mature students, students with mental ill health and students from POLAR 1 backgrounds, with a particular focus on young males from disadvantaged backgrounds. We have a short term retention task group starting in April 2021 to review impact and insights in the last year.
T16a_05	Ongoing target in 5 year A&PP with multiple projects working on progression: Project 2 accessible study skills, Project 3 The Oracy Project, Project 4 Change Makers, Project 5 Marjon Student Colleagues, Project 6 Online and Personalised Career Support
T16b_05	During the course of the academic year 2020-21, we have further developed our online outreach capabilities, with a series of virtual workshop activities and masterclasses (e.g. in Psychology, History and Sports Therapy), which we are providing to schools both in live and on-demand formats. We will continue to publicise our online outreach offer among key contacts in target schools and colleges.
T16b_07	We have identifed two further schools and colleges for future Progression Agreements and we will pursue these opportunities during the summer term of 2021 (i.e. once schools are more settled, following the disruption caused by the pandemic).

T16b_17	We will continue to work closely with schools and colleges to deliver tailored activities to support attainment-raising at Year 11. This includes the development of a new iteration of Easter Revision School, 'Marjon Endeavour', which will be delivered during the second week of the Easter holidays in 2021. This focus of this project will again be on supporting attainment-raising in English and Maths, and will be supported by current teaching practitioners and those undertaking PGCE training at the University.
T16b_19	Ongoing target in 5 year A&PP with multiple projects working on progression: Project 2 accessible study skills, Project 3 The Oracy Project, Project 4 Change Makers, Project 5 Marjon Student Colleagues, Project 6 Online and Personalised Career Support.

5. Confirmation

University of St Mark & St John 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 St Mark & St John 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	Rob Warner
Position	Vice-Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

University of St Mark & St John's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_04
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Yes: delivered Studiosity and study skills sessions, improved checkin rates and delivered follow up, diversified welcome week, successfully trialled Change Makers to improve the student experience, developed parental support and guidance to improve home support, developed 16 new societies to improve belonging, increased visibility of students with mental ill health or disabilities succeeding through multiple social media campaigns.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Yes: We have a specific Change Maker project in 2020-21 focusing on engagement and retention with young males from disadvantaged backgrounds, and a further three Change Maker projects focusing on supporting aspects of mental health.

Target reference number: T16a_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Yes. All first years invited to meet Futures team early on, with targeted follow-ups, and course-specific interventions delivered.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
Yes: Futures online platform is now embedded with Personal Development Tutors to encourage career planning, resilience and growth mindset. Students are self-reporting improvements in employability skills through a regular "career pulse" and these reports go monthly to Directors of Schools.

Target reference number: T16b_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
26 workshops achieved vs 32 target:until March 2020, we were on track to exceed this target. Restricted acccess to schools meant we could not deliver planned activity in the spring and summer terms.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have converted our in-person, school-based activities to an online programme. This programme is predominantly focused on providing support to post-16 students in terms of study skills, resilience and wellbeing. The programme also includes subject-level master classes (see cell 73X).

Target reference number: T16b_07
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
11 agreements vs 12 target. Ongoing discussions were impacted by change in school priorities during lockdown 1 in 2020.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We created two new Progression Agreements in 2019-20 (with Tavistock College and Liskeard School and Community College). In addition, we have explored opportunities with other target schools and colleges but did not conclude discussions due to covid.

Target reference number: T16b_17
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We had to revise the plan as the purpose of Easter Revision School is to provide GCSE exam preparation in English and Maths for students in school year 11. As the GCSE examinations were cancelled this project was re-purposed as a series of online workshops designed to help students adapt to online learning, improve wellbeing and resilience, and raise awareness surrounding Level 3 options and higher education pathways. Their final grades would not be an appropriate way to measure this online event.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
See cell V85.

Target reference number: T16b_19
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
No: We recruited 5 Ambassadors in 18-19 but the format was not successful. We changed focus towards mentoring which would spread the load and focus on individual students. This will launch in 2021.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have taken many steps to reach improved employability, but not through this specific route. We have changed to focus on outcome rather than output.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

University of St Mark & St John's commentary on any of the targets listed in Section 2.

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	Before the Covid-19 pandemic, we expanded our work with state schools, particularly those located within the South West region and in our local community. All of our school and college liaison work (including our WP activity) is directed towards state school pupils. We will continue to cultivate relationships with the University's state feeder schools and identify opportunities for collaboration with their students. We will seek to develop two new Progression Agreement compacts with state schools in the local community, to support progression to the University.
T16a_02	The University continues to concentrate its outreach efforts in areas of high deprivation, low HE participation and in schools were Progress 8 scores are below average. We will continue to focus on those students for whom the support we can offer is of most benefit in supporting future learning aspirations and removing barriers to higher education.
T16a_03	The University has renewed its strategy for working with mature learners at one of the University's feeder colleges, City College Plymouth. This includes increased contact with Academy Managers and Programme Leaders for Access to Higher Education programmes at the College, and increased dialogue in terms of the types of actions and interventions that are of most benefit to City College mature learners. We are also refreshing our Progression Agreement with the College to ensure that the needs of mature learners are prioritised within the agreement. The University intends to replicate this approach for other feeder colleges in the South West region and to monitor and evaluate the impact of these changes.
T16a_04	All English HEIs young student continuation is 92.4%. We excel for access in many areas where all HEIs show gaps in continuation, so 8% is a tough target. Example gaps in all HEIs are: 5.6pp for those eligible for free school meals, 3.2pp for those with a mental health condition, 4.8pp for those in POLAR4 Q1. We have high proportions of these students compared to other HEIs.
T16a_05	We are also focusing on graduate outcomes by school to understand specific challenges, for example for those in the arts.
T16a_06	The university has been working closely on mature student retention, particularly focusing around induction, the commuter experience, flexible study, different societies and university culture. See T16a_04 for other relevant actions.
T16a_07	The gap has almost closed: those with a parent in HE achieved 82.4% while those without managed 81%.
T16b_01	In moving to online delivery, we have created a new programmes of virtual events and activities for key WP audiences.

T16b_02	We have worked with Programme Leaders to increase awareness surrounding the Student Ambassador Scheme and to publicise opportunities for joining the Scheme. In 2019-20, we also delivered a 'How to Apply' workshop for prospective Student Ambassadors. We will continue to deliver application preparation sessions. From 2021-22, the Student Ambassador Scheme will form part of the Marjon Student Colleagues Access and Participation Plan project.
T16b_03	in 2019-20, we extended our small group mentoring offer to two additional schools, Eggbuckland Community College and Hele's School.
T16b_04	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this programme was converted to a series of online sessions. The online offer was provided to nine local primary schools and one third sector organisation (Millfields inspired). Overall performance c 200 primary participants.
T16b_05	This target refers to individual activities, which were immediately impacted by access to schools in the first lockdown.
T16b_06	This target refers to parent/carer events delivered at local schools.
T16b_07	This target refers to the number of Progression Agreeements in place with individual schools and colleges.
T16b_08	This target refers to the delivery of a single Summer School event. In 2019-20 Summer School was delivered as a series of 12 virtual sessions between 27 July – 21 August.
T16b_09	Our Digital Innovation team are part of inductions, and in 19-20 we also delivered additional pre-induction work.The team delivered comprehensive training and upskilling at the start of lockdown for new programmes in use.
T16b_10	This programme is delivered by Personal Development Tutors and is working effectively.
T16b_11	New Student Engagement Officer role has delivered this throughout 2019-20, and worked closely with Care Leavers to develop a new Care Experienced Student Policy and support plan.
T16b_12	This target refers to the total number of advice sessions delivered.
T16b_13	This target refers to the total number of visits undertaken. We created a new series of virtual transition sessions ('Preparing for your Course and AIM (Acquire, Improve and Master) to equip student with Library, digital and study skills. We intend to deliver these sessions again to relevant offer-holders during Spring and Summer 2021.
T16b_14	Conferences delivered: Challenging Stereotypes was moved on online.
T16b_15	Induction is extensive and includes handshake support for Care Leavers and one-to-one invites for all first years to Futures careers team. Student Support and disability support are a significant part of pre-entry and induction visibility.
T16b_16	This target has been discontinued as per commentary in cell P84 here and as highlighted in 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan.

T16b_17	As highlighted in W85, this project was repurposed to provide online support to students transitioning to online learning and to raise awareness of Level 3 options and higher education. Four 45-minute virtual sessions were delivered on the following themes: 1. Wellbeing, resilience and self-esteem 2. Motivation to study at home. 3. Student life and higher education 4. Level 3 options and careers. During Easter 2021, this project will revert back to supporting attainment-raising in English and Maths at GCSE level.
T16b_18	This target refers to the total number of care-experienced children and young people engaged during 2019-20. We will continue to work closely with Devon Virtual Schools to raise awareness of our WP offer for care-experienced students. We will also continue to ring-fence places on high intensity WP activities for care-experienced students.
T16b_19	We have changed focus from output to outcomes, as encouraged in the 5 year A&PP.