

Introduction

This document covers how Plymouth Marjon University helps disadvantaged groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. For each of these areas, it covers an assessment of current performance, and then moves into our ambitions for these areas and the plans we will deliver in 2019-20. Forecast spend, targets and milestones for the five years up to 2022-23 are on the appended spreadsheets.

Assessment of current performance

Assessment in the area of Widening Access

1. Plymouth Marjon University (University of St Mark & St John) has championed equality of access to higher education throughout its 180-year history. Assessment of current performance in widening access, which draws on a range of statistical indicators and provider-level data, including the UCAS multiple equality measure (MEM), highlights the University's on-going success in reducing gaps in participation among students from areas of low higher education progression and low socio-economic backgrounds, as well as mature and disabled students.

Students from POLAR 3 neighbourhoods, low household income and/or low socio-economic status backgrounds

2. The University continues to perform well against HESA benchmark and location-adjusted benchmarks in attracting young full-time degree entrants from state schools, low participation neighbourhoods (i.e. POLAR3 quintile 1) and low socio-economic backgrounds. Taking 2011 as the baseline year of entry (i.e. the year prior to the introduction of fees at the higher rate of £9000 per annum) state sector admissions have risen by 1.0 percentage point to 97.7%. Admissions of students from low participation (POLAR3) neighbourhoods have exceeded benchmark and national measures throughout this period, although the University's figure for full-time first degree entrants in 2017 was 1.3 percentage points lower than the baseline (18%) and 1.7 percentage points lower than the level in 2016 (18.4%) at 16.7%.¹ Provider-level UCAS data for 18 year old applications by POLAR3 quintile reflects this trend. From 2011 to 2016, the offer rate among young applicants from POLAR3 quintile 1 (areas with the lowest young higher education participation) rose from 54.8% to 86.1%, an increase of 31.3 percentage points.² In 2017, the offer rate for this learner group was 89.2%, a year on year increase of 3.1 percentage points.³
3. Index of Multiple Deprivation data, which measures relative deprivation for small areas in England by dividing neighbourhoods (lower-layer super output areas or LSOAs) into 10 equal groups (deciles) according to their deprivation rank, shows a steady rise in enrolments

¹ HESA Performance Indicators 2016-17, Table T1a, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/01-02-2018/widening-participation-tables>

² <https://www.ucas.com/file/90786/download?token=oWA-Mf3p>

³ <https://www.ucas.com/file/145371/download?token=K-iO-JiD>

among students from decile 1 (the most deprived neighbourhoods in England). Between 2014 and 2017, this figure increased from 3.67% to 5.13%, a rise of 1.46 percentage points.⁴ Further, the MEM Group5:Group1 ratio of applicants per 10,000 population statistic, regarded by UCAS as the most useful means of assessing gaps in higher education representation, shows that when multiple dimensions of equality (in this case, sex, ethnic group and POLAR3 classification) are combined, the University achieves significantly lower ratio values for placed 18 year old applicants when compared to other lower tariff providers and all UK providers (i.e. the sector as a whole). For each of the last 5 years, students from MEM group 1, the cohort of English 18 year olds least likely to enter higher education, have been 'more likely' or 'as likely' to be placed for entry at the University than the most advantaged MEM group 5 students.⁵

4. While MEM trend data has proven valuable in assessing the University's current access performance (for English 18 year olds) as a whole, Last Institution data calls attention to the recruitment impact of widening participation outreach activity undertaken at three local schools: Sir John Hunt Community Sports College⁶ and the University's co-sponsored, Progression Agreement-holding schools, All Saints Academy⁷ and Plymouth Studio School.⁸ All three schools have Progress 8 scores classed as 'well below average', low levels of attainment among disadvantaged students at GCSE level, high levels of free school meal eligibility and are located in LSOAs classified among the lowest IMD deciles (1 or 2) in England. Admissions metrics show, that for the 2106-17 recruitment cycle, applications to the University increased in each of the three schools, markedly in the case of Sir John Hunt Community Sports College, where a fourfold increase (from 5 to 21 applications) was recorded.⁹

Mature students

5. National trend data highlights a steep decline in higher education participation among mature students. According to data sets published in the UCAS End of Cycle Report for 2017, for example, a proportional year on year decrease of 7.0 percentage points was recorded among students aged between 21 and 25. For applicants' aged 26 and over, this proportional decrease was 9.8 percentage points.¹⁰ The University, however, continues to perform well against UK performance indicators for this learner group. Since 2011, the University has exceeded benchmark, location adjusted benchmark and the national average for mature students. HESA data for 2016 entry shows that the percentage of mature undergraduate entrants with no previous higher education participation and from low participation neighbourhoods increased by 3.9 percentage points from 9.9% to 13.8%, 4.2 percentage points higher than the benchmark (9.6%).¹¹

⁴ Source: University Admissions data

⁵ UCAS data shows that in 2017, MEM Group5:Group1 ratio of placed applicants per 10,000 population for Plymouth Marjon University was 0.7, compared to 1.9 at lower tariff providers and 3.8 at all UK providers. See: 2017 MEM Analysis: P63 (UCAS).

⁶ <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/113533>

⁷ <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/136142>

⁸ <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/142116>

⁹ Source: Provider-level Last Institution data

¹⁰ <https://www.ucas.com/file/135631/download?token=jwJ7Dg4S>

¹¹ HESA Performance Indicators 2016-17, Table 2a, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/01-02-2018/widening-participation-tables>

6. Renewed emphasis on reaching adults with no prior experience of higher education, particularly those undertaking Access to Higher Education courses at the University's Progression Agreement-holding college, City College Plymouth, is indicative of this trend. For example, admissions metrics for the 2016-17 reveal a step change of 68.2 percentage points in applications from 2015-16 to 2016-17 among students completing Access to Higher Education Diploma courses.¹²

Disabled students

7. The University remains successful in improving higher education participation rates among disabled learners. In fact, the number of students admitted to the University who claim Disability Students' Allowances (DSAs) has significantly exceeded the HESA Performance Indicator benchmark for each of the last 6 years. Taking 2011 as the baseline year of entry, admissions of disabled students have risen by 5.5 percentage points (to 16.8% for 2016 entry). This figure exceeded the University's benchmark (8.3%) by 8.5 percentage points.¹³ Provider level data shows that while the majority of disabled students register a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD, the proportion of students declaring a mental health condition has increased by 10.9 percentage points since 2014.¹⁴

Students of particular ethnicities

8. While UCAS data calls attention to the on-going under-representation of students belonging to the White ethnic group, application and intake measures show that the University continues to recruit almost entirely from this learner cohort.¹⁵ In spite of markedly high representation among White learners, the number of White 18 year old applicants and placed applicants, declined sharply between 2011 and 2017. Over the same period, however, the offer rate for 18 year old students of White ethnicity increased by 29.6 percentage points from 59.9% to 89.5%.¹⁶
9. High level and granular level data (i.e. where students are disaggregated into more detailed ethnic groups) highlights a significant disparity in representation among students from all other ethnicities. In fact, declines in applications were recorded across almost all ethnic categories between 2016 and 2017, with the steepest falls among students from Black Caribbean and Other Black ethnic origins. Admissions data reveals that students belonging to these ethnicities displayed the shared characteristic of age (i.e. were more likely to be classed as 'young' on enrolment) and were more likely to live in the lowest POLAR3 quintiles.¹⁷ UCAS data shows, however, that for four of the last six years, the offer rate for 18 year old students of Black ethnicity was 100%. For students of mixed ethnicity, the offer rate

¹² Source: Provider-level Last Institution data

¹³ HESA Performance Indicators, 2016-17, Table T7, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/01-02-2018/widening-participation-tables>

¹⁴ Source: Provider-level Admissions data

¹⁵ In 2017, the White ethnic group had the lowest entry rate of all ethnic groups at 29.3%. See:

<https://www.ucas.com/file/140396/download?token=TC7eMH9W>

¹⁶ <https://www.ucas.com/file/90786/download?token=oWA-Mf3p>

¹⁷ Source: HEP-level Admissions data

has been 100% for each of the last four years. The offer rate for 18 year old students is higher, therefore, than for those students of White ethnicity.¹⁸

Care leavers

10. Assessment of the University's performance in widening access to care leavers/looked after children shows that applications and enrolments by this learner group remain low. Learner profiling indicates that care leavers applying to the University are significantly more likely to come from areas of low higher education participation (POLAR 3 quintiles 1 or 2) and high relative deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 and 2) than the general University population. The rate of conversion for this group, however, remains consistently high at around 50%.

Assessment in the area of student success

11. In assessing how well we have supported disadvantaged students to continue in their studies, and to achieve good degree results, we have drawn on a range of external and internal provider-level data, including where numbers allow, more detailed analysis of the intersections between different disadvantages, particularly how a students' background, disability, age or gender impact upon their success at university. We have looked at five year trend data to identify emerging issues, consistent issues or areas of steady improvement.

Students from POLAR 3 neighbourhoods, low household income and/or low socio-economic status backgrounds

12. Whilst we have a successful past record in recruiting students from more deprived backgrounds, we remain alert to gaps in performance once they arrive at University. Continuation rates show that students without a parent in HE are retaining as well as those with a parent in HE, which is a good result, but there is an ongoing gap in degree results. Looking at index of multiple deprivation figures, we see that students from a more affluent background retain better and get better degree results than those from a less affluent background.

Mature students

13. A large proportion of our students are mature, but we recognise a gap in continuation rates for mature students. HESA data shows a gap in non-continuation of 6.5 percentage points, with our non-continuation rates for mature students at 18.7% vs a benchmark of 12.2%. By contrast, we are ahead of benchmark for younger students by 1.2 percentage points, showing a non-continuation rate of 7.9% vs 9.1% HESA benchmark.

14. Overall, degree results are improving, with more students achieving a first or 2.1. But in line with other universities¹⁹, degree results show that our mature students consistently perform better than younger students. Within gender groups, mature females have consistently

¹⁸ <https://www.ucas.com/file/145371/download?token=K-iO-JiD>

¹⁹ HESA data

scored the highest percentage of first and 2.1 degrees in the last six years; younger males have consistently scored the lowest percentage of first and 2.1 degrees. The trends for all groups are up over the last six years with the percentage of mature females achieving a 1st or 2.1 growing by 8.24 percentage points, and the percent of young males achieving a 1st or 2.1 growing by 11.36 percentage points.²⁰ Whilst we are reducing the gap, this gap forms a significant part of our ambitions.

Disabled students

15. The University has a proud history and a strong local reputation of supporting students with a disability, and our continuation rates for this learner group reflect ongoing success in this area. Students with a declared disability continue into the next year at a higher or very similar rate than those without a declared disability. A very slight gap of less than 1 percentage point was visible in 2016 but this followed three years of positive differential²¹. This reflects the emphatic focus and expert support that this learner group receives from our Student Support services.
16. We see a persistent gap in degree result for students with a disability, but this has shown significant improvement in the latest results. From the qualifying population, students with a disability who get a first or 2.1 have increased from 51% in 2015/16 to 60% in 2016/17. At the same time students with no disability have also improved performance from 63% up to 67%, reducing the overall gap to 7 percentage points²². However, we recognise that we remain below the Cathedrals Group average²³ for degree results for students with a disability and we are determined to close this gap.
17. There are two learner groups within the group of students with a disability that require further comment and will be returned to in the strategy. Consistently, over half of our students with a declared disability are students with a specific learning difficulty and these students show good continuation rates in line with students without a disability, and often tend to give very positive anecdotal feedback about the support they have received. Looking at degree results, we have seen in the past that a lower proportion of students with a specific learning difficulty have achieved a first or 2.1 degree than students without a disability. However, this gap is showing a strong trend of improvement, reducing from a 33% gap in 2011 to an 8 percentage point gap in 2016, when 68% students with no disability achieved a first or 2.1, compared to 59% of students with a specific learning difficulty. Whilst we continue to strive for no gap in achievement, we celebrate and recognise the work that has gone into reducing this gap, with the percentage of students with a specific learning difficulty getting a first or 2.1 increasing from 23% in 2011, up to 59% in 2016²⁴.
18. The second group to be looked at in detail are students with a mental health condition. Numbers of students with a mental health condition have increased, doubling over the period 2014 to 2017, and now make up 15% of the population of students with a disability. We have

²⁰ Provider level data; degree results by total proportion of the qualifying population.

²¹ Provider level data

²² Provider level data

²³ HESA data

²⁴ Provider level data

seen a more persistent gap in continuation for students with a mental health condition, with a 7 percentage point gap opening up on 2016 for these students compared to the whole population²⁵. This group is a focus of our strategy going forward.

19. We also recognise an emerging issue in achievement with students with a mental health condition. Whilst these students have previously shown no achievement gap, we saw a gap in 2016-17 of 8 percentage points with 59% of students with a mental health condition achieving a first or 2.1, compared to 68% of students with no disability.
20. Finally we note that numbers of students with a communication disorder have increased significantly from less than five students in the years 2011 to 2015, to 24 students in 2017. Whilst the numbers from earlier years are too low to show trends in terms of degree result or continuation, we are carefully considering specific support required for students with a communication disorder in light of the increasing numbers.

Students of particular ethnicities

21. As highlighted in Part 1, we have low learner numbers from minority ethnic groups and ambitions to significantly improve this. Our rates of continuation show significant gaps in 2012-2015, but looking at the data at course level, this was driven by large cohorts of students studying at partner institutions in Vietnam and Malaysia with very low continuation rates²⁶. We have since ended these partnerships and in 2016 we saw a positive differential in continuation rates for minority ethnic students.
22. We have a positive differential in degree results for minority ethnic students, with minority ethnic students achieving a higher proportion of firsts and 2.1 degrees in each of the last four years.²⁷ Breaking this down into individual ethnicities results in such small numbers that trend data is not robust. Whilst we intend to focus significant work on attracting more students from ethnic minorities, we are successfully retaining these students and they are achieving good degree results.

Care leavers

23. This is a small learner group and so subject to variations on data. We have previously seen very significant gaps in continuation in 2013 and 2014. However this gap was positive in 2015, by 5.61 percentage points. In 2016 it was a negative gap again, by 5.83 percentage points but we recognise good successes with individual students. At results level, the data trends are not robust.

Allied healthcare students

24. As highlighted in the regulatory advice paper 6²⁸, students on allied healthcare courses are now within the scope of Access and Participation Plans. We recognise that students on our

²⁵ Provider level data

²⁶ Provider level and course level data

²⁷ Provider level data

²⁸ https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1105/ofs2018_06.pdf

Speech and Language Therapy course are, as also highlighted in the guidance, more likely to have children and to want to study part-time. This course has in the past, had high levels of retention and good degree results, we are alert to the potential for these students to find financial issues more restrictive in future. Our retention on this course has reduced from a high of 96% in 2015 to 91% in 2017²⁹ and this will be the subject of further investigation.

Assessment in the area of student progression

25. Marjon has a long history, and much success, in working very closely with schools, and increasingly with multi-academy trusts, to enhance the future careers of our student teachers. We have also developed a far-reaching network of sport organisations to provide support to our sport and health students. Our Growth Plan for 2017-21 “*Centred on Student Success*” describes our ambitions to ensure that our students are not just work-ready, but promotion-ready, being confident, ambitious and successful in applying for higher level jobs. Our plans and teams have never been more focused around ensuring that students from all backgrounds achieve success in their degrees and in their lives after university.
26. Latest HESA ³⁰data shows that 95.8% of Marjon students from full time courses are in employment or further study within six months of graduating, compared to a benchmark of 95.7%. Our figures for graduate employment have increased in the latest cohort from 60% to 63%. We continue to recognise that this is below benchmark and below what we believe our students are capable of and are continuing to work towards increasing this measure for all students. Additionally, experimental Longitudinal Educational Outcome data shows that graduates from education courses as the best paid graduates from Education courses, on average, from any university in the South West or Wales, five years after graduation. The analysis, sharing of good practice and replication of this formula for success forms the backdrop to our ambitions for other courses.

Students from POLAR 3 neighbourhoods, low household income and/or low socio-economic status backgrounds

27. At a top level, we see strong evidence of success in helping students from all participation backgrounds to succeed in graduate level jobs, with trends showing that students from POLAR 3 quintile 1 are as successful in gaining graduate level employment as students from POLAR 3 quintile 5. In three out of the last five years of data, students from quintile 1 have been more successful in gaining graduate level employment than students from quintile 5. In 2016-17, the positive differential was almost 10 percentage points, with 69.7% of quintile 1 students gaining graduate level employment, and 60% of quintile 5 students gaining graduate level employment. This switch is also reflected when we compare graduate outcomes using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, where a prior gap between those students

²⁹ Provider level data

³⁰ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/performance-indicators/employment-summary>

from index 1 (most deprived areas) and index 10 (least deprived areas) has reversed in 2016-17.

28. By contrast, comparing data from students with or without parents in HE shows us a slightly conflicting story for last year only; generally and reassuringly, we have seen very little difference in graduate employment between those with parents in HE and those without a parent in HE, but in 2016-17 we saw a large increase in graduate employment for those with a parent in HE, from 57% to 65%, which was not mirrored in those without a parent in HE, who remained at 57% for both years.
29. However, when we look solely at young males by socio-economic background – identified below as a group consistently not achieving as high graduate-level employment as their peers, we do see significant variances. This is not visible at POLAR 3 level, where results across quintiles show no gap, but it is evidenced consistently both in a) whether young males have a parent in HE, and in b) Index of Multiple Deprivation measures. The graduate employment gap between young males with a parent in HE and those without is 9 percentage points in 2015-16, rising to 12 percentage points in 2016-17, and this is reflected when we compare the top end of the IMD measure (deciles 8, 9 and 10) to the lower end (deciles 1, 2 and 3) where we again see a 9 percentage point gap in 2015-16 and a 12 percentage point in 2016-17.
30. Recognising the national trend ³¹that students with a lower degree result are more likely to be unemployed, and that young males also tend to see a gap in degree results, we have compared students with the same degree results to see how this impacts on graduate employment. This shows that for mature students, if they get a first or 2.1 it transcends their background; there is no differential whether or not they had a parent in HE, and indeed there is a positive differential in each of the last two years. However for younger students with a first or 2.1 results, there is a slight differential opening up for those with a parent in HE, of whom a slightly higher proportion gain more graduate level employment. This differential was 2 percentage points in 2015-16 and 4 percentage points in 2016-17. The difference for those who get a 2.2 or 3rd, however, is more substantial. For students who got a 2.2 or 3rd, there was a 22 percentage point gap in 16/17 between those with a parent in HE and those without.
31. This points to two theories for our students: firstly, that if a young person is in some way disadvantaged in their background, a good degree result (both in itself and in the rigour, drive and skillset needed to achieve it) can significantly enhance their prospects and we must strive towards this; and secondly that if a young person is in some way disadvantaged and does *not* get first or 2.1 degree results, they remain disproportionately disadvantaged compared to peers with potentially higher social capital but with the same degree results. Looking at young people with differing degree results, we see a 12 percentage point gap in graduate employment rate in 2015-16 and a 25 percentage point gap in 2016-17. Our ambitions are that if a student does not have a parent in HE it is critical that we help them achieve a good result, and secondly, that even if they don't get a first or 2.1, we further

³¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications/long-destinations-2012-13>

support them to still achieve graduate level employment, as their peers with parents in HE do.

Female vs male students

32. Consistently, female students are more likely to gain graduate level employment than male students. This difference is significant when splitting by age as well; in 2016-17 female mature students achieved 79% graduate employment compared to 51% of male young students. Younger male students have consistently achieved the lowest percent of graduate employment every year for the last 5 years. The gap in the most recent cohort, of 28%, between mature females and young males, is largely driven by an almost 7 percentage point increase in female mature students gaining graduate employment last year, but there is also a 3 percentage point decrease in young male graduate employability which requires further action.

Mature students

33. Mature students are consistently more likely to achieve graduate-level employment than younger students and the gap has grown over the last three years as our mature student employment figures have improved. For younger students, the figure for 2016-17 was 55%, the same as in 2015-16, but a drop from 60% in 2014-15. Supporting younger students – and particularly finding more engaging and effective ways to support young males - into graduate level employment remains a key strategic priority.

Disabled students

34. We see a gap in graduate prospects for students with a disability, and this gap has grown slightly in 2016-17. Overall our figures have improved in the last cohort, both for students with a disability (at 56% graduate employment) and those without, (at 65% graduate employment) but those without have improved slightly faster, leaving an 8 percentage point gap. The gap is driven by students with a mental health condition, and students with a specific learning difficulty. A trend to be aware of in this context is that the numbers of students with a mental health disability have doubled since 2014 entry (and this cohort is our latest DHLE data) and so in future these students will be a larger proportion of our overall group. It is therefore critical that we tackle the question of how mental health can affect graduate prospects.

35. One cause for celebration and further analysis is that for students with a mental health condition who achieve first or 2.1, we previously still saw a gap in graduate prospects, so that despite achieving well in their degree, they found it harder to succeed after university. This gap has reduced steadily every year for the last four years, from 30 percentage points in 2012-13, down to just 2 percentage points last year. This shows the significant step-change in the way students are prepared to ask for support and are helped to manage a mental health issue; in particular taking confidence from their degree result and being prepared to apply for and tackle graduate-level jobs. It shows that if we can give students the skills and confidence to succeed at university, we can be ever more confident that they will succeed after university.

Students of particular ethnicities

36. Graduate prospects data shows that minority ethnic students are succeeding as well as students from majority ethnicities. In 2016-17 and 2015-16 there was a positive differential for UK domiciled students, of 2% and 6% respectively. For graduates on teacher training courses the difference is very positive with students of an ethnic minority on these courses achieving 100% graduate employment for each of the last three cycles. This is against the national trend highlighted by HESA data³² which highlights that students from a minority ethnic background are less likely to be in work or further study (at an overall employment level).

Care leavers

37. Small cohorts here mean that assessing graduate prospects of care leavers is inconclusive; however we do have additional measures in place to ensure care leavers can succeed into graduate level employment.

Allied healthcare students

38. Students on our Speech and Language Therapy course have in the last four years had high levels of graduate employability of over 75%, with results of 100%, 75%, 93% and 81% in the last four cohorts. We recognise that with the changing nature of the funding for this course, and the potential impact on students, we need to be alert to these results particularly due to the drop-off in 2016-17.

Ambition and strategy

Ambition and Strategy for Widening Access

39. In accordance with the goals, vision and objectives outlined in the OfS Regulatory Framework (OfS 2018.01), the University will continue to work to address social mobility by ensuring that students from all backgrounds – including the target groups identified in the University’s assessment of current performance – have the opportunity to access, succeed in and progress from higher education, and are fully supported in doing so.

40. The University’s widening participation outreach strategy will continue to be 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. The University will also continue to nurture and develop strong and sustained working relationships with schools, colleges and other HEIs as a means of ensuring meaningful learner outcomes and sharing best practice.

41. Our access strategy in 2019-20 is further underpinned by the following guiding principles:

³² <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/publications/long-destinations-2012-13>

- **Whole provider approach** – Outreach activity draws on the expertise of colleagues throughout the University in the design and delivery of interventions (e.g. ITT pathways at Summer School, student involvement and consultation via Student Ambassador Scheme), aligning closely with equality and diversity objectives.
- **Student lifecycle approach** – Sustained outreach delivered across all of the key stages and at Level 3 with early ‘seeding’ at primary level and frequent, targeted interventions at key stages 3, 4 and 5, and mature learners at Level 3.
- **Student-centred activities and AIG** – Agile and responsive to the needs of individual learners and their supporters (i.e. parents, carers and teachers) throughout the student journey with ongoing support as required
- **Holistic** – Addressing multiple barriers to progression; raising awareness, aspiration and attainment in tandem with confidence-building, improving self-efficacy and grit/resilience.
- **Experiential and enjoyable** – Active learning approaches to improve students’ enjoyment of education and nurture positive associations with Higher Education.
- **Progression Agreement/compact model** – Measures to remove barriers to access via a reduced tariff and other admissions-based concessions.

Target groups

42. Through its assessment of current performance, the University has identified good performance against HESA benchmark, location adjusted benchmark and national metrics (including the UCAS multiple equality measure (MEM)) in a number of areas, particularly those involving young and mature entrants in areas where high socio-economic disadvantage is prevalent, and among those learners claiming Disability Students’ Allowances.
43. The decrease in the HESA performance indicator for young participation among students belonging to the lowest POLAR3 quintiles, however, is concerning. The University intends to increase its coverage/delivery of widening participation outreach, therefore, to students located in areas where higher education participation (according to the POLAR3 method) is low, and according to household and area-based measures (i.e. free school meal eligibility and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)), and family-based measures linked to prior higher education experience. This multidimensional approach, which takes account of the likely interaction between multiple equality dimensions, will work towards a return to growth in applications from white working class male and white working class female students located in the lowest POLAR3 quintiles. As admissions data shows, applications from these subgroups have declined significantly since the introduction of the higher fee regime in 2012, (particularly among female learners).
44. Further, Last Institution Data shows that when schools and/or FECs receive a package of outreach of activity in tandem with a reduced tariff and/or other admissions-related concessions via a Progression Agreement/compact, target students are not only more likely to apply to the University, but are more likely to enrol. University data reveals, for example, a year-on-year step change of 34% (from 2016 to 2017) in enrolments by target students at Progression Agreement/Compact-holding schools and FECs in areas of low higher education participation and high relative deprivation (IMD and IDACI deciles 1 and 2). In light of these

findings, the University intends to develop Progression Agreements/Compacts with a further eight schools (four in each of the next two consecutive academic years), including those belonging to the Partnership for Learning and Education (Sir John Hunt Community Sports College, Lipson Cooperative Academy and Tor Bridge High), the largest provider of sixth form provision in the city, as well as other multi-academy trusts in Plymouth.

Addressing under-representation of BAME students

45. Located in a region with comparatively low levels of ethnic diversity,³³ where only 1% of the young population belong to the Black ethnic group,³⁴ the University faces a persistent challenge in attracting students belonging to all other ethnicities, particularly those from Black Caribbean and Other Black ethnic origins.³⁵ Assessment of current performance suggests that ring-fencing approaches, where target students are prioritised for inclusion in high impact interventions (i.e. summer schools) have not been effective in widening access for BAME learners, due to the predominantly white learner profile of the Plymouth-based schools and FECs with which the University works.
46. Over the course of the next academic year (2018-19), the University will therefore engage (current and prospective) BAME students and examine sector-wide best practice to develop a nuanced and rigorous methodology for addressing the under-representation of ethnic minority groups in its own context. Above all, the University intends to ensure that interventions are evidenced-led and targeted to those with greatest need (i.e. where multiple dimensions of equality entwine).³⁶ To mitigate the risk of developing initiatives which evoke so-called 'deficit constructions' and/or 'problematise' ethnic minority students (as highlighted by the Runnymede Trust),³⁷ and following guidance provided by OFFA,³⁸ the University intends to adopt a multi-layered strategy involving:
- Qualitative analysis of the experiences of current and prospective BAME students in order to fully understand the challenges and opportunities for improving representation in the University's own context and according to the socio-economic and cultural specificities of students belonging to different BAME categories (akin to the work being undertaken by Queen Mary University of London).³⁹
 - The development of a keen understanding of best practice within the sector, exploring opportunities for collaboration with Outreach teams at other HEIs where targeted interventions have been effective (e.g. the 'Fast Trackers' project involving Somali students at the University of Liverpool) and drawing on the research and expertise of relevant third sector organisations (i.e. the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)).

³³ 2011 Census data shows that across the English regions and Wales, Wales was the least diverse area, followed by the South West and North East. See:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/ethnicityandnationalidentityinenglandandwales/2012-12-11>

³⁴ <https://www.ucas.com/file/65651/download?token=Sv-zNKMr>

³⁵ The University also understands that students from these backgrounds are more likely to remain at home for the duration of their studies.

³⁶ <https://www.offa.org.uk/egp/ethnicity/>

³⁷ <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Aiming%20Higher.pdf>

³⁸ <https://www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/guidance/topic-briefings/offa-topic-briefing-bme-students/>

³⁹ <https://www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/guidance/topic-briefings/offa-topic-briefing-bme-students/case-study-queen-mary-university-london/>

- The cultivation of links with learner communities in schools and FECs (and via relevant third sector organisations) in ethnically diverse areas (e.g. Bristol).⁴⁰
- Attendance at higher education fairs and conventions held in ethnically diverse cities (e.g. London, Bristol, Manchester, Cardiff) including, but not limited to, UCAS and Train to Teach, to improve front of mind awareness among target students and their influencers of the University.
- Collaboration with current and prospective BAME students on the design, implementation and evaluation of targeted measures to improve representation, learning from their experience at every turn.

The University is committed to identifying and introducing credible, access-related targets and milestones once this consultation is underway.

Care leavers

47. Currently, the University's work with looked after children predominantly focuses on students at key stages 2 and 3. For example, the University has worked closely with the Devon Virtual School and Millfield's Inspired to normalise the experience of higher education among primary age children via visit day events and hands-on, subject taster sessions (e.g. Journalism and Sports Therapy).
48. Specific challenges remain in terms of identifying and subsequently engaging older students in ways that are sensitive, meaningful and, ultimately effective in terms of improving progression to higher education. The University intends to tap in to sector-wide best practice and the work of other outreach professionals at neighbouring universities and the Devon Virtual School to devise a programme of bespoke activities, therefore, for looked after children/care leavers at key stages 4 and 5/Level 3. These measures will be in addition to and complement the work of the Student Support team, who act as the main point of contact for Care Leaving students and provide 1:1 advice on funding support (e.g. care leaver bursaries) and making an application to the University.

Evaluation

49. Evaluation is fundamental to the University's widening participation practice and continues to be an area of continuous improvement for the Outreach team. In our 2018-19 Access Agreement with OFFA, we outlined our use of the Higher Education Academy's 'Practitioner toolkit: Evaluation' to support the management and delivery of outreach work.⁴¹ The toolkit provides guidance on identifying potential input, participant and output data sources, evaluation planning (i.e. assessing the risk of evaluation, engaging project stakeholders, identifying evaluation purpose) and on measuring the impact of initiatives via qualitative and quantitative methods (i.e. Kirkpatrick's four level framework and RUFDATA approaches).

⁴⁰ In Bristol, for example, BAME groups make up 16% of the total population. In the ward of St Pauls, for example, this figure is 80%. See: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/33904/Population+of+Bristol+April+2018/53020277-05de-a153-2052-aa080338bb57>

⁴¹ See: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/evaluation_3rd.pdf

50. The evaluation models proposed by the Higher Education Academy have proven valuable in assessing the impact of our outreach work and ensuring that our resources are directed to those students with the greatest need. While the University has adopted a 'funnel approach' to outreach work at key stages 2 and 3, drawing on different input data sources (i.e. POLAR, IMD, IDACI, Progress 8 scores) at key stages 4 and at Level 3 has ensured that activities are highly targeted.
51. Working alongside Admissions colleagues we have been able to investigate (some) learner outcomes (i.e. using admissions metrics data) and undertake appropriate cost-benefit analysis for more intensive, Level 3 interventions such as small group mentoring programmes and residential activities. For example, we know that our annual widening participation summer school, (with pathways in Sport and Health Sciences, Journalism and Initial Teacher Training), targeted at students in school year 12, generates attend to apply ratios of 70% and attend to enrol ratios of up to 50%. Similarly, the University's annual Education and Social Sciences Conference has attend to enrol ratios of up to 80%. In terms of attainment-raising activity, assessment carried out at the beginning and end of our recent Easter GCSE revision school in English and Maths showed that students' understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals increased significantly following the intervention.
52. The University has faced a challenge, however, in tracking learner outcomes for those students who apply to undertake undergraduate courses at other universities or whose educational journey ceases after Level 3. During the 2016-17 academic year, the University therefore became a member of the Higher Education Access Tracker Service (HEAT). This collaborative database provides a web-based data-capture system that tracks student engagement in outreach activities delivered by each subscriber HEI and partnership projects. While admissions metrics have provided insight into patterns of student application and enrolment, HEAT allows the University to track a broader cohort of students over a wider span of time (i.e. pre and post-16), and to more fully understand the impact of outreach work in relation to a wide variety of participant characteristics and by combinations of outreach.
53. In order to further refine our evaluation work, the University has also sought the expertise of the evaluation specialists working as part of the NCOP consortium, Next Steps South West (NSSW). By working closely with colleagues within NSSW, we have been able to engage with best practice, continuously improve our work and, most importantly, collaborate on evaluation design and reporting mechanisms (i.e. via the Higher Education Access Tracker). This has proven particularly useful for the delivery of co-funded projects. For example, the University and NSSW worked closely on the development of an evaluation plan and evaluation tools for the co-funded, GCSE attainment-raising project, which took place in April, 2018. The University will continue to work closely with Evaluation specialists within the Next Steps South West consortium and elsewhere (i.e. with regional members of the Higher Education Liaison Officers Association (HELOA)) to ensure best practice and continuous improvement in terms of evaluation work.

Complementarity with other activity

54. The University was a founding member of the NNCO, Devon Collaborative Outreach Programme (DCON) and closely involved in the bidding process for and subsequent development of the NCOP consortium, Next Steps South West (NSSW). In developing the initial bid for NSSW, the University proposed embedding Institutional Outreach Officers within existing Outreach teams at partner HEIs, as a means of ensuring complementarity with other activity, avoiding duplication and/or cold spots in coverage and in order to share, align and combine best practice. As such, two Next Steps South West Institutional Outreach Officers (1.0 FTE and 0.6 FTE) are based within the University's Outreach team and currently act as the single point of contact for five target schools in Plymouth (including three of the University's partner and/or co-sponsored schools), delivering activities (e.g. Articulacy, CareerPilot, an e-Me online mentoring project delivered with Brightside and in-school activities with Careers South West) to students in school years 9 to 13.
55. In order to avoid cold spots in provision and/or coverage, the University works closely with MAT and Aspiration coordinators, and heads of year (particularly at Level 3), to devise and deliver activities for students who fall outside of the remit of the NSSW (i.e. children at primary school and in school years 7 and 8). These activities include a large key stage 2 event (University Open Day) with pre-event, in-school activities inspired by Professor Fluffy's Educational Adventure, an Aim High! event for students in school years 7 and 8, and small group mentoring programme for qualifying MAT students in school year 9. For students at Level 3/post-16 we have developed a collaborative model where certain high intensity activities and interventions (summer schools, Easter revision/attainment-raising programmes for students at GCSE level) are jointly delivered as a means of increasing coverage and maximising impact.

Financial Support evaluation

56. Following a review of the impact of the financial bursary for higher achievers (ABB at A-level) we ended this bursary in 2016-17 as it was not shown to influence decision-making or retention. The funding was reallocated to the hardship fund and placement bursaries, where there was evidence to suggest a positive correlation with improved retention and student employability. We will continue to assess this in more detail in the coming year.

Ambition and Strategy for improving success

57. As with our ambitions for access, in accordance with the vision of the OfS Regulatory Framework, the university will continue to work towards ensuring that students from all backgrounds can succeed in higher education. We will continue to use an evidence-led methodology, evaluating activities and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement.

The University has identified the following ambitions for specific priority work:

Supporting mature students to continue in their studies

58. The University recognises the criticality of addressing the gap in continuation for mature students. Much of our recent work on retention will begin to address this and we will continue to test, review and improve upon this in consistent ways over the coming years.

59. The Personal Development Tutor system was redeveloped in 2017 to include more group work to help students to bond with other students, and to include more confidence-building and resilience activities. This has been regularly assessed with student and tutor groups and improvements put in place, such as changing how flexible or structured specific sessions are. In 2018 we will review the opportunity to develop activities through Personal Development Tutors specifically for mature students.
60. In September 2017 we introduced a new digital Check-In system for all students to check-in to lectures via our app. This has since been developed to include library usage and Checking-out (to understand lecture lengths) and is undergoing constant communication focus to ensure that all students and lecturers understand the importance of this in supporting students effectively. A recent development is that Personal Development Tutors are sent dashboards at the start of each week to identify students who appear to be disengaging with their studies, in order to understand any issues early on. Through this data we expect to gain significant insight into why mature students particularly might struggle to continue with their studies.
61. We recognise that many of our students, both mature and younger, have part-time jobs, but that mature students in general may have more caring responsibilities than 18 to 20 year olds. We have therefore placed significant emphasis this year on minimising timetable changes that impact students, and have succeeded in reducing these changes (day or time changes, rather than room changes). This is now tracked and reviewed at Senior Management Team monthly. In addition, we have brought forward our timetabling activity to ensure that all students receive their timetable for the next semester six weeks in advance, and can therefore plan their lives around this.
62. We work actively with students on timetable questions, through our Student Union, our Student Experience Council and network of Student Reps, as well as within individual faculties and course groups. Questions we have actively consulted on with students this year have included the return to work after New Year, the way Easter holidays fall compared to school holidays, re-instigating lectures on Wednesday mornings up to 11.30am to bring in more timetabling hours whilst still allowing support for BUCS teams, and whether the start time of lectures should move from 9am to 9.30am to support those with children. We will continue to develop this very active partnership with students on these critical questions which we recognise can impact mature students much more than young students.
63. In Autumn 2018 we intend to restructure our out-of-hours support to include more on-campus support, with the intent of engaging and socialising with all groups. The job description for this will include a focus on engagement and activity for mature students.
64. As part of our current Estates Consultation, we are considering the redesign and repurposing of our Staff Club to be open for students, and a specific aim of this is to give mature students an alternative socialising space.
65. Finally, supporting mature students is a central tenet of the Marjon Student Union Strategic Plan, developed in consultation with around 200 students in 2017. In 2018 they have

supported the development of new societies to reflect an alternative culture to the previous narrative, including a feminist society, geek squad, vegetarian and vegan society, LGBTQ+ society and movie club – none are aimed at mature students but they are aimed at maturing the narrative on campus and making all students feel at home. Our current Vice-President Elect is a masters student, and in September elections for part-time officers will be held including a mature student officer.

66. Welcome week this year includes more activities aimed at mature students, including talks on maximising funding, as well as social activities which include childcare. Student Support target their early face to face whole class information and guidance at cohorts of mature students, such as our FdA degrees, recognising that these students may have more complex lives outside university.

Supporting students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and from low participation (POLAR3) backgrounds to continue in their studies and to achieve higher grades, and supporting students without a parent in HE to achieve higher grades

67. We are proud of our history of attracting students from lower-participation backgrounds, and we will continue our focus on this. We recognise that there may be a multiplicity of reasons for gaps in success for students in these groups, and that targeted measures can improve results for students across various groups. Our activities will therefore broadly target students from these groups rather than, for example, specify activity by postcode.
68. We will improve AIG for parents and our students' supporters so that those without a background in HE are more aware of what to expect. We have tested this with a very popular parents' lounge at Applicant Days in 2018, enabling parents to ask important questions without their children being aware. This has also enabled informal networking and support groups to form. We intend to use the ongoing learnings from this to develop parental support guidance and a network for Marjon parents, in recognition that many of them do not have previous experience of higher education.
69. Our early investigations show that some of our students, particularly in their first year, ask a parent to check their work before submitting, meaning that a difference in parental education could result in a gap in student success. One change recently introduced is to enable students to check for plagiarism before submission of their final dissertation and this has proven popular, giving reasonable grounds to believe that an online system could be suitable. In September 2018 we will trial a system (Studiosity) by which all students can check their work, and gain feedback before submission of any assessments. We will review the usage of this system with staff and students, to understand whether it helps students to improve their work and how we can avoid it becoming a crutch. An option on this which we will consider during review could be to enable students from more deprived backgrounds more 'credits' to use on the system than other students, thus levelling the playing field.
70. We are also recruiting learning skills support advisors, who will introduce learning skills sessions covering broad areas such as literacy and numeracy to ensure that all students

have a place to go to double-check their work and a safe space to ask questions. Our PDTs will be able to advise any students without a parent in HE to use these sessions.

71. We run a hardship fund in recognition of the fact that for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, finances can be a fundamental reason for not continuing at university. We have increased the awareness of this in 2018, making many callouts for students to come forward and ask for help, which has been particularly appreciated and noted by students on allied health courses impacted by the student loan errors in 2017. In addition, we support students on teacher training programmes with costs for placements, depending on their need, and in 2018-19 we wish to review and improve this to ensure it has sufficient impact for target students.
72. Whilst not related, we recognise that many of our students come to us with BTEC qualifications and that there is research to imply that these may not prepare students as well for degree-level study as A-levels. We will therefore use PDT initial assessments to ensure that students with BTECs, and background disadvantages are made aware of and strongly encouraged to use the extra-curricular supports such as the Learning Skills sessions in the library.

Supporting students with a specific learning difficulty to achieve higher grades

73. We offer substantial and well-received support to students with a learning difficulty, but we sometimes only see students for the first time in their second or third year. We want to ensure that students feel able to come forward early in their university career and therefore access the available support for all three years. This year we will further analyse variances in degree success by how much support is accessed, and we hope the results of this may encourage more students to seek out support early. A new student handbook has been produced for 2018, with a full page encouraging students to seek help early if they think they may have a learning disability.
74. We will also focus on ensuring that all courses have accessible assessment methods, raising awareness of the impact of varying methods, particularly on students with a mental health issue or a specific learning difficulty. In revalidating programmes, in recognition of the pressure put upon students with either a specific learning difficulty or a mental health condition, we will only allow exam assessments where there is a strong academic argument for it, rather than include this by default. We will share best practice for inclusive assessment, and review all courses for their inclusivity. This will include further development of our formative assessment policy in order to support those who may require early feedback and can't access it elsewhere, in recognition of the attainment gap between those students with and without a parent in HE.

Supporting students with a mental health condition to continue in their studies

75. As already noted, students with a declared mental health condition are increasing in numbers, and this is a core strategic focus for both the Student Union and the University

support services. This year we will significantly develop the integration of our approach, taking on a whole university approach to mental health as described by UUK in 2017.⁴²

76. We are increasing training across the University, creating mental health first aiders, and raising awareness and reducing stigma of mental health through campaigning (often led by the SU), information and guidance. We have begun a Mental Health Working Group in partnership with students, which is firstly investigating the student year and looking at particular pressure points. Actions and proposals from this are going to Academic Board, in line with the whole university approach. We offer counselling for all students and are currently assessing our services in this regard to ensure we can keep up with increased demand. Our new handbook has clear guidance with options on where to go for help, both internally and externally, and within the calendar section has specific reminders at particular pressure points of the year to seek out help, and how.
77. Our estate planning has always taken into account physical and mental wellbeing, but in 2017 included specific developments such as creating more social learning spaces and better access to student services in our Student Hub development, introducing a nap room in our Chaplaincy and turning a lecture theatre into a flexible relaxed learning space and cinema. Our Estates Strategy 2018-21 (currently under consultation with staff and students), also takes into account student mental health and wellbeing. Our Student Union are active in developing the campus to support student wellbeing, and plans include the development of allotments, a nature trail and a sensory garden. Our determination long term is that all students with a mental health condition are supported to continue their studies and gain good degree results, giving them the confidence to gain graduate level employment.

Ensuring all care leavers are aware of and can access the support available

78. We have increased the bursary for students leaving care from £1000 to £2000 this year and will continue to ensure that all students are aware of this and come forward to apply for this. Our mentoring of this small group will continue within Student Support services, but we will also ensure an active and careful “handshake” introduction to the Futures team, to ensure that these students are preparing well for graduate level employment from the start of their studies.

Allied healthcare students

79. In 2018 we are introducing a part-time degree in Speech and Language Therapy to encourage more experienced and mature students into this career. As part of the introduction of this degree, we will work closely with the first cohort of students to develop and design the degree to suit their needs. We will measure the success of this through module evaluation results and student retention measures, ensuring that we maintain the same positive results seen on the full-time SLT course.

Ambition and Strategy for improving progression

⁴² <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/stepchange/Pages/whole-university-approach.aspx>

80. We are proud of the positive and significant impact we have on our students' lives, but at the same time we recognise that we need to support more of our students to progress quickly into graduate level employment. The focus of our work is around improving their attainment levels in order to flatten the playing field; giving them the ambitions and desire to take on graduate-level roles, and ensuring they have the abilities to both apply for and succeed in graduate-level roles.
81. Our previous work in developing more partnerships for students continues, most recently with the BBC for our Journalism students, and within healthcare for our Osteopathy, Psychology and Psychotherapy and Counselling students. Our integrated career module reflects the needs of each course, with careers specialists from the Marjon Futures team working closely with Personal Development Tutors and Programme Leads to develop course specific activities and interventions. We will continue to provide bespoke career provision within specific groups by course, to ensure that courses with the lowest graduate employment rates have early interventions.
82. We continue to offer job opportunities to students on campus, giving valuable work experience, training, and references for future careers and we intend to co-ordinate and review these roles in 2018-19. These roles allow us a more direct route to increase student training and preparedness for work, and we will ensure that any students who are employed by us take part in high quality training to prepare them for a successful future career.
83. Digital capabilities are recognised by JISC⁴³ as critical for career development, and these have been embedded for some time in our curriculum. This year we are extending and improving this across the University to include job search abilities, personal branding and self-promotion and digital literacy, in a cross-functional project between the Futures team, the e-learning team and academics within the Business School.
84. In 2018-19 we intend to improve our international travel bursary, bringing more variety for students. Previously this has focused on Camp America, with a bursary of up to £600 for all successful applicants, but we will expand this to include further options for students with differing ambitions. We will amend the criteria to be means-tested and ensure students also include an element of fundraising which provides significant personal development. This is in recognition of research demonstrating that international experiences can have a significant impact on social mobility, degree results and earnings after university, and have a disproportionately positive effect on students from more disadvantaged backgrounds⁴⁴. We recognise that for many of our students there are a range of significant barriers to international experiences, and so this year we aim to provide a range of safe space experiences that can steadily extend their comfort zones, at the same time as understanding the full impact of barriers.

⁴³<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/designing-learning-and-assessment-in-a-digital-age/digital-capability-and-employability>

⁴⁴ http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/International/GoneInternational2017_A4.pdf
Nadine Richard, Rosalind Lowe and Catriona Hanks

All of the above activities will support all groups to succeed, but we have identified three key student groups to focus on for progression:

Supporting younger students to gain graduate level employment, particularly younger males from more deprived backgrounds

85. The consistent gap in graduate-level employment between younger and more mature students, and between females and males, will be the subject of significant focus. This year we have targeted interventions from the Futures team at those courses achieving lowest levels of graduate employment. We ensure all students have the opportunity to gain experience through a placement module, and we are increasing our focus on this, recently producing more specific guidance for students in choosing and completing placements, in recognition of research showing that the quality of the placement experience is critical to its impact on future careers⁴⁵.
86. Our data also shows that for students who are young, and without a parent in HE, their degree result is essential for gaining graduate level employment. If they achieve a first or a 2.1, there is a 4% gap in graduate employment for those with or without a parent in HE. But for students who achieve a 2.2 or a third, there is a 22% gap. Our focus on raising graduate employment for this group needs to focus as well on helping more of them to gain top degree results, and then to focus on students who don't get top degree results at the end of the year, to ensure they are not forgotten. Our alumni database and management has developed significantly this year and with the ending of DHLE, we will replace with alternative research which will enable us to offer support more directly to those who need it.
87. We recognise the importance of creating positive role models, and raising ambitions of this group from early on in their studies and so we will recruit Marjon Employability Ambassadors to act as one-to-one mentors and to deliver small group mentoring, firstly from the local business community and then extending this to broader industries across our alumni community. We are investing further in our Futures online platform this year, allowing us to create awards for various employability activities. The platform will hold live data on student engagement, and we will expect Personal Development Tutors to gently intervene where students are showing little engagement in their future career planning. Finally we will ensure that all students, within their first eight weeks at Marjon, are invited to meet the Futures team for an initial assessment of their career aspirations. Outcomes of these meetings will include being invited to specific further group work, dependent on current career thinking or aspirations, for example being invited to be mentored by a member of our alumni community.
88. We recognise that a focus specifically on young disadvantaged males will be essential in increasing progression into graduate level employment. Several strands of our student engagement strategy will intertwine to focus specifically on young disadvantaged students, both male and female, including trialling a student "change-makers" programme as used at other universities such as Exeter and Winchester.

⁴⁵ http://publications.aston.ac.uk/18824/1/Placements_and_degree_performance.pdf

89. We recognise that some courses have higher proportions of young males with lower graduate employment, and we will target interventions by course, covering raising ambitions, raising attainment through additional learning skills work and finally through ensuring application skills are not letting our students down.
90. Finally, we will review and develop our marketing campaigns to specifically aim to attract young males from deprived areas to the courses most likely to lead to good graduate-level employment, such as teaching and SLT. We will do this both through strong creative and story-telling, and through digital targeted interventions, such as Facebook targeting or Google Display Network targeting.
91. Our ambition in this area is to continually raise the graduate level employment of young males, through targeted interventions by course whilst maintaining or increasing the higher levels of other groups.

Supporting students with a specific learning difficulty or with a mental health disability to achieve graduate level employment.

92. Data shows that if we can help students to achieve good grades, we are much more successful in helping them to gain graduate level employment. In addition to supporting them to succeed in their grades, we have ambitions to increase the visibility and awareness of students with disabilities succeeding, and ensure that even if students don't achieve high grades they are still supported into graduate level employment.
93. We have recently begun working with "Work Routes" (a programme designed to support individuals into employment who may experience challenges (physical and mental health, care leavers etc), funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the European Union Social Fund. This programme enables target students to work with a key worker for up to year, helping them to move confidently into sustained and meaningful employment after graduating.

Ensuring all care leavers are supported into graduate level employment

94. For many of our students, leaving university is cause for significant apprehension, and we recognise that for care leavers this is likely to be compounded. Whilst we currently welcome this group of learners in with mentoring from the Student Support team, from September 2018 we will also introduce an active and careful "handshake" introduction to the Futures team, with ongoing support, to ensure that these students are prepared well for graduate-level employment from the start of their studies. We will particularly aim to recruit one of our Marjon Enterprise and Employability Ambassadors from a care background to provide further inspiration and small group support for this group.

Access, student success and progression measures

Measures for Widening Access

95. In 2019-20, the University will continue its work in advancing equality of opportunity for under-represented groups by delivering programmes of outreach throughout the student lifecycle and in ways that are cost-effective, evidence-led and demonstrably high impact. The University also recognises the benefits of working collaboratively and will continue to seek out opportunities for collaboration both within the higher education sector and outside (i.e. with schools, FECs, and third sector organisations) as a means of sharing best and innovative practice, and facilitating continuous improvement. This collaborative approach involves listening to those who know target students best; teachers, careers and aspiration coordinators, heads of year and, wherever possible, parents, carers and supporters, to deliver activities that are relevant and tailored, therefore, to the needs of individual students. Further, the University is committed to directing its work to those students foregrounded in the assessment of current performance and according to the strategic aims and objectives outlined by the OfS.

96. The University intends to review progress against the milestones and targets outlined in the Resource Plan at quarterly intervals in order to identify and mitigate the risk of programmes not being delivered or outcomes not being achieved.

Outreach with schools and young people

97. Since 2016, the University has significantly expanded its delivery of outreach work in local primary and secondary schools. In particular, we have worked to cultivate links and build relationships with key stakeholders in schools where school performance data and area-based measures indicate that learners face significant barriers to social mobility. In light of the demonstrable impact of these programmes of activity, the University will continue to direct its resources to local schools where Progress 8 scores are below average, levels of free school meal eligibility are high and where POLAR3 data indicates low levels of higher education participation. Where feasible to do so, these programmes will be aligned with key transition points in the student lifecycle.

98. The University will continue to adopt a funnel approach to Outreach at key stages 2 and 3, with more targeted activity (i.e. residential opportunities, GCSE interventions) delivered at key stage 4 and at Level 3 where protected/priority characteristics can be identified. These programmes of activity are summarised below:

Target group or Key Stage	Programme of activity
Learners in school years 5 and 6 (Key stage 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Primary Open Day' - Campus-based event comprising fun and engaging activities delivered in collaboration with the Devon Virtual School and Millfield's Inspired.⁴⁶• In-school activities delivered by Student Ambassadors in

⁴⁶ Millfield's Inspired is community-based charity located in the Stonehouse neighbourhood of Plymouth (part of St Peter and the Waterfront ward). This LSOA falls within the most deprived 1% of LSOAs nationally. See: <http://millfieldstrust.com/millfields-inspired/>

	<p>immediate run-up to 'Primary Open Day' (drawing on the work of the University of Liverpool and Professor Fluffy's Educational Adventure)</p>
<p>Learners in school years 7 - 9 (Key Stage 3)</p> <p>Parents and carers of Key Stage 3 students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim High! - A series of campus-based events involving subject-level master classes, mini lectures and fun 'wrap around' sessions (i.e. interactive campus tours, clubs and societies activity) led by Student Ambassadors and delivered prior to February half-term (and GCSE choice-making) • Pre-GSCE 'options' and exam support sessions delivered by the Outreach team
<p>Learners in school years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4)</p> <p>Parents and carers of Key Stage 4 students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus-based activities including, but not limited to subject-specific sessions, master classes, AIG • Parents' evenings (in school) – higher education awareness-raising talks and activities • GCSE attainment-raising support, including small group mentoring for target students in partner schools • GCSE interventions in English and Maths delivered in partnership with Next Steps South West (NSSW)
<p>Learners at Level 3 (i.e. White males located in POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2, IMD and IDACI deciles 1 and 2, disabled learners, care leavers/looked after children, BAME students, disabled students)</p> <p>Parents and carers of Level 3 students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progression Agreement/compacts with partner schools and colleges – admissions concessions and package of curriculum-aligned, attainment-raising activities and application/UCAS support • Attendance at Higher education fairs and conventions (UCAS, Train to Teach, school and college information fairs) in areas where the proportion of students from BAME groups is high (i.e. Bristol, Manchester, London) • Bespoke campus-based visit events and application support for care leavers/looked after children • Parents' and sixth form open evenings at partner schools and colleges – higher education awareness-raising talks and activities • Careers and IAG events, collaborative network events • Campus-based, curriculum-aligned activities including master classes, Discover Days, conferences and careers days to improve subject knowledge • Small group mentoring programmes for target students at partner schools in year 12 – AIG, UCAS application support, confidence-building, activities to improve resilience and self-efficacy • Residential summer schools for target students in school year 12 with pathways in Initial Teacher Training, Sport and Business, delivered in collaboration with Plymouth Music

Strategic relationships with schools

The University is a co-sponsor of All Saints Academy Plymouth (ASAP), an academy school and business and enterprise college. We have committed to work strategically with ASAP to increase participation of target groups from the ASAP community in higher education by:

- Providing continuing professional development for staff
- Helping with curriculum development; particularly in Mathematics and Sport
- Supporting our students through the Gifted and Talented programmes, developing our excellent sport provision and student programmes, serving on the Governing Body.

99. The University will continue to work closely with the Partnership for Learning and Education (PLE), a consortium of five schools in Plymouth located in areas of low participation, and where a high proportion of enrolled students are from a lower socio-economic background. For 2019-20, the University will continue to work with the PLE to develop events that broaden horizons and raise awareness of the career opportunities available to students when they leave school.

100. In light of the uncertainty surrounding the future of the University's co-sponsored school, Plymouth Studio School, we will investigate opportunities for sponsoring other schools in Plymouth, with a view to improving learner outcomes and providing support (via colleagues in the Faculty of Education, Enterprise and Culture) in terms of strategy and governance, and in terms of teaching quality.

Mature Learners

101. In its assessment of current performance, the University identified success in improving participation rates among mature learners, particularly those with no prior experience of further and/or higher education (i.e. students completing Access to Higher Education Diploma programmes). In 2019-20, the University will continue to deliver a package of outreach work, therefore, with mature learners at City College Plymouth, Cornwall College, Saltash and Exeter College. This package of support will include:

- Progression Agreement/compact with the University providing lower entry tariff and admissions concessions
- Well-tailored AIG delivered by the Outreach team and relevant academic colleagues, shedding light on progression routes
- Attendance at Open Evening events for prospective students
- Bespoke, campus-based events and activities for students completing Access courses

102. The University will continue to offer Foundation Degrees with work-placed learning pathways (FdA Learning and Teaching, FdA Early Years), with specific emphasis on attracting mature students, particularly mature female learners. In 2019-20, the University

intends to introduce a part-time route for BSc Speech and Language Therapy in order to improve representation among mature learners.

Careerpilot

103. The University will continue collaborate with nineteen other universities to fund, maintain, develop and promote the free to use, careers and progression planning websites managed by the Western Vocational Progression Consortium (WVPC) based at the University of Bath:
- Lifepilot, engaging and supporting mature and part-time students in progressing to higher level study (www.life-pilot.co.uk),
 - Careerpilot, an award-winning website providing one-stop inspirational, impartial pathway and progression information to 13-19 year olds, parents and advisers in the South of England region. The site was used by 420,000+ users in 2017-18.⁴⁷ Careerpilot supports schools in meeting the 2018 Careers Statutory Guidance and 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and is integrated into the work of six NCOP projects.

Measures for Improving Success

104. Our activities for improving success are based on actively seeking feedback from student groups, and working closely with colleagues who provide their support to these groups. Our Chatback service provides an opportunity for students to identify points they would like raising about their experience and this is often used to develop further conversations, for example at Staff Student Liaison Committees, Faculty Boards of Study and Student Experience Council. Frequently, the comments raised are from “minority” groups who may feel less certain about being vocal about their points elsewhere and so this has been an important development in ensuring we listen to all students, not just the loudest students. We will continue to use this mechanism to request feedback on developing ideas and to understand the impact of ideas we deliver.
105. Many of these more tightly targeted aims are relatively new, and although we have started to review proposed actions with groups of target students, we will renew this in September 2018, particularly with newly enrolled students as they will gain the full benefit of the plan. We will do this through focus groups with target groups, through Student Union online surveys, and through anonymous commentary, enabling students to share their views however confident they are.
106. Our Care Leavers bursary will be analysed in 2019-20 to understand its impact on both attracting and retaining Care Leavers. It has been increased in order to be in line with local competitors. We will also further analyse our hardship fund spend to understand how hardship impacts on students and the best way to deliver this funding, as well as our teacher training placement funding, to understand how other groups may benefit from some of this support, for example to support Journalism students taking up placements in London.

⁴⁷ See: www.careerpilot.org.uk

107. Our programme to improve success within target groups:

Target group or Key Stage	Programme of activity
Supporting mature students to continue in their studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver mature students Welcome week activities • Develop additional non-sporting clubs and societies • Reduce timetable changes • Improve CheckIn usage
Supporting students from lower socio-economic backgrounds or from low participation POLAR 3 areas to continue in their studies and to achieve higher grades, and supporting students without a parent in HE to achieve higher grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop parental support and guidance • Trial Studiosity as a way for students to check work and gain feedback before submission • Introduce learning skills sessions • Extend travel bursaries to give more outward mobility options • All students to meet Futures team early on in order to understand the importance of aiming high in their grades to graduate level employment, and the options available to help them; targeted follow-ups to include prescribing learning skills sessions, mentoring or whole course interventions such as motivational speakers.
Supporting students with a specific learning difficulty to achieve higher grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete further analysis to understand how usage affects degree result • Deliver additional communication campaign to ensure students with a learning difficulty access help sooner, starting with Student handbook to be given to all students • Develop hearts and minds campaign for academics to raise awareness of different methods of inclusive assessments, and review assessments to ensure that all courses deliver varied assessments and learning methods.
Supporting students with a mental health condition to continue in their studies and achieve graduate level employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Mental Health campaigns in partnership with the SU • Develop the Mental Health working group in partnership with students • Develop our counselling service • Develop hearts and minds campaign for academics to raise awareness of different methods of inclusive assessments, and

	review assessments to ensure that all courses deliver varied assessments and learning methods.
Ensuring all care leavers are aware of and can access the support available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate significant bursary to students • Handshake introduction from Student Support to Futures team
Financial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leavers' Bursary of £2000 per student • Hardship Fund of £150,000. • Placement funding for trainee teachers.

Measures for Improving Progression

108. Our measures for improving progression are based on well-researched evidence into graduate attributes and attitudes, for example from HEA⁴⁸. During the course of 2018 we will assess the early stages of these projects and gather feedback from the target groups, including from these groups as they graduate and leave us. The target groups are based on our assessment of performance and our student outcomes data, taking into account benchmark data, and our ambitions and strategy. Our financial support package, which encourages outward mobility, is based on extensive external research into the impact of outward mobility, but also on student feedback about the positive impact of the current package. We are amending this to include an element of fundraising due to various pieces of research supporting the broader learning experiences of fundraising⁴⁹ and this will enable more students to access the bursary. We also want to ensure that international opportunities are available to more students, not just those who are happy to work with children (Camp America). By making the programme more flexible we hope to attract more students to the scheme.

Target group or Key Stage	Programme of activity
Younger males (particularly from more deprived backgrounds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver up to eight course specific interventions, targeting courses with a high proportion of younger males from more deprived backgrounds. • Recruit five Marjon Employability Ambassadors. • Futures team to invite all students to meet

⁴⁸ <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/21st-century-skills>

⁴⁹ Clarke, M. 2017 Rethinking graduate employability: the role of capital, individual attributes and context, *Studies in Higher Education*, (1); Harper, L.R., Downie, J.R., Muir, M. & White, S.A (2017) What can Expeditions do for Students ... and for Science? An Investigation into the Impact of University of Glasgow Exploration Society Expeditions, *Journal of Biological Education*, 51:1, 3-16,

	<p>within first 8 weeks of course starting with specific follow-ups for those deemed at risk of not progressing into graduate-level employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial a student “Change makers” programme to help students to gain confidence and experience in delivering change. Target students with a higher risk of not getting graduate-employment including younger males from deprived backgrounds. • Targeted follow-up to students who have left us but not got into graduate level employment yet, to offer support and guidance, from graduation and beyond, with close focus on younger students both without a parent in HE and without a first or a 2.1.
Encouraging more young boys into courses with high levels of graduate employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review marketing materials and develop marketing campaigns (both traditional and targeted digital) to encourage young males into courses such as teaching or SLT which traditionally have high levels of graduate employment.
Students with a specific learning difficulty or a mental health disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase visibility and awareness of students with disabilities succeeding, in particular through Employability Ambassadors and through mental health awareness campaigns. • Deliver Work Routes for students, aiming to help up to five students through this route.
Care leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver handshake introduction from Student Support to Futures team and ongoing mentoring career support. • Aim to recruit one Employability Ambassador from a care background.
Financial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver further options for travel bursaries and introduce element of fundraising.

Student consultation and involvement

109. The University works very closely with the SU on all aspects of student support, and they will be integral to delivering our ambitions laid out in this plan. They comment; “All

our work on access and to enable us to fulfil our ambitions within these areas. The proposed division of funding is below:

19/20 predicted total investment	£	%
Total eligible funding	£8,334,305	
25% of which gives total investment required of:	£2,095,577	
Total funding		% of HFI (adding up to 30%)
i. Access	£586,831	7%
ii. Success	£628,748	7.5%
iii. Progression	£502,998	6%
iv. Financial support to students	£377,000	4.5%

Beyond our Access and Participation Plan we expect to make additional investment in access and participation of £550,000, as noted in the accompanying spreadsheet.

Provision of information to students

116. **Fees:** We make information on fees available to students through our fees and funding page on our website, and through individual course pages.

117. **Financial support:** Our website also contains information on financial support available, including bursaries, criteria and relevant application forms. For specific groups of students, we target this information face to face as well, for example in Open Day talks, in Applicant Day talks, and in Welcome Week talks, to promote all possible opportunities.

118. **Publishing our approved Access and Participation Plan:** We will make our approved plan available on our website within 28 days of approval, (subject to approval), within our strategies and policies section.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The University, if permitted by the level of the Government fee caps, would increase fees by the rate of inflation for students who start in 2019-20 in subsequent years. This is to ensure that we are able to maintain union-agreed pay increases and other cost increases, and continue to give a high quality educational experience to students.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	Work-based route (e.g. FdA Learning and Teaching, FdA Early Year)	£6,000
Foundation degree	Non work-based routes (e.g. FdA Sport Studies)	£9,250
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
Foundation degree	Richard Huish College - 10005465	£5,995
Foundation degree	Exeter College - 10002370	£7,995
Foundation degree	DbS Music - 10005128	£7,500
First degree	DbS Music - 10005128	£9,000
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,165
Foundation degree	Richard Huish College - 10005465 -	£3,996
Foundation degree	- Work-based route	£4,000
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

T16b_07	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Progression Agreements	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	10	12	12	12	12	12	Progression Agreements with local and regional target schools and FEIs including admissions concessions Baseline year refers to 2011-12
T16b_08	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	4-day residential Summer School event for target WP students open nationally	No	2013-14	1	1	1	1	1	1	Up to 30 WP profile learners in school Years 12 and 13
T16b_09	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Student support services	Programmes to improve digital literacy	No	2015-16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	All new and continuing undergraduates, the programmes will encompass the SITS teams, MOLU, e-learning and accessibility teams across the University
T16b_10	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	Student support services	On programme co-ordinated support by academic advisors and student support services	No	2015-16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	All new undergraduates to have a year long module which includes a diagnostic tool, learning plan and 3-4 intervention points throughout the year.
T16b_11	Progression	Care-leavers	Operational targets	Care Leaver Mentoring	No	2015-16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Provision through new Wellbeing Adviser offered to all care leavers
T16b_12	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Admissions support	No	2014-15	2	2	2	2	2	2	Advice sessions through the Admissions department directed at local and regional schools and colleges
T16b_13	Progression	Mature	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Foundation Degree and Top-up taster and transition days	No	2011-12	2	4	4	4	4	4	Continuation of current bespoke visits and activities

T16b_14	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Lifelong learning	Teacher CPD, conferences and training for local teachers	No	2015-16	40	80	80	80	80	80	Challenging Stereotypes and Services to Disabled Students conferences
T16b_15	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	Student support services	Enhanced and extended induction including seamless transition and teaching and student support	No	2011-12	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	All new undergraduates
T16b_16	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	Residential event for BTEC Sport students at Truro and Penwith College (target expressed as number of students)	No	2015-16	10	20	20	20	20	20	Following consultation with the OfS (contact: Beth Cooper), this target has been discontinued. The rationale for this decision is that significant overlap/duplication exists between this programme and the Sport and Health Sciences pathway at our widening participation Summer School. Further, we believe that the Easter revision school, piloted in April, 2018, is higher impact in terms of attainment-raising and aligns more closely with current thinking re the relationship between GCSE attainment and future HE progression. This amendment was agreed on Monday, 14th May.
T16b_17	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	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)	No	2017-18	75%	80%	85%	85%	85%	85%	Four day revision school delivered during Easter vacation to improve GCSE attainment in English and Maths
T16b_18	Access	Care-leavers	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Bespoke events for care leaving/looked after children (target expressed as number of students)	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	10	15	20	20	20	20	Bespoke events designed in partnership with the Devon Virtual School, Devon County Council and relevant third sector organisations
T16b_19	Progression	Multiple	Operational targets	Recruit Employability Ambassadors	No	2017-18	0	5	12	15	18	20	Target refers to target number of Employability Ambassadors recruited