

1. ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

Introduction

In its third year of independence, the University of Suffolk is proud to be a community impact institution; established in one of the few counties with no dedicated higher education (HE) provider, it aims to have a transformational impact on the region. The University is pleased that for the last two years we have been ranked third in the country by HESA¹ for the proportion of students entering the University from low-participation neighbourhoods (academic years 2016/17 to 2017/18). Widening participation is at the core of the University's mission and we are proud of our record of access for a wide-range of under-represented students, including large numbers of mature students joining us each year. Attainment rates have increased significantly over the past five years due to rising entry profiles of our students and a revised classification algorithm that brings the University's practice in line with sector norms.

In previous Access and Participation Plans (APP) and Access Agreements, the University has focussed on increasing progression to highly skilled employment or further study for the whole population, as while our progression rates have remained static, the sector has seen an increase. We continue to undertake significant work to provide students with experience relevant to graduate employment, which has been commended by the Quality Assurance Agency², but gaps persist between some groups of students. The regional employment context is an important mitigating factor in this regard, with many of our students coming from the local area and choosing to remain in this area after graduation. In particular, the University's high mature female student population tend to be less mobile as they are often deeply rooted in the region. The county of Suffolk is predominantly a low-skill, low-wage dispersed rural economy with infrastructure challenges that present obstacles to productivity³. Official labour market statistics for 2017/18 highlight that the county is 6.4% behind the national average of SOC 1-3 (highly skilled) occupations and 6.2% behind the eastern region⁴. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) contextual data shows that a high proportion of our students go on to work in areas with the lowest proportion of employed graduates working in highly skilled employment⁵. The limitations in graduate opportunities within the region has a direct impact on the progression of our graduates to highly skilled employment. We continue to work closely with regional stakeholders to improve the skills base in the local economy and tackle regional economic and educational inequality.

The University of Suffolk's Assessment of Performance (AoP) is based within the context of a period of growth in overall student numbers, both at the University's main campus in Ipswich and across a range of partners, including our Partner Colleges in Suffolk and Great Yarmouth, and a new partner based in London from 2017/18.

Most data provided in the AoP is from the Office for Students (OfS) dataset and relates to full-time and apprenticeship undergraduates across all sites of delivery unless otherwise specified, although we have used internal data where necessary to support our analysis (for example where a small underlying student population results in lack of reportable OfS data). Part-time numbers are relatively small and we have only included reference to them where specific trends or sustained gaps can be seen. The definitions used in the AoP are based on the OfS definitions, and references to 'progression' therefore only include graduate-level employment and further study. We have used additional internal and external data sources where relevant.

¹ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/ukpis/widening-participation/table-t1>

² QAA Higher Education Review report, November 2014

³ New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan, 2017

⁴ Office for National Statistics Labour Market Profile for Suffolk, employment by occupation July 2017 to June 2018, available at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1941962836/report.aspx> [accessed 12-06-19]

⁵ Provider-level contextual data, TEF subject level pilot metrics (2018-19)

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access

The University of Suffolk's (UoS) performance in the access of POLAR4 Quintile 1 (Q1) students is very good, reflecting our commitment to, and achievements in widening participation. The proportion of both 18-year-olds and all full-time students from POLAR4 Q1 at the University is higher than the proportion in the population and across the sector. UCAS data⁶ shows that POLAR4 Q1 students are just as likely to receive an offer of study at the University as POLAR4 Q5. However, Table 1 shows that the proportion of 18-year-olds from Q1 in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) at the University is lower than the proportion of IMD Q1 18-year-olds in the UK population. We have seen variances in our performance, with proportions higher than the sector in some years, but lower than the sector in 2016/17-2017/18. However overall, we have always had a lower proportion than the UK population. We are committed to closing the gap between the proportion of IMD Q1 18-year-olds in the UK population and the proportion studying at the University.

| | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Access – proportion of IMD Q1 18-year-olds within UoS, the sector and the wider population | | | | | | |
| UoS | - | 17% | 13% | 16% | 15% | 12% |
| Sector | - | 14.3% | 15.2% | 15.8% | 15.9% | 16.4% |
| Population | - | 21.8% | 21.9% | 22.2% | 22% | 22.1% |
| Success – continuation rates of POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at UoS | | | | | | |
| POLAR4 Q1 | 82% | 82% | 86% | 83% | 80% | - |
| POLAR4 Q5 | 92% | 80% | 86% | 90% | 87% | - |
| Success – attainment rates of POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at UoS | | | | | | |
| POLAR4 Q1 | - | 38% | 42% | 34% | 59% | 60% |
| POLAR4 Q5 | - | 47% | 55% | 60% | 65% | 75% |
| Progression – progression rates of POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at UoS | | | | | | |
| POLAR4 Q1 | 59% | 45% | 48% | 49% | 51% | - |
| POLAR4 Q5 | 67% | 54% | 50% | 60% | 60% | - |

Table 1: Data showing access, success and progression gaps from areas of low participation, household income or socioeconomic status (full-time students)

In relation to part-time student access, the OfS dataset highlights a sustained gap in the proportion of IMD Q1 students at the University compared to Q5 students, rising to 16.3 percentage points in 2017/18. Associated student numbers are small (only 20 Q1 students in 2017/18), and internal analysis shows that a significant proportion of these students are on employer-led vocational programmes (for example in engineering) where their employer has selected them to undertake the programme in accordance with business need. Closing the gap is therefore not wholly within our control, but we are committed to working with employers to promote engagement of their staff from disadvantaged backgrounds in part-time study as part of our strategic measures for IMD Q1 access.

Success: Continuation

We recognise our gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Q5 and Q1 and are prioritising a reduction (akin to the OfS Key Performances Measures (KPMs)). Table 1 demonstrates this gap has been present in three of five years. Variations are due to small numbers in our population (130 Q1 students and 60 Q5 students in 2016/17), but we are committed to eliminating the 7% gap that can be seen in each of the last two years. We are pleased that our gap for IMD Q1 and Q5 (2%) is not statistically significant.

Success: Attainment

We are pleased that our attainment rate for students from POLAR4 Q1 has increased over the past five years (Table 1) although our 15% gap between Q1 and Q5 students in 2017/18 is higher than the 9.5% gap across the sector. We are also pleased that the gap between IMD Q1 and Q5 has been reducing over the past five years to 10%, compared to 18% in the sector. We are committed to continuing to reduce the gaps between attainment rates of POLAR4 and IMD Q1 and Q5 students.

⁶ UCAS 2018 End of Cycle: <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-reports-sex-area-background-and-ethnic-group/2018-entry-ucas-undergraduate-reports-sex-area-background-and-ethnic-group>

Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

The University's progression rate for students from POLAR4 Q1 has increased over the past four years but the gap between Q1 and Q5 has fluctuated (Table 1), with a 9% gap in 2016/17 that is not flagged as statistically significant. We are pleased that our gap for IMD Q1 and Q5 has been no more than 2% over the past five years. However, our progression rates are generally lower than the sector and we are therefore committed to improving progression rates to reflect the sector norm, as well as reducing the gap in graduate outcomes between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students.

1.2 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (BAME students)

Access

Table 2 shows that over the past five years, a maximum of 11% of our 18-year-olds entrants are BAME students, which is below both the proportion of BAME 18-year-olds in the UK population and the proportion of BAME entrants in the sector. We have seen an increase in our entrants in 2017/18 with the introduction of our partner, the London School of Commerce (LSC), which has predominately Black and Asian entrants, although a significant majority of LSC entrants are mature. The gap between White and BAME entrants at the University has remained statistically significant throughout the past five years, and we are therefore committed to increasing the intake of BAME students at our campuses in Suffolk. The University predominately recruits from Suffolk and the surrounding region, which has a lower proportion of BAME young people than elsewhere in the country.

| | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Access – proportion of BAME 18-year-olds within UoS, the sector and in the UK population | | | | | | |
| UoS | - | 10% | 7% | 10% | 6% | 11%* |
| – Asian | - | 1.9% | 2.9% | 2.7% | 2.1% | 6.2% |
| – Black | - | 5.8% | 6.2% | 5.1% | 6.0% | 10.6% |
| – Mixed | - | 3.5% | 3.2% | 3.7% | 3.2% | 3.6% |
| – Other | - | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.5% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| Sector | - | 22.8% | 23.9% | 25% | 26% | 27.3% |
| Population | - | 16% | 16% | 16% | 16% | 16% |
| Success – continuation rates of BAME and White students at UoS | | | | | | |
| BAME students | 87% | 87% | 85% | 82% | 86% | - |
| – Asian | 85% | 85% | 85% | 95% | 85% | - |
| – Black | 90% | 91% | 89% | 77% | 88% | - |
| – Mixed | 80% | 85% | 80% | 87% | 80% | - |
| – Other | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | - |
| White students | 85% | 86.4% | 85.2% | 84.7% | 85.4% | - |
| Success – attainment rate of BAME and White students at UoS | | | | | | |
| BAME students | - | 34% | 28% | 42% | 52% | 55% |
| – Asian | - | 35% | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| – Black | - | 30% | 30% | 35% | 50% | 55% |
| – Mixed | - | 45% | Insufficient data | 50% | 50% | 60% |
| – Other | - | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| White students | - | 56% | 57% | 59% | 69% | 72% |
| Progression – progression rates of BAME and White students at UoS and White students across the sector | | | | | | |
| BAME students (UoS) | 55% | 59% | 73% | 72% | 66% | - |
| – Asian | Insufficient data | 60% | 65% | - | - | - |
| – Black | 65% | 55% | 85% | 75% | 65% | - |
| – Mixed | Insufficient data | 60% | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | 65% | - |
| – Other | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | Insufficient data | - |
| White students (UoS) | 64% | 57% | 61% | 60% | 63% | - |
| White students (sector) | 66.2% | 67.7% | 70% | 71.6% | 74% | - |

Table 2: Data showing access, success and progression gaps for full-time Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (noting that due to small student numbers there is insufficient data to enable full reporting for all ethnic groups, although we anticipate that we will be able to report on this in future as numbers increase in line with our BAME access target) (* includes intake of LSC students, with internal data showing a figure of 10.1% when LSC students are excluded)

Success: Continuation

BAME students at the University have consistently had continuation rates similar to White students (Table 2). Continuation rates are also similar where we are able to disaggregate by ethnicity, with no statistically significant gaps identified for any BAME student group compared to White students. There is a small gap of 3.4 percentage points in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White in 2016/17 which we are committed to eliminating, but small cohort sizes (between 10 and 20 students over the five year period) means that percentages can fluctuate from year to year and therefore trends are indicative. Our continuation rate for all BAME students in 2016/17 was 86%, compared to 88.1% for the sector.

Success: Attainment

We recognise our gap in attainment rates between BAME and White students, and are prioritising a reduction (akin to the OfS KPM). Table 2 shows that the proportion of White students gaining a First or 2:1 classification is significantly higher at the University than for BAME students. Over the last five years, the gap between White students and BAME students has narrowed, but a gap of 17% still remained in 2017/18, which is higher than the national gap of 13.2%. This has been identified by the OfS, as part of our enhanced monitoring, as an area for the University to make progress on over the next five years. We have insufficient data to enable more granular analysis of performance in relation to all ethnicities, with particularly small numbers of Asian students resulting in attainment data only being available for 2013/14. However, by aggregating internal data for 2016/17 and 2017/18, our Asian attainment rate is 58%, representing a 14 percentage point gap compared to White students in 2017/18. We are committed to improving attainment rates across all BAME groups, with targeted measures designed to address barriers for specific minority ethnic groups.

Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

We do not have a sustained gap in the progression rates of our BAME students compared to White students and in some years' progression rates have been higher for BAME students (in particular Black students in 2014/15 and 2015/16). However, Table 2 shows fluctuations in the progression rates of our BAME students, and a significant gap between progression rates of BAME students at the University compared to White students across the sector. Progression rates of BAME students has been identified by the OfS as part of our enhanced monitoring, as an area for the University to make progress on, and we are committed to closing the gap between our BAME students and White students across the sector.

1.3 Mature students

Access

We continue to have a high proportion of mature students studying at the University. Since 2013/14, the University has maintained approximately 60% mature entrants, increasing to 66.8% in 2017/18 with the introduction of LSC as a partner. This compares to 27.8% across the sector. Our proportion of mature part-time students (81% in 2017/18) has remained comparable to the sector (87.4%).

Success: Continuation

Continuation rates for mature full-time students have remained comparable to those of young full-time students, with both increasing over the past three years. The gap has not been more than 1% over the past five years. The latest data (2016/17) shows that our mature student continuation rate of 86% was higher than the sector's continuation rate (84.8%).

Our mature part-time continuation rates are considerably lower than those for young part-time students, with a statistically significant gap in 2013/14 (21 percentage points) that we are pleased to report has subsequently reduced to 11 percentage points in 2015/16. However, our young part-time continuation rate is well above sector norms (93% in 2015-16), largely because a significant majority of these students are on employer-funded construction and engineering programmes. Our mature part-time continuation still compares favourably with the sector (for example being 82% in 2015/16 compared to 61.8% for the sector), and therefore part-time continuation is not subject to a specific target at this time.

Success: Attainment

Attainment rates of mature full-time students have consistently been higher than for young full-time students, and have been increasing over the past five years to reach 68% in 2017/18 compared to 70% for the sector. Disaggregating by age group shows that older groups are more likely to achieve a First or 2:1, particularly the 41-50 age group (74% attainment in 2017/18 compared to 64% in the sector) compared to the 26-30

group (61% attainment in 2017/18 compared to 72.7% in the sector). Again numbers are small and the OfS dataset shows no significant gaps between age groups.

Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

The University's progression rates for mature students are better than for young students. In 2016/17, mature students' progression rate was 69% compared to 56% for young students, although progression across the sector was 75.7%. We recognise that we must continue to increase progression rates for our mature students, and for all students at the University.

1.4 Students known to have a disability

We have disaggregated on the basis of disability type where possible, but in some cases it is necessary to consider students with a disability as a single group where numbers are very small.

Access

The University continues to have a higher proportion of entrants declaring a disability than the sector (15.7% in 2017/18 at UoS compared to 14.6% for the sector). Our split of disability type is similar to the sector: in 2017/18, 5.1% of UoS students had cognitive or learning difficulties (5.5% in the sector); and our next largest group were those with a mental health condition at 3.7% (3.5% in the sector).

Success: Continuation

Continuation rates for students known to have a disability at the University have increased over the past five years, and we are pleased that we do not have a gap between continuation rates of full-time students known to have a disability and those not known to have a disability (Table 3). We have been able to disaggregate the data by some disability types, and while continuation rates for students with cognitive or learning difficulties is higher than for students without a disability, Table 3 shows a gap in continuation rates for students with a mental health condition, with rates declining slightly over the past two years. We are aware of an increase both at the University and across the sector of students reporting a mental health condition and we intend to reduce this gap.

| | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Success – continuation rates of all students known to have a disability; students with a Mental Health Condition; and students not known to have a disability | | | | | | |
| All students with a disability | 82% | 81% | 86% | 82% | 85% | - |
| Students with a mental health condition | 80% | 80% | 85% | 78% | 77% | - |
| Students not known to have a disability | 85.8% | 87.3% | 84.9% | 84.9% | 85.5% | - |
| Success – attainment rate of students known to have a disability and those not known to have a disability | | | | | | |
| All students with a disability | - | 46% | 46% | 47% | 57% | 64% |
| Students not known to have a disability | - | 54% | 53% | 58% | 69% | 68% |
| Progression – progression rates of students known to have a disability at UoS and those not known to have a disability across the sector | | | | | | |
| Students with a disability (UoS) | 60% | 55% | 60% | 62% | 62% | - |
| Students not known to have a disability (sector) | 65% | 66.8% | 69.5% | 70.7% | 73.3% | - |

Table 3: Data showing success and progression rates for full-time students known to have a disability

For the latest year in which sufficient part-time student data is available within the OfS dataset to allow comparison (2013/14), continuation rates for students known to have a disability were 20 percentage points lower than for students not known to have a disability. However, due to the small student numbers involved (between 20 and 30 students with a disability for the three years in which there was sufficient OfS data), this gap has fluctuated considerably and in no instance is statistically significant. More recent internal continuation data (which does not capture information on students leaving the University and enrolling with another provider) shows a gap of 14% for 2014 entrants and 16% for 2015 entrants, in both instances with the part-time disabled population comprising no more than 22 students. Continuation rates for part-time students known to have a disability have been in line with or above sector norms at 60% or above over the period under review, but we are committed to working with this student group to better understand the challenges that they face, with a view to reducing any internal gaps in continuation compared to those not known to have a disability.

Success: Attainment

The University is pleased to report that attainment rates for students known to have a disability have improved over the past five years (Table 3) as a result of a significant amount of work in this area. However, we continue to have a gap between the attainment rate of students with a disability and those not known to have a disability, which has been highlighted by the OfS as part of our enhanced monitoring as an area for the University to make progress on. Disaggregating by disability type shows that students with cognitive or learning difficulties have slightly lower levels of attainment, but numbers are small (30 in 2017/18) and we cannot therefore draw any conclusions based on disability type. We will therefore be focussing on increasing attainment for all students known to have a disability.

Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

We are pleased that progression rates for students known to have a disability at the University are very similar to the rates of students not known to have a disability. However, Table 3 shows that progression rates for students known to have a disability are below the progression rates of students across the sector not known to have a disability. As part of our enhanced monitoring, the OfS have asked us to address progression rates of students known to have a disability. We are committed to reducing the gap between students known to have a disability at the University against the sector's progression rates of students not known to have a disability.

1.5 Care leavers

We have included care leavers as a target group for access activity and support once on-course in previous Access Agreements, recognising that research into the experiences of care leavers nationally has identified that their outcomes remain worse than for their counterparts in the general population. Research commissioned by the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers in 2017 highlighted that care leavers were around 11% less likely to enter HE than other young people (taking into account GCSE results, special educational needs and demographics); around 38% more likely to permanently leave HE than their peers; and more likely to take breaks in study.⁷ Barriers to access and success included lack of support from social workers at the outset, insufficient practical support with the application process, inadequate mental health support and a sense of not fitting in. However, those who did successfully complete their degree programme were just as likely to attain a first or upper second class degree classification as their peers.

Over the last five years we have recruited between 10 and 24 care leavers each year. We have limited data about care leavers in the local area to enable analysis of our success in terms of access, but we are working closely with Suffolk County Council to better identify data to support our activity. Small student numbers makes it difficult to undertake meaningful statistical analysis of our performance and identify trends over time. Nevertheless, internal data shows that in line with the national picture, continuation has proved challenging, with a non-continuation rate of 32.7% for the 49 full-time students who commenced their studies between 2013/14 and 2016/17. While there have been some notable individual success stories in terms of attainment, our overall data suggests that students are more likely to obtain a lower degree classification: of those 12 care leavers who commenced a degree programme between 2013/14 and 2015/16 and successfully completed their studies, over 80% attained a lower second class degree. We have insufficient data to reliably evaluate progression to highly skilled employment or further study, but we are improving our collection and reporting of data on care leavers from 2019/20 and thus anticipate that we can report on progression for this cohort following their graduation in 2022 (dependent upon having a sufficient cohort size to enable meaningful statistical analysis).

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

We have undertaken intersectional analysis of our students within the limitations of the size of our student population. Data is presented below where gaps can be seen.

Access

We can see gaps based on *ethnicity and IMD/POLAR4*. In 2016/17, only 3% of our students were BAME and POLAR4 Q1-2 (6.5% in the sector) and only 6.1% of our students were BAME and IMD Q1-2 (20.2% in the

⁷ Harrison, N. (2017) *Moving on up: Pathways of care leavers and care-experienced students into and through higher education*. Winchester: National Network for the Education of Care Leavers.

sector). Data improves in 2017/18 with the introduction of LSC, but we will continue to prioritise access of BAME and IMD Q1 students to the University in Suffolk.

Success: Continuation

Our continuation data shows that we have had small gaps in single years relating to *gender and POLAR4 Q1/2*, and *ethnicity and POLAR4 or IMD Q1/2*, but the gaps have not been sustained.

Success: Attainment

Our attainment data shows a gap based on *ethnicity and IMD* with lower attainment rates for BAME Q1 students (55%) compared to White Q1 students (63.9%), when aggregating two years of data. Aggregated data also shows a gap between BAME male attainment (44.9%) and White male attainment (71.3%). Numbers are small but we are committed to reducing these gaps.

Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

Our analysis of progression data shows that previous gaps have closed or are no longer significant. We have had a slight increase in the gap between *male POLAR4 Q1-2 and female POLAR4 Q1-2* but this has fluctuated over the past four years.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in Higher Education (HE)

The University does not currently collect data on whether students identify as being carers; refugees or asylum seekers; belong to a military family; are estranged from their families; or are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community. We cannot therefore provide any evidence about access, success and progression of these groups. We continue to include these groups as priorities for access activities and for access to services including counselling or financial support and we will be collecting this data at enrolment from 2019/20 for better targeting and analysis.

2. STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Established in 2007 (originally as University Campus Suffolk), the University aims to raise aspirations and widen participation to HE across Suffolk and the region, and have a clear, measurable and positive impact on the economic, cultural and educational lives of the communities we serve. We work closely with regional stakeholders to ensure that our academic offer meets the needs of the local economy and skills gap, and that our degrees equip our graduates with the knowledge, skills and experience for successful graduate employment.

We aim to provide an inclusive and supportive environment for all students, embracing and valuing diversity and providing equality of opportunity for all. Our progressive Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2018/2023) is designed to reflect the profile of our student body and recognise that our students join the University from a range of backgrounds, requiring support and development to enable them to achieve their full potential throughout the full student life cycle.

2.1 Target groups

The University has a diverse student body, many of whom can be identified as belonging to at least one under-represented group. The institution commits to improving opportunities and outcomes for all of our students, and we therefore have a broad range of target groups including those from areas of low HE participation or socioeconomic status; BAME students; students known to have a disability; mature and part-time students; care leavers; carers; estranged students; refugees or asylum seekers, and those from military families or from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities. We have made a significant impact in Suffolk and the region in relation to access and participation in HE and will continue to maintain our performance in this area in order to contribute to continuous improvement nationally.

However, our AoP has highlighted gaps where groups of our students are not achieving outcomes comparable to other groups or to the sector, and our Targets Investment Plan therefore sets out the measurable targets that we have set to 2024/2025, and in some cases to 2030/31. The groups that will be targeted at each stage of the student lifecycle are as follows:

- Access: IMD Quintile 1 18-year-olds and BAME 18-year-olds

- Success (Continuation): POLAR4 Quintile 1 students and students with a mental health condition
- Success (Attainment): BAME students, students known to have a disability, POLAR4 Quintile 1 students and IMD Quintile 1 students
- Progression: BAME students and students known to have a disability

2.2 Aims and objectives

The University targets and milestones have evolved in line with our own strategic direction, and also the OfS KPMs, and build on targets from previous APPs/Access Agreements. We have chosen to discontinue targets that previously focused on the whole population from academic year 2020/21, and concentrate on gaps for specific groups of students, noting that our whole population success and progression rates will be monitored through other means. We have also chosen to discontinue targets where we no longer have significant gaps (e.g. entrants who are POLAR4 Q1, part-time, or mature), and those that have previously related to specific activity (e.g. summer schools, teachers' conferences and outreach activities), although those successful activities will continue as part of our strategic measures as outlined below.

The University will not be setting new targets based on outreach engagement/activity with specific groups as this activity will continue as part of our widening participation strategy. We are also not setting new targets relating to attainment-raising activity with schools and colleges, but instead are committed to working collaboratively with our partner institutions to raise attainment for mature students on Access to HE Diplomas and Foundation Year programmes as part of our wider partnership strategy (as discussed in more detail below).

The University's ten new targets and milestones, as set out in the Targets Investment Plan, are stretching and ambitious yet realistic, with gradual percentage increases in the early stages, increasing as we implement more enhanced activity. Where we expect to see an increase in the outcomes of comparator groups, we are committed to reducing or eliminating gaps rather than setting a target based on reaching the current position of comparator groups, and our baseline data reflects this. We are committed to a robust governance and monitoring structure to ensure progress throughout the five years of our targets, ensuring that we are able to respond to any indication that our performance is not successful.

Where we have identified particular gaps but student numbers are small and trends are therefore only indicative, we have not set specific targets but have given a written commitment to improve performance. In addition to those commitments noted below, we are also committed to:

- Increasing the number of care leavers entering the University and supporting their success and progression.
- Supporting access, success and progression for other groups who experience barriers in HE as outlined in Section 1.7 above.
- Improving our data capabilities in relation to access and participation work through investment in Qlik Sense business intelligence software, which is currently being piloted with a view to full implementation from the commencement of this APP in 2020.

A summary of our written commitments, including the activities we intend to undertake to address these and associated timescales and success criteria, is provided in Annex 2. This summary will be fine-tuned as we undertake further work to understand barriers to access, success and progression for relevant target groups, in order to determine appropriate interventions and success measures.

HE participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

We are pleased with our record on access of students from low participation neighbourhoods. However, our AoP shows a gap in access for students from areas of multiple deprivation; a gap in continuation for students from areas of low HE participation; and gaps in attainment rates across this under-represented group. Our aims and measurable objectives are therefore to:

- Eliminate the percentage gap in the proportion of IMD Q1 18-year-old students at the University compared to the proportion of IMD Q1 18-year-olds in the UK population by 2024/25, with the gap closing by 2% per year.

- Eliminate the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 at the University by 2024/25 and eliminate the gap in our continuation rates compared to the sector by 2030/31. Our milestones are based on increased performance in later years, but with the gap closing by between 0.4% and 2% per year.
- Reduce the gap in attainment rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at the University from 15% in 2017-18 to 8% in 2024-25 (within the context of a current sector attainment gap of 9.5%).
- Reduce the gap in attainment rates between IMD Q1 and Q5 students at the University from 10% in 2017-18 to 7.5% in 2024-25 (within the context of a current sector attainment gap of 18%).

We are also committed to working with employers to improve access for part-time students from IMD Q1 areas and reducing gaps in progression between students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students

Our AoP shows gaps in access of BAME students and their degree outcomes. As part of our enhanced monitoring the OfS has also asked us to focus on progression rates of BAME students. Our aims and measurable objectives are therefore to:

- Reduce the percentage gap in the proportion of BAME 18-year-olds at the University (excluding students based at LSC) compared to the proportion of BAME 18-year-olds in the UK population by 0.5% per year to 2024/25; and to eliminate the gap by 2030/31. We recognise that this is a particularly stretching target for the University as our students are predominantly from the local region, which has a lower proportion of BAME young people than elsewhere in the country.
- Reduce the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between White and BAME students at the University of Suffolk by 2024/25, and to eliminate the gap by 2030/31. We have set a target of reducing the gap from 16% in 2017/18 to 7% in 2024/25 and to eliminate the gap by 2030/31, and we are committed to reducing and eliminating this gap across all minority ethnic groups. We will be undertaking additional data analysis throughout 2019/20 to better understand the reasons for the gap in attainment for each ethnic group, in order to provide appropriate targeted activity.
- Eliminate the gap in progression of BAME students at the University of Suffolk compared to White students nationally by 2024/25. Our milestones are based on increased performance in later years, but with the gap closing by between 1-2% per year.

We are also committed to eliminating the small gap in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White students.

Students known to have a disability

Our AoP shows gaps in continuation, attainment and progression of students known to have a disability compared to students not known to have a disability. As part of our enhanced monitoring the OfS has asked us to focus on progression rates of students known to have a disability. Our aims and measurable objectives are therefore to:

- Reduce the gap in the continuation rate of students with a mental health condition compared to those not known to have a disability by 2024/25, and to eliminate the gap by 2030/31. Our milestones are based on increased performance in later years, but with the gap closing by between 1-2% per year up to 2024/25. We recognise that this is an ambitious target as the University has a large proportion of students on courses requiring placements (e.g. health and social work), which can be particularly challenging for students with a mental health condition. We will be developing and targeting further support for these students before and during placements, in order to initially reduce, and then eliminate, the gap.
- Eliminate the gap in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between students known to have a disability and those not known to have a disability by 2024/25. We have set a target of reducing the gap by up to 1% per year.
- Reduce the gap in progression of students known to have a disability at the University of Suffolk compared to those not known to have a disability in the sector by 2024/25, and to eliminate the gap by 2030/31. We recognise that the current gap of 11% is large, and we are therefore committed to reducing the gap to 5% by 2024/25, and eliminating the gap by 2030/31.

We are also committed to reducing gaps in continuation rates between part-time students known to have a disability compared to part-time students not known to have a disability.

3. STRATEGIC MEASURES

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

Achieving inclusivity and equality of opportunity for all is fundamental to the University's vision. We are strongly committed to reducing and eliminating gaps in access, success and progression for under-represented groups and this is embedded within the organisation's key strategies, activities and culture, ensuring a whole provider approach to achieving our aims, objectives and targets. Our overarching strategies (as outlined in subsequent sections) for widening participation; partnerships; learning, teaching and assessment; equality, diversity and inclusion; employer and business engagement; and employability, provide a comprehensive, well-aligned framework for supporting student access, success and progression, and delivering change to address identified gaps in performance. The collaborative engagement of our Board, Senate, Executive and Students' Union with our APP provides strong leadership and oversight of progress. We have a wide range of staff involved in leading and implementing change in this area, with active engagement by teams across both academic and professional services. The collective commitment and responsibility of the whole university community to work together to successfully implement targeted strategic measures to reduce and eliminate gaps is further supported through recruitment and selection approaches for staff, corporate induction, staff development activity and appraisals.

We have developed our theory of change framework to guide the development of a sound and evidence-based programme of activities to achieve our APP targets and written commitments. Through this process, we are focused on:

- identifying our aims and objectives in terms of securing equality of opportunity for target student groups
- determining the changes we want to make (including both intermediate and final outcomes)
- collating evidence on factors influencing equality of opportunity, including any associated barriers that we need to address
- planning and implementing the activities required to achieve our intended outcomes (taking into consideration assumptions we have made as we have set out our theory of change, and determining plans for managing associated risks that may impact on the success of our activities)
- evaluating the impact of initiatives in terms of ensuring continuous improvement and delivering positive change in line with our written commitments, targets and milestones.

An exemplar outcomes chain for one of our targets is provided in Annex 1, to illustrate our theory of change framework. The framework provides a valuable mechanism for planning, communicating, monitoring and evaluating our activities in relation to each of our targets and written commitments.

Our strategic measures will be further developed throughout 2019/20, supported by comprehensive and systematic literature reviews and collaborative projects that engage students from the identified target groups as partners, to ensure an evidence-based approach. All activity will be planned using our theory of change framework, with outcome chains for all targets and written commitments. Our activity will be underpinned by the evaluation strategy outlined in section 3.3, which will be led by a new Professorial post, and linked to the work of our Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

Alignment with other strategies

The aims and objectives of our APP are strongly embedded in all our institutional strategies, with our APP targets clearly aligned to institutional KPIs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Ensuring equality of opportunity is a fundamental element of the University's core values, and the principles of equality, diversity and inclusivity underpin all University strategies, including those relating to widening participation and learning, teaching and assessment. All of our policies, procedures and activities are subject to equality impact assessments. The University monitors implementation and evaluation of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 through the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC),

which has diverse membership from across the institution including partners from the community. Our work on access, success and progression is reported into the EDC, providing a holistic view of equality and diversity issues. Supporting our APP activity, work has been undertaken to analyse a broad range of protected characteristics of students to inform marketing and recruitment activities, curriculum development, and the tailoring of support to suit a range of needs. All staff involved with student recruitment, outreach and admissions receive training in equality and diversity, emphasising the need to ensure that discrimination, either direct or indirect, is not exercised at any stage. Much work has been done to support applicants and students known to have disabilities, and all marketing literature and digital media is fully compliant with accessibility guidelines. The University continues to invest in information and advice for applicants and students on reasonable adjustments and Disabled Students Allowances, and applicants are encouraged to disclose information about additional needs as early as possible. The University's multi-faith Chaplaincy represents a wide range of faiths, and students benefit from effective links with local faith groups.

Widening Participation (WP) Strategy: Our strategic approach to WP is underpinned by our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, as outlined in our equality, diversity and inclusion activity. We recognise that we have made considerable progress in increasing participation rates for a range of under-represented groups, but that we have a responsibility to ensure those participation rates remain high. We will extend our work to better engage other disadvantaged groups, for example within BAME communities, recognising the enrichment of the learning experience that comes from having a diverse student body. Our county and region have areas of significant disadvantage and low participation, and our local secondary schools and colleges are often in remote small towns serving populations that include sparsely populated rural areas, and urban areas characterised by low-skill, low-wage economies; and we will therefore continue to provide activity to support access to HE for all under-represented groups. We will work collaboratively with local partners, including Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Refugee Support, Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality, the Ipswich Opportunity Area, and the National Collaborative Outreach Programme to achieve these outcomes and increase data available about these groups. From 2019 we will introduce questions on a range of characteristics as part of the enrolment process for new students to improve our reporting and tracking of under-represented groups.

Partnerships Strategy: The University's founding principle of access to quality HE across Suffolk and Great Yarmouth continues to be a key strategic focus through the maintenance of our Partner Colleges (a network of Further Education Colleges) who deliver awards of the University in areas of the county characterised by economic deprivation and low HE participation. Through our Partner Colleges, we are able to work directly with under-represented groups that would otherwise be unlikely to progress to HE, particularly mature and part-time students; offering courses that directly support local private, public and third sector organisations and the technical and industrial skills needs of the local community. The spread of activity for mature and part-time students across Suffolk and south Norfolk, and genuine collaborative working with our Partner Colleges, is key to our success in attracting a high proportion of mature students to the University each year. Our academic partnerships will further shape our WP strategy, with new partners actively engaged in meeting our aims and objectives. The partnership with LSC provides access to HE for predominantly mature and BAME student groups, with Foundation Year programmes designed to increase access and success. This partnership is relatively new but early data analysis indicates that we will need to monitor the continuation and attainment rates of these students closely and work with LSC to support the success and progression of students in line with agreed performance targets.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Strategy: We recognise that our excellent record in WP has created challenges in success and progression. Our new LTA Strategy has been developed within a theory of change framework, with the aim of taking a different transitional approach linked directly to WP. The Strategy is designed to ensure that our students experience learning, teaching and assessment that is active, progressively independent, inclusive, employer-engaged, and research-informed. The Strategy is being rolled out from 2019/20, based on the recommendations of a series of task and finish groups that were established in 2018/19 to develop operational plans to embed and implement the strategy. As discussed in more detail below, associated LTA initiatives are being designed to lead to better outcomes for our students, driving progress in the key areas across success and progression where we have previously seen performance below our expectations. As part of the LTA Strategy, staff are expected to commit to the professional values outlined in the UK Professional Standards Framework, including respect for individual learners and diverse learning communities, and promotion of participation in HE and equality of opportunity for learners. A range of staff development opportunities and enhanced course design processes enable staff

to demonstrate values of inclusivity and to embed appropriate practices in their work, aligning with our access and participation strategy.

Employer Engagement and Employability: Our strategic approach to employer engagement and graduate employability actively engages academic schools and professional services departments in a range of initiatives to support progression in line with our APP targets. Our Employability Strategy includes a commitment to providing meaningful employer engagement opportunities for all students. Course teams are expected to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship education across the curricula, and the University has developed a set of Graduate Attributes which personal tutors can use to help students identify personal attributes and goals. The Strategy includes the wider roll-out of an online platform (FutureMe) and associated support to enable students to engage in career planning and development and prepare to articulate their achievements to potential employers. We are also committed to ensuring that employers play a key role in the course design process.

We are committed to enhancing student and graduate employment outcomes through the development of enterprise and entrepreneurship. We are building a quadripartite approach to enterprise education involving the student, the entrepreneur, the academic and the community, which will be used to underpin strategic measures for improving progression rates within target student groups. We have a range of enterprise and entrepreneurship programmes delivered in-curricular and extra-curricular, such as the Games Hub, launched to address a skills shortage in Suffolk. Such initiatives provide an innovative and creative environment for students to learn more about business skills and what is needed when setting up a business. Our start-up hub and incubation space for staff, students and the community, the Ipswich Waterfront Innovation Centre (IWIC), collaborates with other innovation centres and hubs across the region to support and promote enterprise and entrepreneurship education within our communities, and the IWIC will play a role in facilitating our APP work in relation to progression. We have had considerable success in creating Knowledge Transfer Partnerships between our students and local employers, and aim to increase opportunities for our students as part of our Business Engagement strategy.

Strategic measures

Access

Our strategic measures relating to access fall into two broad categories: (i) measures to maintain our performance in areas where we are doing well in ensuring equality of opportunity in order to contribute to continuous improvement nationally; and (ii) measures to improve our performance in areas where we have identified significant gaps in access for specific under-represented groups, with a view to securing continuous improvement in line with our targets and written commitments.

Strategic measures to maintain existing performance

The University's strong performance in widening participation is underpinned by an extensive evidence-led schools engagement programme that sees us working with a wide range of students across the region. Much of our access activity is inclusive across full cohorts of young people, and we are pleased that the region has seen increasing participation rates over the past ten years. We have seen demonstrable positive impact from our targeted access activity aimed at young people from at least one under-represented group, including students in POLAR4 Q1 areas; students known to have a disability; those who are first in their family to progress to HE; care leavers; young carers, and refugees and asylum-seekers, and we have been recognised for our work in this area. We have also achieved considerable success in terms of supporting mature students returning to learning. We are committed to continuing to deliver the wide range of activity that has proven successful in contributing to national targets on participation rates and securing continuous improvement, including:

- In-school outreach activity, including younger age activity such as primary school workshops and our successful family awareness events.
- On-campus academic activity and summer schools.
- Collaboration and alignment with other funding sources e.g. *neaco* (Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach), of which the University is a founding partner. *Neaco* is the East Anglia consortia for the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (*NCOP*), where the University is working collaboratively with universities and colleges in Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire to increase access of under-represented young people into HE. Suffolk Higher Education Champions are based at the

University and collaborate with the University outreach team on activities that align with the strategic priorities of both organisations. During 2019/21, neaco will establish an outreach hub in partnership with key agencies in the region: the existing *neaco* infrastructure will be maintained where possible and the hub will build on existing work. It is anticipated that sustainability of the hub will be secured through engagement of other organisations in the region to provide a clear and joined-up offer to schools, including exploring match-funding projects. From August 2021 onwards the University will continue to contribute to the hub dependent on the external funding available.

- Playing a key role in the work of the Ipswich Opportunity Area (IOA) by hosting the project team, having a place on the Board, and chairing the IOA priority group for raising aspirations. As an example of collaborative activity, we have been working with the IOA to increase attainment in GCSE Maths. Initial outcomes are very positive and we are therefore committed to continuing to run this activity when the IOA project ends, building on our own previous pre-entry attainment raising activity in relation to GCSE English (where we had some difficulties in accessing students in schools).
- Staff across the University support the governance of large Academy Trusts, schools and FE colleges, including roles as Chairs/Vice-Chairs of governing bodies in schools with high numbers of WP students, acting as a critical friend on attainment and progression data. As an example we have recently joined the South West Ipswich and South Suffolk (SWISS) schools' partnership as a member of the Senior Leadership Group, and more operationally supporting the delivery of younger age activities (Years 7-9) to complement our existing primary school outreach programme.
- Facilitating mature and part-time student access through alternative and flexible approaches to course delivery, for example online delivery (e.g. Youth Justice and Early Years), Year 0 courses for Science degrees (Ipswich) and Business degrees (LSC); and collaborating with employers in the provision of work-based learning through Foundation degrees, HNC/Ds, and Higher and Degree Apprenticeships using a variety of flexible modes of delivery models including day release and online learning to promote accessibility. Internal analysis shows that the majority of our students undertaking online courses, Year 0 and apprenticeships are mature students returning to learning.
- Collaboration with our Partner Colleges to support progression from Access courses. We are mindful of the OfS report on Access to HE Diplomas⁸ which found that students had lower progression rates to HE than those on integrated Foundation courses, with progression often affected by having limited qualifications on entry or not completing the Access course. We will therefore focus pre-entry attainment raising activity on students undertaking Access courses in Partner Colleges to support the progression of Access students into HE, particularly into Health degrees where we have seen declining applications from mature students completing Access courses.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate the success of these measures in accordance with the evaluation strategy and monitoring processes outlined in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 below.

Strategic measures in relation to our access targets and written commitments

As highlighted in our aims and objectives, through our APP we have specific targets to increase recruitment of young full-time students to the University from IMD Q1 areas and BAME communities⁹. Intersectional analysis has also shown a lower proportion of students drawn from IMD Q1 BAME communities compared to the sector, which we intend to address as part of our measures.

National research on understanding and overcoming barriers to access for students from disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds has highlighted a range of factors influencing equality of opportunity, including prior educational outcomes, financial constraints (recognising that BAME students are more likely to be from deprived areas), experiences of racism and identity factors.¹⁰ We are particularly conscious that the University's location in a region with a lower proportion of BAME young people than elsewhere in the country can be a barrier to access, leading to reluctance for those from outside the region to move away from family

⁹ We are excluding partner students at LSC from our BAME access target as they recruit heavily from these communities, but we hope to draw on their experiences to inform our BAME outreach work in Suffolk.

¹⁰ Stevenson, J., O'Mahony, J., Khan, O., Ghaffar, F. and Stiehl, B. (2019). Understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds. Bristol: OfS.

and community support mechanisms. For those from IMD Q1 areas, recognised barriers to access that we need to address include poor school performance, low aspirations, concerns about the financial burden of HE, lack of visibility of graduate job opportunities and a fear of not fitting in. Recent research by the Bridge Group on geographical inequality is particularly relevant in our context, noting the barriers to access that arise for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds living in remote rural and coastal communities.¹¹

Our approach to securing positive change in this regard is based on identification of activities that will increase the visibility of HE, remove barriers to access and increase interest in HE amongst young people from IMD Q1 and BAME communities. All activities will be underpinned by further research into barriers to access for specific groups, and evaluation of best practice and evidence of previous success within target communities. In relation to BAME targets, we are strongly cognisant of the need to ensure that our measures are based on an understanding of disaggregated ethnic inequalities. We will establish clear objectives and achievable outcome measures in terms of attitudinal change and increased progression rates to HE, in line with our evaluation strategy outlined in Section 3.3. To measure the success of our strategic measures, we will continue to use the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) to log student engagement with our access activities and subsequent progression rates, in order to evaluate our success in securing continuous improvement in relation to our targets and milestones.

Examples of activities we will undertake to achieve our access targets include:

- Developing and delivering targeted activity for those communities in IMD Q1 areas through schools and community groups, to raise awareness and interest in HE (we are also committed to working with employers to promote IMD Q1 access through employer-led part-time vocational provision).
- Working collaboratively with organisations including the Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality to increase our engagement with all minority ethnic groups.
- Working collaboratively with the Ipswich Opportunity Area and *neaco* on a new Parent Ambassador project, where parents are HE ambassadors within their communities, prioritising work with BAME communities and in IMD Q1 areas.
- Developing flexible delivery models to facilitate access for IMD Q1 students from remote rural and coastal communities.
- Facilitating inspirational academic engagement with target communities to increase interest in HE, promote awareness of graduate employment opportunities, and dispel myths about HE 'not being for the likes of me'.
- Establishing progression agreements with UK partners to increase access from Level 3 to HE for BAME students.
- Increasing awareness of financial support to remove potential barriers to access for both groups.
- Making use of contextual data provided by UCAS to make preferential offers to BAME applicants (from application cycle 2019/20) and applicants from POLAR4 Q1 or 2 areas; UCAS MEM group 1 or 2; and IMD Q1 areas (from 2020/21). Applicants will be eligible for offers of study based on reduced entry requirements, with a view to removing barriers to access in terms of prior academic achievement.

As part of our written commitments in relation to other groups who experience barriers to HE access, the University has pledged support for organisations focussed on under-represented groups, including the Centre for Social Justice's aim to increase the proportion of care leavers progressing to HE nationally to 12% by 2024¹². We are committed to increasing the number of care leavers entering the University and this is supported by outreach activity and collaborative work with the University of East Anglia focused on this under-represented group, and also the use of contextualised admissions to address barriers in terms of prior academic attainment. We will monitor the success of our activities using HEAT and local Suffolk County Council data on progression to HE. We have also signed the Stand Alone pledge¹³ to provide increased support to estranged students. Care leavers and estranged students will both be included as priority groups for access to mental health services and financial support (see information on bursaries below), in order to

¹¹ The influence of place: geographical isolation and progression to HE (Bridge Group, February 2019), available from <https://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/research> [accessed July 2019]

¹² Centre for Social Justice (May 2019) '12by24', available from <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/core/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/12by24-Publication.pdf> [accessed May 2019]

¹³ <http://www.thestandalonepledge.org.uk/>

improve both access and outcomes. Improved data collection at enrolment from 2019/20 will enable us to evaluate the success of our activity for both student groups.

Success and progression

Our strategic measures to reduce or eliminate gaps in success and progression for specific under-represented groups sit within the context of our ambitious targets for improving outcomes for all of our students as part of our new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA Strategy). The Strategy has been designed to increase the success of our students through a managed process of increasing capability in independent learning. Both academic research¹⁴ and our own experience shows that students who have experienced gaps in learning and those with low levels of academic confidence can find the transition to HE challenging, which can have an adverse impact on continuation and attainment. Rather than expecting students to quickly adapt to the different learning and teaching methods used in HE, our Strategy identifies three phases of learning aimed at supporting students towards autonomous learning through gradually tapering the level of guidance and contact time throughout their studies.

The Strategy is being implemented through a range of inclusive interventions across the student lifecycle designed to improve continuation, attainment and progression to graduate employment or further study for all students. These include a greater emphasis on inclusivity in terms of curriculum content and delivery; the establishment of a holistic peer and alumni mentorship programme; and provision of a comprehensive student support framework. This framework includes a refreshed approach to personal tutoring that utilises a coaching model of support; increased expectations of module tutors in facilitating engagement with learning activities; and the identification of dedicated staff within each academic school who will take on 'progression tutor' roles to identify students at risk of withdrawal and implement appropriate intervention strategies.

To support progression, there is a focus within the Strategy on developing 'Graduate Attributes' to enhance employability; enhancing students' understanding and engagement in career management; providing increased opportunities for employer engagement; and promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship. The University has a long history of successful collaboration with employers in the design of curricula to enhance progression into employment, and has been commended by the QAA on its approach to employability.¹⁵ For example we have recently been successful in a collaborative bid with BT which will result in the development of curriculum focussed on technical skills based within BT's site in Suffolk, and current work with Suffolk County Council to construct a bespoke home for Suffolk's archival collections on the University campus will provide our students across a range of degree programmes with opportunities for placements and practical work-based experience. Such collaborative activities help our students make connections in relevant industries, while also supporting their continuation and attainment by providing a positive perspective on where their studies will take them.

All of our work on the curriculum, pedagogy and student support will be underpinned by the development of a new Learner Analytics platform, which will allow the University to better evaluate the success of our strategies and interventions. The platform will help to identify gaps in our provision and the use of our services by individual groups of students. The new platform will be piloted in key course areas in 2019/20 and rolled out following successful evaluation in 2020/21.

The University's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) will play a key role in the implementation and evaluation of the impact of the LTA Strategy, including implementing carefully targeted measures aimed at reducing or eliminating gaps identified in our AoP, informed by research that will help us to understand the experiences and structural barriers to success and progression. It is vital that our approach to success and progression involves student input on the services and activities that will have most impact. We have introduced BAME networks in some course areas and across the University, and we will be working with the Students' Union to develop networks for other under-represented groups to ensure our targeted interventions can truly increase equality of opportunity.

¹⁴ For example, Caprara, G et al (2008) 'Longitudinal analysis of the role of perceived self-efficacy for self-regulated learning in academic continuance and achievement' *Journal of Educational Psychology* 100 (3) 525-534.

¹⁵ QAA Higher Education Review report, November 2014.

Strategic measures in relation to our continuation targets

As highlighted in our aims and objectives, through our APP we have specific targets to improve continuation rates of POLAR4 Q1 students and students with a mental health condition. Research into student mental wellbeing in HE has highlighted how a range of interrelated social, academic, environmental and economic factors can affect mental health, necessitating a holistic approach to the provision of support.¹⁶ Our initiatives to support continuation for students with a mental health condition are intended to provide clear and accessible points of contact for support (internal student focus groups highlight the value of having a single point of contact for advice and support); to destigmatise mental health difficulties to encourage disclosure; and to promote wellbeing and resilience within our target student community. For students from areas of low HE participation, to address barriers to continuation we aim to facilitate and support students' academic and social integration into the University community; raise awareness of the benefits of engagement with learning and student support services; and ensure students are well supported in terms of dealing with personal and/or financial difficulties that impact on their studies.

Examples of activities we will undertake to achieve our continuation targets include:

- The provision of informal early induction for students with a mental health condition or those who are first in their family to go to university, to reduce anxiety about starting university, to signpost support services and to help develop social support networks.
- Embedding opportunities for peer mentorship for both target groups through the Suffolk Mentorship Programme, including mentoring for Level 4 students to aid both academic and social integration into the University, and peer assisted learning schemes to provide subject-specific support.
- As part of our new coaching model for personal tutoring, regular review of engagement and academic progress amongst target groups, including close working with school progression tutors to identify students at risk of withdrawal and implement appropriate intervention strategies.
- Ensuring that adequate consideration of mental health, wellbeing and resilience is embedded into module and course design, for all Level 4 students, as part of the development of academic skills, and confidence in capability.
- Active promotion of staff engagement in a wide range of training and developments relating to Mental Health First Aid, suicide prevention and tackling violence and harassment, especially amongst staff and students with defined pastoral and support roles.
- Further enhancement of personalised support and specialist mentoring provided to students known to have a mental health condition, including specialist tutors and counselling services.
- Recognising that students with mental health conditions often find compulsory placements in health or social work courses particularly challenging, developing and targeting further support for such students before and during placements (including working with practice partners to increase the support available to our students while on placement).
- Working with the Students' Union to promote wellbeing initiatives amongst target groups, including the Active Wellbeing scheme which provides free access to social sports designed to boost general wellbeing and mood, supplementing existing mental health interventions.

In addition to considering data on continuation rates, the success of our activity for students from both target groups will be evaluated using evidence of their engagement with the support offered (monitored through our Student Records and Learner Analytics platform); student-focused evaluative activity to identify satisfaction with service provision; and measurement of changes in students' confidence, attitude and resilience arising from specific targeted initiatives. The success and timeliness of interventions will be reviewed and enhanced throughout the student lifecycle.

Strategic measures in relation to our attainment targets

Our aims and objectives outline our targets in relation to improving degree outcomes for those students with a disability, BAME students (including an expectation of improved performance across all minority ethnic

¹⁶ See for example Student Mental Wellbeing in HE: Good Practice Guide (Universities UK and Mental Wellbeing in HE Working Group, 2015).

groups), POLAR4 Q1 students and IMD Q1 students. The recent UUK and NUS #closingthegap report highlights the BAME attainment gap as one of the starkest disparities in HE.¹⁷ We have signed the UUK and NUS BAME Attainment pledge to commit to increasing attainment rates of BAME students, with our own intersectional analysis showing a need for particular focus on male BAME students. The recent report commissioned by the OfS on understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds¹⁸ identified a range of factors acting as barriers to success that we aim to address, including lack of a sense of entitlement to support services, resources and opportunities; lack of recognition of white privilege within institutions; failure to adequately address issues of diversity, equality and discrimination within the curriculum; and a weak sense of student belonging to the wider university community. As highlighted in the #closingthegap report, we are conscious that open discussions within the institution about attainment gaps and matters relating to race are vital in making progress in relation to our targets. For disabled students, our focus is on addressing barriers to success by ensuring an institution-wide commitment to inclusive teaching practices; ensuring the availability of high quality, timely academic and pastoral support; and supporting disabled students in terms of overcoming financial difficulties. We recognise that students from areas of low HE participation or socioeconomic status also require dedicated academic, pastoral and financial support to enable them to develop their academic skills, build resilience and motivate them to reach their full academic potential. We are mindful of research showing that socio-economic inequalities in attainment link back to experiences earlier in the school system, reinforcing the importance of our attainment-raising activity with schools highlighted above.¹⁹

Examples of activities we will undertake to achieve our attainment targets include:

- Introducing BAME and Disabled Student forums for students to share experiences, offer peer support, and drive student success projects, sponsored by CELT. This will provide us with original research to develop our knowledge base about social and structural causes of attainment gaps amongst disabled and minority ethnic groups, to inform ongoing student success projects which promote equality, diversity and inclusivity.
- As part of the implementation of our LTA Strategy, provision of new guidance to academic teams (including guest lecturers) for 2019/20 to define explicit expectations for inclusive pedagogic practices. This will include increasing the diversity and reality of curriculum content, reading materials and assessment; providing students with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and awareness in relation to different perspectives and experiences; and supporting balanced debate and developing trusting and respectful learning communities (this work will build on a successful project undertaken by our Social Work team to address white privilege and promote a more open culture conducive to discussing difference and diversity safely).
- Enhancing the personalised support and specialist mentoring provided to students known to have a disability, including specialist tutors and counselling services, and actively promoting the £200 bursary for students receiving the DSA to enable purchase of equipment and resources to support their learning.
- As part of our new coaching model for personal tutoring, a strong focus on regular review of academic progress and attainment amongst target groups, leading to targeted additional support where required to improve student attainment.
- Increasing the capacity of specialist academic support available from our Library and Learning Services team, and promoting the services amongst target student groups to overcome barriers in terms of lack of sense of entitlement to support (specific areas of expertise within the team includes in the design of programmes and activities to improve engagement levels of BAME students and students known to have a disability, particularly those with cognitive or learning difficulties). We will continue to provide training and development to ensure we can support students with a range of needs, and that our staff continue to meet the qualificatory requirements of the DSA Quality Assurance Framework.

The success of our activity for students from the targeted groups will be evaluated using data on module and course level attainment rates; evidence of student engagement with the support offered (monitored through our Student Records and Learner Analytics platform); and student-focused evaluative activity to identify

¹⁷ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #closingthegap (Universities UK and National Union of Students, 2019)

¹⁸ Stevenson, J., O'Mahony, J., Khan, O., Ghaffar, F. and Stiell, B. (2019). Understanding and overcoming the challenges of targeting students from under-represented and disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds. Bristol: OfS.

¹⁹ For example, Crawford, C. (2014). Socio-economic differences in university outcomes in the UK: drop-out, degree completion and degree class. Institute for Fiscal Studies Working Paper W14/31, London.

satisfaction with service provision and the impact of specific targeted initiatives (for example on diversity of curriculum content and students' academic confidence and performance).

We are conscious that our new partnership with LSC may require bespoke strategic measures to address any trends that emerge in relation to BAME attainment. We will keep this under review as the partnership evolves and data becomes available on the degree outcomes of LSC students. We note the benefits that the partnership will bring in terms of enhancing our understanding of the needs of minority ethnic students and sharing good practice in relation to supporting success and progression.

Strategic measures in relation to our progression targets

Our aims and objectives outline our targets in relation to improving progression for BAME and disabled students. An OFFA briefing on BME students (2018) highlighted that regardless of entry qualifications, subject studied, degree classification and other socio-demographic characteristics, differences in employment outcomes between White and BAME graduates persist three years after graduation.²⁰ This is accentuated by BAME attainment gaps, particularly in employment contexts where an upper second class degree is a minimum expectation as part of initial screening processes. We aim to address barriers to successful graduate employment by supporting the development of self-efficacy within minority ethnic groups and providing enhanced opportunities to network with employers and gain meaningful work experience. For disabled students, our work to address barriers to progression will include a similar focus on improving students' confidence in terms of developing and achieving their career ambitions, and providing opportunities for employer engagement and skills development to enhance graduate employability.

Examples of activities we will undertake to achieve our progression targets include:

- Through the personal tutorial system, working with students from target groups on their understanding of graduate attributes and career management, using the FutureMe online platform.
- Working with target student groups to provide opportunities for engagement with employers, practitioners, commercial or social enterprises, and charitable or voluntary organisations in ways that are relevant and meaningful for their subject or discipline, to increase their confidence in pursuing graduate opportunities.
- Promotion of the University's Supported Student Placement scheme for students with specific needs who perceive that they might face barriers to successful graduate employment, providing meaningful paid placements supported by a workplace mentor.
- Providing alumni mentoring opportunities for Level 6 BAME and disabled students, to support progression into employment and further study, and business mentoring for students considering establishing social or commercial enterprises as they complete their degree.
- Actively promoting tuition fee discounts for our BAME and disabled graduates to encourage them to progress into postgraduate study to enhance their prospects in terms of subsequently progressing to rewarding graduate employment, and working with these student groups to enhance our understanding of other non-financial barriers to engaging in postgraduate study.
- Working with members of our local business community to understand the challenges to these target groups and to develop entrepreneurial and employability opportunities which will support students in navigating these barriers to progression and drive social change.

The success of our activity for students from these target groups will be evaluated using data on graduate outcomes; evidence of student engagement with the support offered (including FutureMe reports on engagement with online resources); and student-focused evaluative activity to determine the impact of targeted initiatives (for example on career management planning, graduate employment ambitions and self-efficacy in terms of achieving career goals).

²⁰ Topic briefing: BME students (OFFA, 2018), available at <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/2018051112400/https://www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/guidance/topic-briefings/offa-topic-briefing-bme-students/> [accessed July 2019].

Strategic measures in relation to our written commitments on success and progression

As part of our written commitments in relation to other groups who experience barriers to success (for example in terms of continuation, attainment and progression of care leavers and estranged students; progression of students from areas of low HE participation; and continuation of mixed ethnicity students and part-time disabled students), we are committed to offering support through specific group forums (e.g. for care leavers) and promoting activity and support for target groups as part of tailored initiatives stemming from the implementation of our new LTA Strategy. We will undertake continuous training and development to understand the specific challenges for under-represented groups, and will establish a Student Success Research activity workstream to ensure we develop targeted activities underpinned by experience and evidence of success. Improvements in the collection of data at enrolment about under-represented groups from 2019/20 will enable more targeted activity and enhanced evaluation and monitoring of success and progression.

Financial support and investment

The University will continue to invest in measures directly related to increasing access, success and progression of under-represented groups, and meeting the targets and milestones outlined in our Targets Investment Plan. Our split of investment in Access reflects the increased costs of our post-16 and mature/community work, where activity is targeted and intensive (e.g. summer schools) compared to the lower costs of pre-16 activities, which is usually working with full cohorts.

We will continue to invest the same proportion of higher fee income as in previous APPs on financial support, reflecting the positive impact that bursaries have had on student retention (see evaluation section below). We will continue to offer the following Bursaries to students who meet the eligibility criteria from 2020/21.

- *University of Suffolk Bursary:* We will maintain the Bursary amount at a maximum of £500 per student per year to support success and retention. The eligibility criteria will be based on a Student Finance England (SFE) assessment of household income (less than £25,000).
- *Bursary for Part-time Students:* We will maintain the Bursary for part-time students at a maximum of £500 pro rata per year of study. Students will be eligible if they are studying at least 50% of the Full-Time Equivalent and eligibility will be based on SFE assessment of household income (less than £25,000).
- *Bursary for Students known to have a disability:* We will continue to pay the first £200 payable by students in receipt of DSA.
- *Looked After Children and Estranged Student Bursary:* This will be offered to students who live or have lived in local authority care or are estranged from their families. The Bursary will be £500 each year of undergraduate study.

Eligibility criteria are clearly stated on our website and students are required to apply for the Bursary, which is promoted by the Finance team, Student Services and the Students' Union. Payment dates are set at February and May each year, and are therefore linked to students successfully starting their second semester and remaining on-course throughout the academic year.

- *Asylum Seekers:* The University will be providing one fee-waiver for an undergraduate Asylum-Seeker each year; and will be including Asylum Seekers as an eligible group for our University of Suffolk Bursary.

3.2 Student consultation

Student consultation and engagement has been instrumental to the development of our APP. The University has demonstrated their commitment to collaborative working with the Students' Union (SU) by allocating resource for an SU-led consultation and student feedback process. The SU and University are equally committed to a partnership approach to the development and monitoring of the APP from the outset. Student Officers took the decision for this section to be integrated within the plan, rather than as a separate student submission.

The consultation process has been in-depth with 90 students from under-represented groups taking part to offer their views on the proposed strategic measures. Underpinning strategies already commit to students as

co-creators in curricula and learning activity design and it has been a natural progression to ensure that our identified targets are informed by student consultation and approved by our elected Student Officers.

Within their Student Officer Committee, the SU elects a BAME Officer, a Students with Disabilities Officer and a Mature Students Officer each year. Students from target groups have been reached via these formal representative structures but also via other student networks, both formal and informal to avoid the issues relating to self-selecting students. These students were supported to engage by offering a range of channels including group discussions, opportunities to submit anonymous quantitative feedback, one-to-one interviews and phone calls/email consultation to fit in with the demands of their course and other responsibilities. We have briefed students on an ongoing basis and ensured they were supported to offer their feedback by staff with particular responsibility for engaging students with the APP.

Student consultation has had an impact on the proposed strategic measures, as outlined in these examples below:

- Student focus groups were in favour of an inclusive approach, improving access, continuation, success and progression for all students with additional limited and evidence-based targeted activity for under-represented groups.
- Student focus groups and anonymous quantitative feedback have informed the decision to continue to offer bursaries and enabled the University to understand the retention benefit of these for students from lower socio-economic groups.
- Feedback from students with disabilities (though other groups also cited this as a priority) has led to enhanced investment in mental health support as part of the plan to close the gap in success and progression.
- Student consultation on success for underrepresented groups has informed practice relating to in-course academic skills delivery via Library and Learning Services.
- Students from underrepresented groups stated that the role of the individual tutor was key to supporting their continuation, success and progression. The APP includes a commitment to introduce a greater level of support from module tutors and the role of the progression tutor.

We recognise that the number of BAME students currently studying at Ipswich is relatively low and that there is an identified gap in degree outcomes and progression for these students, so University of East Anglia students from this background alongside NUS findings were also used to support our learnings from group discussions and interviews with University of Suffolk students from this group.

Student Officers have worked with the University Executive to approve this plan, taking part in the relevant governance with support from members of SU staff. The SU will maintain their membership of the APP Group, with responsibility for ensuring that student consultation and feedback is tabled and discussed as part of continuous monitoring. Implementation of a student feedback platform in September 2019 (Suffolk Online Feedback in Action, or SOFIA) will provide us with 'live' feedback in relation to learning, teaching and the wider student experience, enabling us to respond to pressures, experiences and inform our ongoing provision.

The proposed governance structures will enable the role of President and Student Officers for under-represented groups, via Student Officer Committee, to oversee progress by monitoring our agreed targets and suggesting areas for development or further student consultation. We have additionally committed to formal training relating to data and inclusivity practice for Student Officers as we move to the monitoring phase. This will enable students to continue to act in partnership as critical friends, challenging and supporting the University to achieve our targets.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

The evaluation of our APP will be led by a new Professorial post, working closely with the University's Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT).

Strategic Context: The University's evaluative activity will use logic frameworks for each area to clearly identify expected impact in accordance with our theory of change framework. All activity that falls within the scope of this APP will be evaluated, although the level of evaluation will be based on the type and duration

of the work, including the costs involved. Activities requiring significant spend, such as financial support and summer schools; or requiring significant resource, such as sustained projects relating to continuation; will be evaluated more extensively than smaller activities. All activities will have clearly defined aims and objectives reflecting our targets and milestones, which will be evaluated robustly. Our evaluation self-assessment identified that we should communicate evaluation more widely across the University, and we will therefore run evaluation dissemination events through CELT, relevant research centres and academic schools. Our biannual University-wide Learning and Teaching Days will be the primary means of regular, formal dissemination (with the next scheduled event in December 2019), supplemented by dissemination through schools and research centres. Our evaluation activity will also inform the provision of knowledge exchange and professional development opportunities across the University. The aim of our evaluation strategy will be to ensure robust processes are in place to monitor our progress in meeting our aims and objectives relating to identified gaps in access, success and progression.

Programme Design: Our evaluation self-assessment has shown that while all access, success and progression programmes have been based on clear objectives, their design has often been based on local evaluation and practices shared across the sector, rather than on more robust academic-based evidence. We will therefore be carrying out evaluation of wider evidence as part of the development of our specific activities for 2020/21 and beyond, including drawing on published research and undertaking more robust evaluation of our internal activity. Our theory of change framework will enable us to more clearly align our activities with aims, objectives and intended outcomes, underpinned by sound understanding of factors influencing equality of opportunity drawn from this wider and more robust evidence base. Furthermore, by clearly articulating our assumptions as part of our theory of change framework, we will be able to monitor factors that may affect the success of our activities and shape how we deliver initiatives to maximise impact. We will continuously test our assumptions as part of our evaluation process.

To support the design of future programmes, rapid evidence assessments (REAs) for all proposed interventions will be undertaken to ensure that these are underpinned by evidence – building an evidence base for existing programmes and initiatives, but also to determine whether specific groups of students are being appropriately targeted through our interventions and whether those interventions are likely to achieve the intended outcomes. Our theory of change framework will underpin all evaluation activity, and impact will be assessed based on statistical outcomes (e.g. continuation rates) and indirect factors (e.g. confidence, sense of belonging, attitude change). Coherent evaluation mechanisms will be firmly embedded at the programme design stage. The results of evaluation will be used for further development of activity, strengthening areas that are shown to have an impact and stopping activity shown to have little to no impact.

Evaluation Design: Our previous evaluation activity has focussed on narrative approaches with empirical research used to evaluate some of our more resource-intensive activity (e.g. financial support and summer schools). For example in relation to evaluation of financial support, we have used internal data to explore the profiles of bursary recipients and compare their retention and success against the non-recipient group (using a similar methodology to that of the OfS financial support toolkit in analysing our own data), coupled with student focus groups to better understand the impact that financial support has had on student access and success. Reflecting our target groups for access, over the three year period from 2016-2018, our analysis has shown that around three-quarters of bursary recipients are mature, and an average of 22% declared having a disability (with 33% of these declaring a mental health condition, 27% declaring a specific learning difficulty and 17% a longstanding illness or health condition). 85% of recipients identified as White, but there are signs of improved diversity, with the proportion of non-White beneficiaries increasing from 10% in 2016 to 14% in 2017 and 18% in 2018. The largest proportional increase can be seen amongst those identifying as Asian (0% in 2016 rising to 6% in 2018). Reflecting the fact that bursary applications are assessed primarily on household income, the lower the POLAR quintile, the higher the proportion of bursary recipients (35% quintile 1; 20% quintile 2; 20% quintile 3; 15% quintile 4 and 8% quintile 5). While our evaluation does not provide conclusive evidence that bursaries have a direct impact on access, research into the outcomes of our bursary recipients has shown better retention rates compared to those not in receipt of the bursary. Continuation rates for full-time bursary recipients were 7% higher than for non-recipients for 2013, 2014 and 2015 entrants and 6% higher for 2016 entrants (ranging from 88-90%). Student consultation via focus groups and anonymous surveys has also provided continued support for the bursary, particularly in supporting retention (70% of those consulted in spring 2019 reported that the bursary had 'helped them to stay on their course', with several commenting on how it enabled them to purchase course-related resources and focus on their studies rather than taking on additional paid work), although a need for better promotion of the support available amongst target groups has been highlighted. In terms of future evaluation of financial support, we

intend to enhance our existing analysis of the impact of bursaries on student access and outcomes via our new business intelligence software (Qlik Sense), which will be designed to replicate the OfS toolkit, and we will continue to engage in consultation with students to obtain qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impact of our financial support measures. The outcomes of our evaluation will be used to review and, if necessary, adapt our approach to financial support.

To evaluate the success of our strategic measures, we will use pre- and post-event activity surveys, reflective discussions with participants, observation and feedback to show changes in attitudes and confidence. We will use HEAT to indicate whether the outreach participants have subsequently progressed to HE. While we cannot use HEAT to prove a causal effect on our activity, the use of tracking alongside pre- and post-event evaluation will provide us with a better indication of the success of associated initiatives. We will use academic literature relating to good practice and draw on the educational research expertise of our academics in evaluating outreach activity to help us develop our evaluation strategy further in order to better evidence causality.

Our approach to evaluation design will be multi-method, drawing on different sources of data and information. We are investigating the NERUPI framework²¹ for evaluation of access activities, and will be implementing a *realist* approach to evaluation for all activities. This is a theory-based evaluation approach developed by Pawson and Tilley (1997)²², which aims to identify the underlying mechanisms that explain how the outcomes were caused and the influence of context. Working within the *realist* approach, the University will be able to design evaluation mechanisms that are flexible and adaptable to the contexts of the activity, based within our theory of change model.

Our evaluation methods will reflect the intensity of activity, ranging from on-the-day evaluation of workshops, pre- and post-event evaluation for longer activities or more intensive activities, to observational and focus-group based evaluations for intensive activity and financial support. The use of HEAT for access activity and the development of our Learner Analytics platform will provide tracking data to identify data-based outcomes of our activity, while also providing better potential for measuring causality.

Evaluation Implementation: The evaluation self-assessment has provided a useful indicator of areas where better evaluation processes should be implemented, and this work will take place over 2019/20 to ensure evaluation is fully implemented for all activities by 2020/21. In most cases, evaluation activity will be instigated by the teams carrying out the activity, but this will be supported by the new Professorial role and academic research teams within the University. We have access to many of the tools required to carry out evaluation and expect that development of our new learner analytics and business intelligence platforms will enhance our evaluation and tracking. Over 2019/20, we will also focus on ethical approval of evaluation activity and data protection procedures.

Learning to Shape Improvements: We recognise that good evaluation has the potential to make a considerable difference to the University's progress in closing gaps and meeting our targets, particularly in continuation, attainment and progression. Our evaluation strategy will ensure that we implement a more joined-up approach to our evaluation, incorporating our theory of change framework into our activity. We will create better opportunities for review and reflection of activity to provide enhanced understanding of the impact of our activity, particularly amongst APP staff across the University. The outcomes chains developed as part of our theory of change framework (see exemplar in Annex 1) will provide a useful communication tool in terms of evaluating our activities and associated outcomes.

A series of knowledge exchange activities on the APP evaluation will be facilitated by our new Professorial appointment, through the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Reflective discussions will be used to drive change and action at school and institutional level. We will involve our academic staff by contextualising the data at the school, programme of study or modular level to elicit more accountability and action. We will work with Deans of School to create a shared responsibility for APP at school level. APP will be expected to feature in School plans and meetings, and this will be included in our monitoring.

²¹ <http://www.nerupi.co.uk/>

²² Pawson, R. and Tilley, N., (1997) *Realistic evaluation*. London, California and New Delhi: Sage

The University has an excellent record in widening participation, but we have generally not shared our practices across the sector. Implementing a more robust evaluation strategy will enable us to share good practice, and to have the reflective understanding to benefit from shared experiences across the sector.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The University will monitor progress against our aims, objectives, targets and written commitments through the APP Group. Membership of the APP Group includes academics and professional services staff directly involved in delivering, monitoring and evaluating APP activity, including members of the Students' Union. The Group reports to the University's Portfolio Oversight Committee (POC), which is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and has responsibility for and oversight of all academic-related strategy. POC will oversee the activity within the APP including tracking performance against agreed milestones, targets and written commitments, and ensuring accountability at School Executive level for making progress within individual academic schools. POC reports to the University's Executive, which in turn reports to the Board, and progress updates will be considered within both fora. The APP forms an integral part of the University's operational plan, with regular monitoring of progress by the Senior Leadership Team and Executive. Updates on APP progress will also be reported to Senate, and relevant Senate and Executive sub-committees (such as the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee, and Student Experience Group), to ensure that monitoring of the plan is embedded across both academic and executive governance structures. The APP Group will also report to the Student Officer Committee, and student representatives will be a key part of monitoring progress through their representation on a wide range of relevant committees.

Our evaluation strategy includes a range of points throughout the academic year where progress against our targets and written commitments can be monitored in addition to the OfS annual monitoring requirements. In-year monitoring will be overseen by POC and reported to the relevant groups outlined above. Our OfS annual monitoring will be signed off by the Executive and Board. Accountable staff will be required to provide information on development, implementation and success of strategic measures in line with our theory of change and associated evaluation strategy, including making recommendations to POC on alternative strategies where the University is not making sufficient progress against agreed milestones, targets and written commitments. Monitoring activity will be reported to the Executive, Board and Senate. Ultimate responsibility for progress against our milestones, targets and written commitments is held by the University's Board.

4. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

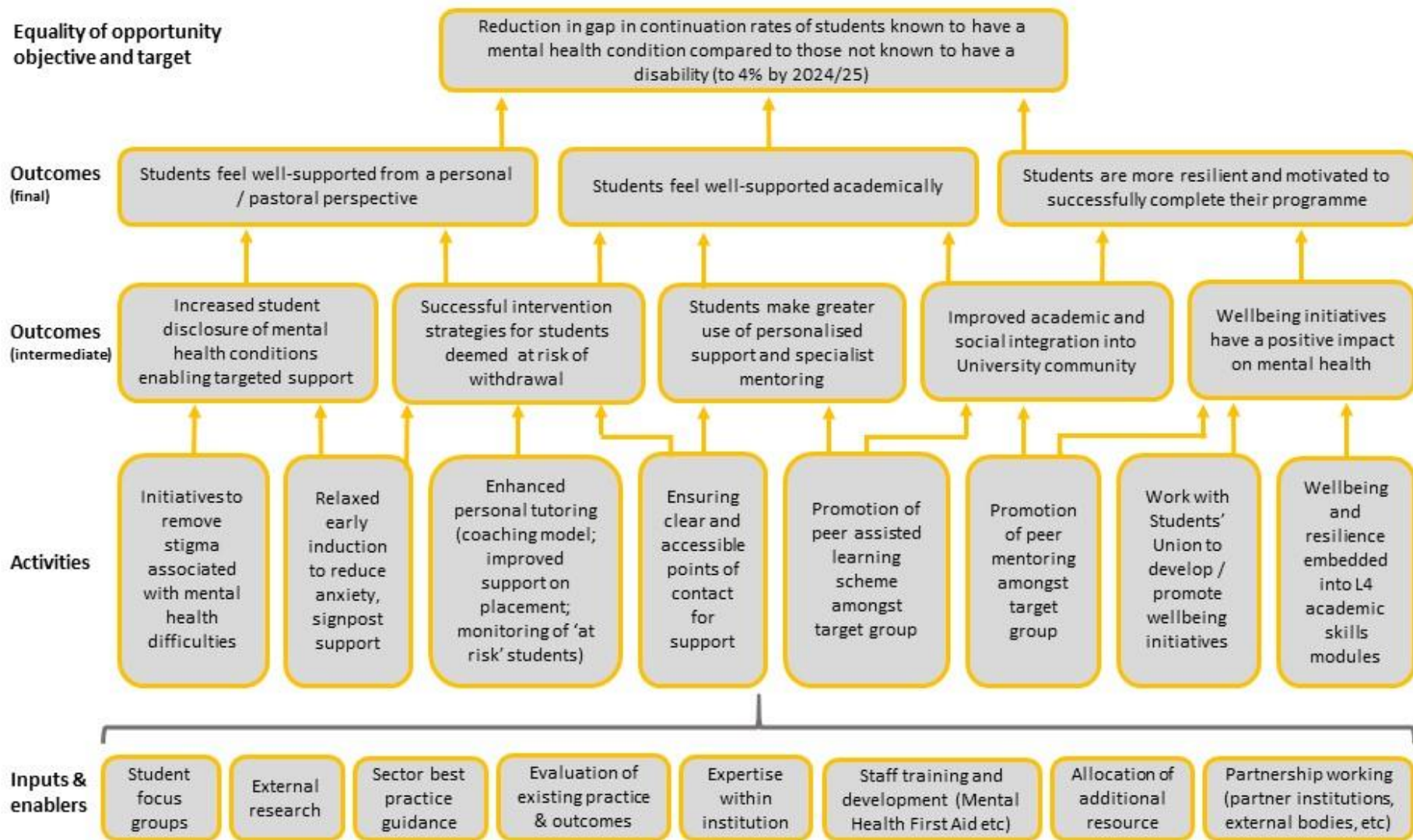
The University of Suffolk is aware of its responsibilities in relation to the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and UK Quality Code, and is committed to clearly informing students of tuition fees, financial support, and additional course costs at all key stages in the student lifecycle. We also provide information about the minimum associated costs that they should plan for to successfully pass their course. This information is included within Definitive Course Records, which are updated and published on an annual basis.

The University's previous Access Agreements, APP, and the 2020/2025 APP will be available from the University's website in a downloadable and printable format. All relevant information for students is provided as early as possible, including course specific information, bursaries and financial support (including eligibility criteria as summarised in the financial support section above), and the policies and procedures that will be relevant to students throughout their studies at the University of Suffolk. Students are provided with information about making complaints, and information about the potential for changes either before they enrol or during their studies. The University also commits to providing UCAS and the Student Loans Company with information as required to populate their applicant-facing web services and databases.

5. APPENDIX

See attached Targets and Investment Plan and Fee Summary.

Annex 1: Theory of Change exemplar outcomes chain



Assumptions

- Students will make good use of the support available (with their mental health difficulties not so severe that they are unable to engage)
- Support service capacity matches student demand
- Staff will actively engage with initiatives and possess/develop the requisite skills to effectively support students with a mental health condition

Annex 2: Summary of Written Commitments

| Ref no | Written commitment | Examples of planned activities | Timescales | Success criteria |
|--------|---|--|---|--|
| WC_1 | <p>Increasing the number of care leavers entering the University and supporting their success and progression</p> <p><i>See sections 1.5 (page 6) and 2.2 (page 8)</i></p> | <p>Working with Suffolk County Council to obtain better data on care leavers in the local area to inform our access activity; focused activity with care leavers to better understand barriers to access, success and progression; implementing bespoke support measures to support retention, attainment and progression (including financial support measures); improving collection and reporting of data on care leavers to underpin our activity.</p> | <p>Improved internal data collection and reporting from 2019-20; enhanced support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020</p> | <p>Over the period of the APP, the provision of reliable data that demonstrates an upward trajectory in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of care leavers entering the University each year • the proportion of care leavers being retained (with our non-continuation rate reducing by at least 10 percentage points by the end of the plan); successfully completing their programme of study with an upper second or first class degree classification (with our attainment rate increasing by at least 20 percentage points by the end of the plan); and progressing to graduate level employment (target to be determined when existing data quality improves sufficiently to allow assessment of current performance). |
| WC_2 | <p>Supporting access, success and progression for other groups who experience barriers in HE (carers; refugees and asylum seekers; those belonging to a military family; those estranged from their families; those from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community)</p> <p><i>See sections 1.7 (page 7) and 2.2 (page 8)</i></p> | <p>Improved data collection on students from these under-represented groups; engagement with local community groups to support access activity; student focus groups to better understand any barriers to success and progression; implementing bespoke support measures for students from these groups (including financial support measures for specific target groups).</p> | <p>Collection of data on student identification with these groups from enrolment 2019-20 onwards, enabling assessment of performance and conduct of student focus groups thereafter; bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020</p> | <p>Data collected and reported in relation to access, success and progression of all under-represented groups.</p> <p>Any identified gaps in access, success and progression reduced over the period of the APP (more precise targets to be determined as performance data becomes available).</p> |
| WC_3 | <p>Improving data capabilities in relation to access and participation work</p> <p><i>See section 2.2 (page 8)</i></p> | <p>Investment in Qlik Sense business intelligence software; use of the system to assess our performance, identify gaps and evaluate the impact of our strategic measures.</p> | <p>Pilot system in 2019-20; full implementation from 2020</p> | <p>Successful implementation of Qlik Sense and effective use in supporting APP work (for example in terms of identification of gaps; supporting programme design; and conduct of evaluation activity).</p> |

| Ref no | Written commitment | Examples of planned activities | Timescales | Success criteria |
|--------|--|--|---|--|
| WC_4 | Working with employers to improve access for part-time students from IMD Q1 areas <i>See sections 1.1 (page 2) and 2.2 (page 9)</i> | Liaison with key regional employers (via partner colleges where relevant) to promote engagement of their staff from disadvantaged backgrounds in part-time study. | Work with employers to commence from 2020 with a view to improving HE participation rates from 2021 onwards | Over the period of the APP, reduction in gap between the proportion of part-time IMD Q1 and Q5 students at the University (currently 16.3% according to OfS dataset, with an aim to reduce this to 10% by the end of the plan). |
| WC_5 | Eliminating the small gap in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White students <i>See sections 1.2 (page 4) and 2.2 (page 9)</i> | Bespoke initiatives to support the retention of Mixed Ethnicity students, as part of our wider University work to bring continuation rates into line with sector norms (as part of our new LTA Strategy). | Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020 | Over the period of the APP, elimination of the gap in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White students (currently 3.4% according to OfS dataset). |
| WC_6 | Reducing gaps in continuation rates between part-time students known to have a disability compared to part-time students not known to have a disability <i>See sections 1.4 (page 5) and 2.2 (page 9)</i> | Work with our small group of part-time disabled students to better understand barriers to continuation, to inform subsequent support interventions. | Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020 | Over the period of the APP, a reduction in the gap in continuation for part-time disabled students compared to those not declaring a disability (currently 16% based on internal data for 2015 entrants, with an aim to bring this into line with sector norms - currently 5.8% - by the end of the plan). |
| WC_7 | Reducing gaps in progression between students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 <i>See sections 1.1 (page 3) and 2.2 (page 9)</i> | Initiatives to support graduate employability specifically targeted at POLAR4 Q1 students (e.g. targeted careers support via the Careers team and personal tutors; employer engagement initiatives; entrepreneurship initiatives; alumni mentoring). | Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020 | Over the period of the APP, a reduction in the gap in progression between students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 (currently 9% according to OfS dataset, with an aim to reduce this to 5% by the end of the plan). |

**Access and participation plan
Fee information 2020-21**

Provider name: University of Suffolk

Provider UKPRN: 10014001

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

| Full-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| First degree | | £9,250 |
| Foundation degree | | £8,220 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | | £9,250 |
| HNC/HND | | £6,168 |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | | £6,669 |
| Accelerated degree | | £11,100 |
| Sandwich year | Non-UK Placement | £1,385 |
| Sandwich year | UK Placement | £1,850 |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

| Sub-contractual full-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|--|--|-------------|
| First degree | St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653 | £9,250 |
| Foundation degree | * | * |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | * | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

| Part-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| First degree | | £6,935 |
| Foundation degree | | £6,935 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | | £6,935 |
| HNC/HND | | £6,168 |
| CertHE/DipHE | | £6,935 |
| Postgraduate ITT | | £6,669 |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

| Sub-contractual part-time course type: | Additional information: | Course fee: |
|--|--|-------------|
| First degree | St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653 | £6,935 |
| Foundation degree | * | * |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * |
| HNC/HND | * | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * |
| Erasmus and overseas study years | * | * |
| Other | * | * |

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University of Suffolk

Provider UKPRN: 10014001

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

| Access and participation plan investment summary (£) | Academic year | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Total access activity investment (£) | £731,020.00 | £693,535.00 | £715,197.00 | £735,270.00 | £755,315.00 |
| Access (pre-16) | £81,725.00 | £77,534.00 | £79,956.00 | £82,200.00 | £84,441.00 |
| Access (post-16) | £426,347.00 | £404,485.00 | £417,118.00 | £428,826.00 | £440,517.00 |
| Access (adults and the community) | £211,956.00 | £201,088.00 | £207,368.00 | £213,189.00 | £219,000.00 |
| Access (other) | £10,992.00 | £10,428.00 | £10,755.00 | £11,055.00 | £11,357.00 |
| Financial support (£) | £1,410,000.00 | £1,338,900.00 | £1,381,500.00 | £1,421,150.00 | £1,460,750.00 |
| Research and evaluation (£) | £231,335.00 | £219,500.00 | £226,315.00 | £232,675.00 | £239,000.00 |

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF1%)

| Access and participation plan investment summary (%HF1) | Academic year | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| Higher fee income (£HF1) | £20,563,046.00 | £19,508,455.00 | £20,116,936.00 | £20,682,012.00 | £21,246,230.00 |
| Access investment | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% | 3.6% |
| Financial support | 6.9% | 6.9% | 6.9% | 6.9% | 6.9% |
| Research and evaluation | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% | 1.1% |
| Total investment (as %HF1) | 11.5% | 11.5% | 11.5% | 11.6% | 11.6% |

