

University of St Mark & St John

Access Agreement 2018/19

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The University of St Mark & St John continues with the commitment to widening participation, fair access and social mobility that it has championed throughout its almost 180 year history. Nearly 40% of young full-time undergraduate degree entrants are from lower socio economic groups and the University consistently performs in the top deciles of institutions in the recruitment of widening participation students. As a significant proportion of the undergraduate student population at the University are recruited from those groups under-represented in higher education, support for widening participation throughout the student life cycle is integral to the day to day operation of the University. Much of the expenditure incurred by the University on the recruitment, retention and progression of under-represented groups to encourage social mobility is treated as core expenditure and is not always separately accounted for. In an attempt to be consistent with sector practice the costs included in the agreement reflect the apportionment of these integrated activities.
- 1.2** The University's long standing commitment to widening participation is informed by the student life cycle, with the aim of building support activities across the student journey, providing both young and more mature learners in full and part-time modes with access to a seamless pattern of contact and choice at various stages of their higher education experience.
- 1.3** The University regularly reviews its responses to the challenges of widening participation and fair access in line with the demographic profile of the local and regional population, evidence from prior year activities and the regional and national priorities as defined by OFFA and other related bodies.
- 1.4** The University has an excellent record of attracting and recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds, and will continue to sustain its already successful widening participation programme of activity in 2018/19 to support recruitment, access, retention and employability of under-represented groups in higher education. In line with the

strategic priorities identified by OFFA the University will take a renewed focus on improving access for white males from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, whilst retaining high levels of support for disabled, mature and part time learners. The 2018/19 access agreement will focus on the following areas:

- (i) Learner interventions from key stages 2 to 4 and at Level 3
- (ii) Development of an embedded module to improve retention rates
- (iii) A greater focus on collaborative partnerships, with other stakeholders across the region to share best practice on access and student success measures
- (iv) Ongoing support of our co-sponsored schools; All Saints Academy and the Plymouth Studio School
- (v) A revision of the University's extensive package of financial support to ensure it meets the needs of the students it is intended to support
- (vi) The development of a more research-based approach to evidence gathering and evaluation to measure the impact of our access measures.

1.5 Given the degree of uncertainty around changes to HEFCE grant funding for 2018/19, in particular any potential reductions to student opportunity funding, the University reserves the right to adopt a broad and flexible approach to the prioritisation of access, student success, and financial support measures for 2018/19. The University commits to the protection of the activity funded by the student opportunity fund where this is practicable and is having the desired outcomes, but reserves the right to review activity on an ongoing basis.

2. Widening Access, raising aspiration and attainment

The University's widening participation outreach strategy for access and student success in 2018/19, will continue to be informed by student lifecycle and evidence-led approaches. This comprehensive package of activity is summarised as follows:

- Learner interventions from key stages 2 to 4 and at Level 3
- Well-tailored advice, information and guidance for all target groups and their supporters
- Transition and Progression - Student Experience and Support
- Employability
- Researching Impact

2.1 Outreach

Outreach programmes for 2018/19 will focus primarily on high impact, cost-effective approaches to widening participation and will include:

- Curriculum-aligned, attainment-raising events and activities including Sixth Form Induction, Discover Days, master classes, Summer Schools, small group mentoring programmes and bespoke events for mature learners at partner FECs
- 'Removing barriers to HE' talks and workshops including sustained AIG activity for target groups and supporters
- An enhanced Student Ambassador Programme, mentoring and support
- Progression Agreements and bespoke programmes with seven target schools and regional FECs

This programme of activities is informed by evaluation and longitudinal tracking data, and cost analysis. Tracking data shows, for example, that 73% of students who attended the University's widening participation Summer School in 2015, subsequently submitted one or more application to study at the University. Similar events delivered within the fields of

Education, Initial Teacher Training, Sport & Health Sciences and Social Sciences in the academic year 2016/17 yielded 'intervention to apply' ratios of up to 75%.

In light of the demonstrable impact and cost-effectiveness of such events and in consultation and collaboration with teaching colleagues at partner schools and colleges, the University will continue to design and deliver curriculum-aligned Discover Days, Aim High! events (at key stage 3) and residential Summer Schools with specialist pathways spanning the majority of subject areas currently taught at the University. This package of activities will focus, wherever possible, on under-taught and/or 'hard to teach' areas of complementary curricula, where necessary in-school/FEC resources (e.g. laboratory testing equipment) are absent. For example, monitoring data shows that nine out of ten students who attended a pilot residential event for BTEC Sport students in 2016, felt 'strongly' that the practical, hands-on nature of the residential programme, had given them a 'greater understanding' of key aspects of the curriculum, particularly in relation to fitness bio-motor abilities and lactate threshold testing.

The University will also continue to deliver awareness, aspiration, and attainment-raising activity via small group mentoring programmes (including pre-exam revision workshops for students at partner schools).

In 2018/19, we will seek to enhance our understanding of the impact of our attainment-raising work (Truro and Penwith residential, small group MAT mentoring) via informal written assessment and group and/or poster presentation activities. Following this pilot study, the success criteria outlined in our 2019-20 Access Agreement, will include targets linked to more

formal assessment, whereby the University will seek to understand the impact of such work on improving the overall grade outcomes and, ultimately, the progression rates of participating students. Following consultation with teachers and tutors at partner schools and FECs, those input targets included in the present resource plan will, therefore, be replaced by appropriate, impact-related output targets for this area of activity.

The University's annual Raising Aspirations event for students at key stage 2 will be delivered in collaboration with other Plymouth-based HEIs to broaden the scope of the event and facilitate the use of Professor Fluffy's Education Adventure (as developed by the University of Liverpool) in local primary schools located in low participation neighbourhoods, prior to the delivery of the campus-based element of the programme.

The University will continue to work to ensure the participation of white males from socio economically disadvantaged backgrounds in all of the activities and interventions committed to in this access agreement. Following the model developed by outreach colleagues at the University of Sheffield, the University will quantify its activity with this target group by measuring ethnicity, gender, and whether participants meet one or more socio-economic status measures of disadvantage (POLAR3 quintile 1, areas of deprivation measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and eligibility for free school meals).¹ Where teachers are not able to influence the composition of cohorts taking part in interventions and where pre- event application screening processes exist (as in the case of residential activities), an appropriate proportion of places will be ring-fenced for this target group.

Whilst ring-fencing will continue to include and place equal emphasis on BME students, the University will also work to develop links with target schools and colleges where the proportion of BME students is high, such as those located in the cities of London, Bristol and Birmingham. Further, the University is completing work on an 18 month project, 'Increasing diversity: recruiting students from underrepresented groups', led and supported by the Equality Challenge Unit. Working collaboratively with 11 other universities based in England and Wales, this project addresses the current under-representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) students at the University. The findings of this project will inform, and provide

the foundation for future work with this group of students.

2.2 Provision of Information, Advice and Guidance

The provision of information to both students and parents will continue to take place on regular basis through open days, information evenings and student recruitment and outreach activity. The University will also draw upon and make use of social media platforms (including the @MarjonOutreach twitter account) to disseminate AIG to target groups and supporters.

Additional emphasis will be placed on pre-entry information, advice and communication and the provision of both on-line and face-to-face support to enable applicants to plan how to finance their study, and to provide information about the level of support available through fee waivers, scholarships, bursaries and other forms of financial assistance. Full details on course fees and any financial support offered to students will be made available both on the University website and submitted to UCAS and SLC in a timely manner.

Specific advice and guidance actions for prospective students will include:

- The provision of financial information, with 'Frequently Asked Questions' and illustrations of the cost of study for students on different types of courses, through a dedicated and interactive section of the University website.

¹ <https://www.offa.org.uk/topic-briefing-white-british-students/#individuals>

- Incorporation of financial and fees advice as an integral part of information provided for prospective students through open days, the website, the prospectus and other publications.
- Inclusion of information about finance in 'Preparation for HE' taster days which form part of the University's range of outreach activity.
- Information sent to all full and part-time students receiving offers of places on programmes, directing them to the dedicated space on the website for fees and financial support.

Table 1. Focus of outreach activities for 2018/19

Target group or key stage	Outreach programme
Year 6 (Key Stage 2)	On campus and in-school activities including deployment of Professor Fluffy's Education Adventure
Year 7-9 (Key Stage 3)	In-school 'Aim High' sessions and on-campus activities to include university taster days
Year 10-11 (Key Stage 4)	In-school IAG sessions and on-campus activities to include subject taster days and 6 th form inductions, attainment-raising pre-exam revision workshops
Year 12-13/Level 3 (Key Stage 5)	In-school IAG sessions and on-campus activities to include mentoring, subject taster days, small group mentoring (including attainment-raising pre-exam revision workshops), Discover Days, individual campus tours, admissions advice and information and a summer school programme
Mature Learners	Careers and IAG events, collaborative network events, social media-based IAG, bespoke events
Parents/Carers	Careers and IAG events & materials, use of social media

2.3 Sponsorship of schools and work with Colleges

The University co-sponsors All Saints Academy Plymouth (ASAP), an academy school and business and enterprise college, and Plymouth Studio School a free school specializing in sport-related pathways. University representatives will serve on the Governing body of co-sponsored schools. The University holds Progression Agreements with one further school (Ivybridge Community College), and three FECs (Bodmin College, Truro and Penwith College, City College Plymouth) in the region. We will continue to work strategically and collaboratively with all six schools and colleges to increase participation of target groups by offering:

- a bespoke sixth form induction event prior to the start of each academic year, bridging the gap between GCSE and A level study
- well-tailored, attainment-raising group mentoring activity for MAT students at GCSE and A level
- guaranteed places at the University's residential Summer School (for students who meet widening participation criteria)
- an attainment-raising residential event for BTEC sport students at Truro and Penwith College
- bespoke AIG to Access to Higher Education Diploma students at City College Plymouth via formal events (open evenings, careers events) and as required throughout the academic year.

In 2018/19, we will seek to develop a further Progression Agreement with Cornwall College, Saltash in order to engage mature learners completing Access to Higher Education

Diplomas. We intend to work closely with this group of students to raise awareness of pathways to higher education and support successful transitioning.

The University will continue to work closely with the Partnership for Learning and Education (PLE), a consortium of four schools in Plymouth located in areas of low participation, to deliver well-targeted aspiration and awareness-raising activities to support and encourage progression to higher education.

2.4 Collaborative work

NCOP

The University is working in partnership with all other regional universities and HE providers through the National Collaborative Outreach Programme and is partner in the Next Steps South West consortium led by Plymouth University, covering target wards in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. This collaboration builds on the success of the former regional NNCO networks: the Devon Collaborative Outreach Network and Next Steps Cornwall.

Working within the targeted remit of the NCOP initiative, this programme focuses on pupils in Years 9-13, identified as medium/high achievers, with low HE aspiration, and domiciled within nominated postcodes (HEFCE POLAR3 and Gaps Analysis). A diverse range of outreach projects will be designed and delivered collaboratively by partners in the consortium, with robust evaluation of impact throughout.

The funding for these projects will continue to sit outside the University's Access Agreement, but their presence within the university directly sits within the broad access and outreach "offer" and contributes to a rich evidence base which can be used to track student access, success and progression throughout the life-cycle. The Next Steps South West provision for target groups complements the broader outreach work to promote higher education to the wider range of WP target groups such as other age groups or those with other indicators of disadvantage.

Across the consortium, other benefits of this complementary programme are being maximised to add momentum and efficiency to Widening Participation Access programmes. Through sharing best practice, avoiding duplication, enabling specialisation from a wider pool of providers, allowing a broader representation of partners at a larger number of

events, and pooling resources, partners are able to make best use of resources for targeting under- represented groups in HE.

As a collaborative partner within a regional consortium of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), the University will work to ensure complementarity between access provision and work undertaken by the NCOP. For example, the University has developed proposals for activities and interventions which further expand and extend the reach of the work committed to in the access agreement and which create new opportunities for collaboration with a diverse range of organisations (e.g. Devon and Cornwall Police, Plymouth Music Zone). These proposals, which bridge gaps and address potential 'blind spots' in provision and participation, include:

- A further residential summer school covering the fields of Psychology and Criminology
- Campus-based English and Mathematics revision sessions at GCSE level
- A Student Ambassadors into Schools Programme
- Student Shadowing opportunities

The University will continue to develop NCOP-specific activities and interventions which enhance and extend its access provision, particularly in relation to resource-intensive activity, including high impact events such as Summer Schools.

The University will collaborate with eleven other universities in the South West region to fund, maintain, develop and promote the, free to students and schools, careers support websites managed by the Western Vocational Progression Consortium (WVPC).

Careerpilot, will provide inspirational pathway and progression information on the the full range of choices for 13-19 year olds in the South West region, (used by 60,000+ young people a month). (www.careerpilot.org.uk). **Lifepilot** will engage and support mature and part-time students (www.life-pilot.co.uk). **HE Skills Map** supports post 16 students and adults in recognising skills and experiences relevant to progression to HE.

The university will support the development of the websites; develop further strategies to embed the websites into outreach and IAG activities; maintain the 'Parent Zone' developed through the four National Network for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) partnerships in the South West; work with universities and partnerships in the region to support plans for sustaining their integration of the Careerpilot site in their offer to all South West students and schools, including embedding the use of the careers resources in the work of NCOP consortia in the South West region.

Through membership of professional organisations such as the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON), the Plymouth Association of Head Teachers, the Higher Education Access Committee and the Plymouth Teaching Schools Alliance, the University will seek out opportunities to work collaboratively with the regional HEIs, FECs and other stakeholders.

3. Assessment of the University's performance in widening access

3.1 Our approach to widening participation continues to be successful, and in the five year period from 2010-2015, the University consistently recruited a significant proportion of its student body from under-represented groups. The trend data for the University in relation to its performance indicators and benchmarks for this period are detailed in Table 3 below.

3.2 Access performance

The latest figures (HESA, 2015/16) show, that of its first degree entrants, the University recruited 97.3 % from state schools/colleges; 18.4% from low participation neighbourhoods; 9.9% from mature age groups; and 17.6% with a registered disability (Table 3). Table 2 shows that the University performs above the location adjusted benchmark in all categories and national average in all but one category.

Table 2. Access performance for 2015/16 – comparison with location adjusted benchmark and national average

Under-represented group	Comparison with Location Adjusted benchmark (%)	Comparison with national average (%)
State schools	Exceeds by 1%	Exceeds by 7.4%
Low participation neighbourhoods	Exceeds by 0.1%	Exceeds by 7.1%
Mature age groups	Exceeds by 1.3%	Under by 2.4%
Registered disability	Exceeds by 9.3%	Exceeds by 10.7%

Table 3. Participation of under-represented groups in HE (HESA, 2010-2015)

a) Young full-time first degree entrants– from State Schools (HESA Table 1a)

YEAR	University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location Adjusted Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
2010/11	97.2	96.3	94.7	88.7
2011/12	96.7	96.0	94.6	88.9
2012/13	96.3	96.8	96.1	89.3
2013/14	97.9	97.0	96.3	89.7
2014/15	97.6	97.2	96.9	89.8
2015/16	97.3	97.1	96.3	89.9

b) Young full-time first degree entrants – from NS-SEC classes 4-7 (HESA Table 1a)

University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location Adjusted Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
42.8	38.8	38.0	30.6
38.7	38.7	35.2	30.7
40.7	39.5	41.3	32.3
39.8	41.5	38.0	32.6
37	42.3	39.6	33
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

c) Young full-time first degree entrants - from low participation neighbourhoods (HESA Table 1a)

YEAR	University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location Adjusted Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
2010/11	12.6	14.6	12.4	10.5
2011/12	18.0	13.8	15.3	10.2
2012/13	16.7	15.7	17.7	10.9
2013/14	18.0	15.0	17.7	10.9
2014/15	18.7	15.5	17.6	11.4
2015/16	18.4	15.3	18.3	11.3

d) Mature full-time first degree entrants (HESA Table 2a)

University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location Adjusted Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
11.2	9.5	8.2	11.9
11.1	8.4	8.5	11.7
9.2	7.8	9.3	11.6
14.0	8.5	11.0	11.9
13.7	9.1	11.5	12.8
9.9	7.2	8.6	12.3

e) Full-time first degree entrants in receipt of DSA (HESA Table 7)

YEAR	University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
2010/11	10.0	5.7	4.9
2011/12	11.3	6.3	5.3
2012/13	13.1	7.2	6.5
2013/14	14.5	7.6	6.9
2014/15	17.5	8.1	7.0
2015/16	17.6	8.3	6.9

4. Retention performance

We believe that access to higher education only has real value if those students who are recruited into the University continue and succeed in their studies. However, some students do not complete their awards and the on-going improvement of retention rates remains a university priority; we have set stretching targets to work towards achieving the benchmark of 10.1% (HESA, 2014/15) for non-continuation rates by 2019/20.

The University has a well-developed culture of strong student support and aims to provide a high quality system of pastoral, personal and academic support for all students. Such support is viewed by the University as of central importance in encouraging students from under-represented groups to study and succeed at our university, in the knowledge that a wide range of support mechanisms exist

4.1 Actions to Improve retention

Improvement of retention rates is a strategic priority of the University as it remains below benchmark across all retention indicators as detailed in Table 4 below. Significant work was undertaken in 2014/15 to improve retention, including investment in a pioneering year-long module for all new entrants, which will develop through their journey with the University to encompass success and employability outcomes. This is supported by the development of a data dashboard for programme leaders which seeks to highlight at the earliest opportunity students not engaging with their programme and additional investment in academic advisors to intervene with additional support and guidance as necessary. These activities have now become embedded and will continue through the next 3 year cycle, with the impact being regularly monitored.

This prioritisation of resource reflects the resolute efforts the University continues to make in order to deliver an inclusive student experience, combined with high quality academic and pastoral support, targeted financial support, and close monitoring of student performance.

Table 4. Non-continuation following year of entry - all full-time first degree entrants
(HESA, 2010-2015)

a) Young entrants (HESA Table 3a)

YEAR	University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
2010/11	7.9	9.6	6.3
2011/12	11.1	7.9	5.7
2012/13	9.3	8.0	5.7
2013/14	11.8	8.7	6.0
2014/15	11.4	9.0	6.2

b) Mature entrants (HESA Table 3a)

University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
8.3	10.9	11.6
9.8	10.0	10.5
10.7	11.7	11.9
13.0	12.3	11.8
14.7	11.9	11.7

c) All entrants (HESA Table 3a)

YEAR	University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
2010/11	8.1	10.0	7.4
2011/12	10.7	8.6	6.7
2012/13	9.8	9.3	7.0
2013/14	12.2	9.7	7.2
2014/15	12.7	10.1	7.4

d) Projected outcomes neither

award nor transfer (HESA Table 5)

University of St Mark & St John (%)	Benchmark (%)	UK (%)
12.8	15.2	11.3
17.1	13.4	10.7
16.9	12.9	10.1
17.8	13.2	10.2
19.2	13.3	10.3

4.2 Student Retention and Success

Effective transition into higher education and post-entry support is essential to improve both retention and success rates, particularly for students from under-represented groups. For 2018/19, we will continue to prioritise these targets through a range of specific activities which will be of benefit not just to widening participation students, but to all students. Extra provision may also have to be made to support students who currently receive help through the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for provision that was previously supported by local authorities and goes beyond reasonable adjustments made. We employ a whole University approach which encompasses Wellbeing, Student Services, Academics, Registry and the Chaplaincy. Activities include:

- (i) Enhanced Induction Programme - this programme runs over the first four weeks of the autumn term and will provide support for students making the transition into higher education through:-
 - Study skills and early formative assessment
 - Personal tutorial support
 - Programme of subject based cohort identity building / orientation activities
 - Buddy and peer mentoring.

- (ii) Student Experience and Support - the provision of specific academic support, over and above the pastoral support system, will be delivered through specialised activities that focus on three main areas:
 - Academic, personal and professional skills
 - Enhanced Student support e.g. disability, counselling, mentoring
 - 'Transition' support between different years of study

- (iii) Academic Advise and support - the provision of a year-long module supported by academic staff which will include the following elements

- Diagnostic tool
- Individual learning plan
- 3 - 4 intervention points

This module has been extended to support students through the life of their programme with a focus on personal development, academic guidance, digital literacy and employability.

(iv) Digital Literacy – A University-wide programme will engage students through digital activities from initial contact with the university to post-graduation. This will include:-

The development of digital materials that offer guidance to students from pre-entry to post-award stages offered online and on demand whilst ensuring that students are supported by sufficient interaction with tutors, professional staff and peers.

Digital skills development workshops and learning, teaching and assessment strategies aimed at developing digital skills early in students' university careers and diminishing some of the obstacles to participation identified for under-represented groups.

Consideration of which e-learning methods are effective in driving participation by different widening participation groups, taking into account the likely barriers, and catering for all group's needs accordingly.

Adopt e-learning approaches to curriculum delivery which will enhance students' experience of learning and encourage them to work critically and reflectively, independently and collaboratively; skills of great importance in later study and employment.

4.3 Employability

As a vocationally focussed University with a large range of professional programmes, we seek to give students the best opportunity to develop employability skills before and after graduation through the curriculum; the work place; volunteering and their social life. We also recognise that students should be supported in the process of evidencing and articulating these experiences. All undergraduate degree programmes include explicit outcomes relating to knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, and practical/transferrable skills. The inclusion of a section on careers/employability outcomes within programme handbooks is considered best practice. To ensure curricula remain current and relevant, input from employers and professional bodies is sought to ensure programmes enhance the work- related skills of students to increase employment prospects.

The strong vocational and professional nature of the majority of our courses means that many include placements, the successful completion of which often attracts professional accreditation or endorsement.

The Employability team provide impartial 1:1 advice and guidance for students up to three years after graduation. Careers staff work closely with lecturers to provide resources and workshops on topics such as creating effective CVs, completing applications, job search techniques, PDP, digital footprint and business start-up. We run a twice yearly e FEST which is supported by employers and an annual Education recruitment fair for our student teachers. The University are also partners with Camp America supporting students with the recruitment process and offering bursaries to enable students to enhance their employability.

The University has also teamed up with 4 other universities in the region to provide a

'one- stop job shop'. Career Hub will enable students and graduates can access part-time and graduate jobs, placements and internships.

The Employability team co-ordinate all extra-curricular opportunities to complement and encourage the application of intellectual and practical skills acquired within students' chosen subjects. These include paid part-time work, accredited volunteering, professional development opportunities, work experience, and student enterprise and entrepreneurship competitions. The University is keen to recognise individual student achievements through the annual Inspiring Student Awards. Students and staff of the University, as well as external organisations, have the opportunity to nominate students who have made a positive difference within the University of St Mark & St John and the local community. The categories are: Volunteer of the Year, Outstanding Contribution Award, Leadership Award, Sports Volunteer of the Year, Best Business Start- Up, Student Union Volunteer of the Year and the Grace Adamson Outstanding Student Ambassador Award.

All students are able to develop personal progress files on-line through eduBlogs; where possible these are integrated into study modules. Social opportunities also abound, from joining sports clubs or the choir, to raising money for RAG week, and provide an important additional way for students to acquire skills such as teamwork, leadership, money management, organisation and communication.

In 2018/19, we will continue to invest in the development and delivery of activities that provide a variety of support and opportunities at all stages of academic study and post- graduation to improve students' employability and provide support for those students impacted by financial barriers to participation.

The University's Student Support team offer a confidential and comprehensive service to guide and support students through their studies. We are the only university in Devon whose Student Support and Employability departments have received the coveted Matrix Accreditation, the national quality standard for organisations delivering information, advice and guidance.

The student support team offer impartial advice and guidance to all University students throughout the year about:

- Bursaries, scholarships and awards
- Financial or personal situations which may affect study
- Financial implications of interruption, restart, transfer or withdrawal from a course.

5. Financial Support for Students

Additional emphasis is being placed on pre-entry information, advice and guidance, and the provision of both on-line and face-to-face support to enable applicants to plan how to finance their study and provide information about the level of support available through scholarships, bursaries and other forms of financial assistance.

In 2018/19, the University will invest 5% of its fee income above £6,000 into direct financial support for eligible students. This investment will take the form of:

5.1. Bursaries and the Hardship Fund: A number of bursary measures will be available to all qualifying students on honours degree programmes, except for externally funded programmes and these are detailed below:

5.2 Local Student Bursary Fund: the University will make £50k available for local students (PL post codes), who meet the agreed guidelines which also require you to be eligible for the full UK student funding support package with a household income of £25,000 or less. Full details will be available on the University website from September 2017. Bursaries will

not exceed £500 per student.

5.3 University Hardship Fund: The University is committed to supporting students who encounter genuine and unanticipated difficulties which may jeopardise their entry to the University, or their continued study. For 2018/19, the University will make £150k available through the University's hardship fund to assist these students. Awards will be made on a needs basis. The award will be valid for the academic year of application only but does not preclude future applications. Financial assistance will be offered to those students most in need and all care leavers and anyone in receipt of a full means tested maintenance loan will be eligible for support, but will be required to provide a case in line with the University Hardship Fund Guidelines. Successful part-time students will be eligible for a pro-rata award.

5.4 Travel & Accommodation: The University will support students on work based placement with travel and subsistence costs. This support is available to all years and will be assessed on a needs basis, with all students eligible for a minimum level dependant on location and duration of placement. The details of support will be made available on the relevant course pages and provided to applicants.

5.5 International Experience Bursaries: The University will award up to 15 international experience bursaries on a competitive basis for OFFA countable students to support a visit, academic exchange or summer school overseas. The Employability Office will operate the bursary scheme annually, defining the 'competition' rules and awards will not normally exceed £500 per person and will apply for the year in which the application is made.

We will ensure that prior to the 2018/19 application cycle students will be clear as to the criteria for accessing funds.

5.6. Fee Waivers: Fee waivers will be offered to support designated scholars. A fund of £45k will be available for OFFA countable students and the application terms will be published in advance of the cycle.

These schemes are not available to students in partnership institutions or for co-funded students and will be targeted at disadvantaged students defined as above. Expenditure on the current financial support arrangements for continuing students will be maintained in line with the previous Access Agreement.

6. Targets and Milestones

The HESA performance indicators set out in Sections 3 and 4 of this document will provide the overall measures against which we will assess our progress in 2018/19. Please see the Access Agreement Resource Plan for detailed targets and milestones.

We will continue to work towards the key performance targets set out in our 2014/15 Access Agreement, including a commitment to the following:

- Achievement and maintenance of the benchmark levels for the recruitment of students from under-represented groups as evidenced by HESA performance indicators
- Improvement in retention and success to reach benchmark levels by 2019/20.
- Development of a process for effectively capturing and measuring application rates from defined under-represented groups and target activities to improve these levels annually for a three year period
- Development of a programme of outreach activities focused on providing progression routes to higher education for young and mature learners and assessing

their impact.

Each of these milestones is underpinned by a specific set of activities as indicated in the University's widening participation strategy.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements

The Access Agreement, Widening Participation Strategy and WPSS will be monitored through the strategic plan and annual operating statement, and through annual reports to the senior management team. Regular reports will also be made to the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience committee which has a particular responsibility for learning enhancement and student achievement. The senior management team and the University Board of Governors annually review HESA student data, including the performance tables for widening participation. The Student Support Department will also play a key role in monitoring activities.

Evaluation will take place across the widening participation themes and stages of the student lifecycle outlined in the Access Agreement and detailed in the WP Strategy. This evaluation will follow the four level model developed by Kirkpatrick (1994) outlined in the Higher Education Academy's 'Toolkits for practitioners: Evaluation', and will continue its focus on the impact and cost-effectiveness of activity and intervention. Whilst analysis at Level 1 (reaction) and aspects of Level 3 (participant tracking) is now embedded in the work of the Outreach team, there is significant scope for developing the team's analysis at Levels 2 and

4. In order to improve the University's understanding of the increase in participants' knowledge and skills following curriculum-aligned (Discover Days, Summer Schools) and attainment-bolstering activity (pre-exam revision workshops, small group mentoring programmes), for example, the University will work with academic colleagues and teachers in partner schools and colleges to develop modes of informal assessment and seek to obtain the output data following subsequent formal assessment. Wherever possible, this output data will be compared to previous grade predictions, as a means of establishing impact.

We will continue to assess the outcome of outreach work with young people in schools and colleges, contrasting both target schools and those with whom there is a special relationship,

e.g. where the University sponsors an Academy School. We will make an increased use of the 'First Impressions' survey and the post induction student survey, to ascertain the nature and extent of previous contact with the University through outreach activity. Further work will look at adding an additional data field to application and enrolment forms to capture such information. The intention will be to also monitor the performance of students recruited as a result of widening participation activities. Progression and retention statistics will be monitored, as will impact of support measures through the annual programme monitoring and business planning processes.

The outcomes of the evaluation process will be used to keep the activity and expenditure on the Access Agreement under review and to engage in an ongoing process of refinement.

Following evaluation of the previously used 'high achievers bursary' it was evident that it did not influence decision making for OFFA countable students, nor their retention on the programme of study. The University has therefore reallocated the funding to support on-programme support through the hardship fund and placement bursaries, where there is evidence to suggest a positive correlation with improved retention and student employability.

Placement support will continue to be reviewed, with an emphasis on the impact on retention.

Differing methodologies will be used to assess the impact of interventions, such as questionnaires to collate core data on the participants and attitudinal shifts pre- and post-event; focus groups with current higher education students; case studies to capture student success; data from target and partner schools and colleges; and progression data to assess impact of interventions. Evaluation will include:

- Regular review of application, enrolment, retention and completion data
- Questionnaires to event participants
- Student tracking
- Evaluation through outreach activities and tracking and monitoring work
- First Impressions Survey
- Unit-E student progression data
- HESA performance indicators
- DLHE (for student employability).

8. Financial overview

Tuition fees

The following fees limits will apply for all *full-time home (including EU) students* enrolling on an undergraduate or postgraduate programme from September 2018. This is an assumed fee awaiting Government confirmation and may increase for new entrants to the revised maximum fee.

Type of provision	Max Fee 2018/19	Anticipated student numbers 2018/19
All three year undergraduate honours and foundation degree programmes full-time ²	£9,250	858
Foundation degrees – Work Based Learning	£6,000	18
Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training	£9,250	162

Please note that continuing students will be charged the fee that they commenced the programme on, plus an increase for inflation where confirmed by Government. Total student numbers by fee category are detailed on the OFFA spreadsheets.

Part-time entrants

Part time students will pay a percentage of the fees above dependent on their attendance pattern. The maximum part-time fee that a student will pay will not exceed the maximum fee cap and the University commits to spend an appropriate proportion of any income from part- time fees above the basic fee level on access measures.

Franchised courses

The University has franchise arrangements with two UK Further Education Colleges, Exeter College and Richard Huish College and works collaboratively with a private provider. Tuition fees are not expected to exceed:

Type of provision	Max Fee p.a.	Anticipated Student Numbers p.a. across all years
Foundation Degrees and other 'sub- degree' programmes full-time (Exeter College)	£7,995	24

Foundation and Top-up Degrees (Richard Huish College)	£5,995	20
Degrees (DbS Music)	£9,250	277

The fee limits for 2018/19 will apply throughout the student's programme of study, subject only to an annual inflation-related rise or other Governmental decisions.

Expenditure

In line with OFFA guidance, the University expects to spend an amount equating to 31% of expenditure above the £6,000 fee level in 2018/19 on access and student success measures; the total sum is estimated to be ca. £1.992 million depending on student recruitment. The emphasis will be on direct financial support through bursary arrangements and hardship support measures; targeted outreach and collaborative activity; and on retention and completion activities. The proposed division of eligible funding is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Proposed division of eligible spend

Year	Total Eligible Funding (31% of TEF)	Direct Financial Support (6% of TEF)	Access (9% of TEF)	Student Success (9% of TEF)	Progression (7% of TEF)
2018/19	£6,392k	£372k	£580k	£570k	£480K

² Exceptions to this general fee level may be introduced for programmes designed for employers where a component of tuition fee costs will be covered by the employer.

Students accessing the University before 2018/19 will continue to be supported through the current Access Agreement arrangements.

9. Consulting with Students

Marjon Students' Union (MSU) plays an important role in the development of any institutional plans for student opportunity, support and attainment. The Student Union have reviewed the 2018/19 agreement, and whilst they continue to be concerned about the level of student fees they are satisfied that the measures that have been put in place for outreach, retention and financial support will significantly enhance the student experience both pre- and post-entry.

10. Equality and Diversity

The University has set out, in the Equality & Diversity Scheme (EDS), the commitment made to progressing equality throughout the university. The EDS allows us to recognise and support the other characteristics which legislation protects, namely: age, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, transgender, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership as well as effectively targeting resources to cross-characteristic issues and diversity concerns. It also enables the University to address broader socio-economic issues that impact on diversity by taking full account of the widening participation strategy. As such, the EDS is closely aligned to the Widening Participation Strategy which commits the University to:

- Supporting all students to maximize their personal and professional potential and to complete their course of study.
- Providing the environment of a caring and community focused university which takes into account educational attainment, previous experience of higher education and socio economic backgrounds.

We conducted an Impact Assessment on the 2017/18 Access Agreement. This agreement

was seen as positive progress for the targeted equality groups. Other equality groups were also considered (disabled students in particular) to investigate if they could also benefit from the access measures that will be implemented. It was agreed with the Coordinator for the Disability, Inclusion and Access Service (DIAS) that the equality assessment should be reviewed again in 2020/21 to allow for the collection and analysis of appropriate data to ascertain the degree to which the Access Agreement has a positive impact on equality groups not specifically targeted in the agreement. A copy of the Impact Assessment from the 2017/18 is attached at appendix 1.

University of St Mark & St John

Access Agreement 2017/18 Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment Form

Department: External Relations & Marketing (Widening Participation)

1. What item is being assessed?

2017/18 Access Agreement

2. What is the purpose of the item?

To set out the University's commitment to access and inclusion with respect to widening participation into HE.

3. Who has the authority to make changes to the item?

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

4. Who is affected by the item?

Prospective students, current students and graduates

5. Who implements the item?

Selected representatives across the University are responsible for delivering specific targets (e.g. Student Support, Learning and Quality, Faculty Representatives). The Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Access Agreement targets and milestones.

6. Does, or could, the item have an adverse effect on members of an equality target group?

Group	Yes	No	Unclear¹
Age		x	
Disability		x	
Gender		x	
Race		x	
Religion/belief		x	

Sexual Orientation		x	
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7. Does, or could, the item help to promote equal opportunity for members of equality target groups?

Group	Yes	No	Unclear ¹
Age	X		
Disability	X		
Gender	X		
Race	X		
Religion/belief		x	
Sexual Orientation		x	

8. Does, or could, the item contribute to a specific duty in equality law?

Duty	Yes	No	Unclear ¹
Promoting good relations between members of different racial groups		x	
Promote equality between men and women	x		
Eliminating harassment of people because of their race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief		x	
Encouraging the participation of disabled people in public life	x		
Providing for the needs of disabled people	x		

9. Should a full assessment be carried out on this item?²

Yes	No
	x

10. What is the justification for the decision about full assessment?

The Access Agreement outlines the access measures, targets and milestones in relation to the University's performance indicators for participation and retention. In particular, the agreement has a specific focus on targeted equality groups, such as those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, low participation neighbourhoods and BME groups. The University already has a good reputation in terms of recruiting disabled students; 17% of all full time undergraduate students are in receipt of DSA compared to a sector benchmark 8.1% -. The current Access Agreement could potentially promote equal opportunities for additional equality groups, for example through investigating whether there is a correlation between socio-economic background, low participation neighbourhoods and ethnicity within the regional sector. While the current effort is directed at particular equality groups, the University will review the impact assessment in 3 years time (2020/21) to assess the level to which other equality groups are positively impacted upon.

11. What priority does the item have?

High	Medium	Low
	x	

12. Who was involved in the assessment of the item and how?

Student Recruitment and Widening Participation Manager PVC Student Experience

This preliminary assessment was approved by:

Name: Karen Cook

Job Title: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Date: 25/04/2016

Contact Extn: 2007

Reference Notes

1. No-one knows or opinion is divided – further research may be required in full assessment.
2. An item does not have to be fully assessed if **all** the answers to Q's 6, 7 and 8 are "No". If any answer is "Unclear", the item should be provisionally treated as one that could have an effect.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: University of St Mark & St John

Institution UKPRN: 10037449

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
T16a_01	Access	State school	HESA T1b - State School (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain percentage of young, full-time first degree entrants from state schools at above 95%	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	97.9%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	The University attracts most of its learners from state schools and is committed to remaining above the HESA benchmarks. Baseline year 2013-14
T16a_02	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Maintain percentage of students from low participation neighbourhoods	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	18.0%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%	As this level is above benchmark the University will seek to maintain the position. Baseline year 2013-14
T16a_04	Access	Mature	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	Maintain percentage of mature students from underrepresented groups in HE	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	15.2%	As this level is above benchmark the University will seek to maintain the position. Baseline year 2013-14
T16a_05	Student success	Socio-economic	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Achieve the retention benchmark for young, full-time, first degree entrants	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	9.3%	9%	8.5%	8%	8%	8%	the University is committed to working towards the benchmark. Baseline year 2012-13

					on column)								
T16a_06	Progression	Socio-economic	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Maintain high level of employability	No	Other (please give details in Descripti on column)	94.6%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	the University is committed to maintaining high levels of employability. Baseline year 2012-13

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
T16b_01	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	University taster and activity days including Discover Day and Aim High events, Masterclasses and Student Shadowing	No	2011-12	300	300	300	300	300	300	Aspiration-raising and realisation events with local students in school Years 7-13
T16b_02	Access	Other (please give details in Description column)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Student Ambassador recruitment and training	No	2012-13	50	60	60	60	60	60	Increase in numbers to ensure diversity in the programme, many train to become mentors
T16b_03	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Mentoring in schools and FEIs	No	2012-13	60	45	45	45	45	45	Number of learners in Years 10-12. Revised target to 45 to enable successful delivery
T16b_04	Access	Low income background	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	HE awareness raising work with Primary Schools, delivered in collaboration with other Plymouth based HEIs	Yes	2013-14	200	200	200	200	200	200	Raising Aspirations' event and preparatory sessions with local primary school children and teachers
T16b_05	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Progression to HE workshops and activities in schools including 'removing barriers to HE' sessions	No	2013-14	28	30	30	30	30	30	With local and regional partner schools and FEIs
T16b_06	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Sixth Form parents evenings	No	2013-14	3	3	3	3	3	3	With local partner schools
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	60	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 Trurpand Penwith College (target expressed as number of students)	No	2015-16	10	20	20	20	20	20	Two day residential event involving curriculum-aligned workshops for BTEC sport students from Truro and Penwith College

Optional commentary on milestones.

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.