

Leeds Arts University

Access and participation plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

1. Assessment of performance

In 2011 the University transferred to the higher education sector, in 2016 we were awarded taught degree awarding powers and in 2017 granted university title. During this period applications have substantially increased and we recognise that this has had a negative impact on the access of some underrepresented groups to the University since these groups have not risen in line with the overall increase. This is being addressed through focused access measures and progress is slowly being made, but there is a need to accelerate improvement in this area and reduce the gap in participation between under-represented groups whilst still maintaining the good measures in other areas. The measures in this plan are based on current fee levels.

1.1 Higher Education participation - POLAR 4 and Indicator or Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Access

The analysis of UCAS application data over the period 2014 to 2018 shows that the proportion of applications from POLAR 4 Q1 applicants has not increased but there has been an increase in the applications from POLAR 4 Q4 and Q5 applicants.

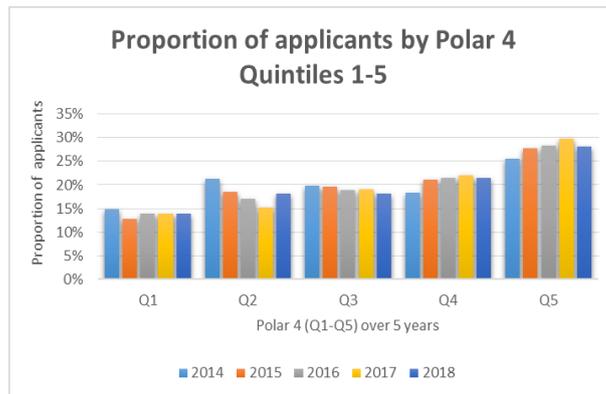


Chart 1 represents the proportion of applicants UK domicile and under 21 years of age by POLAR 4 quintile 1 to 5 for the academic year 2014 to 2018 (Source: UCAS Pers End of Cycle data)

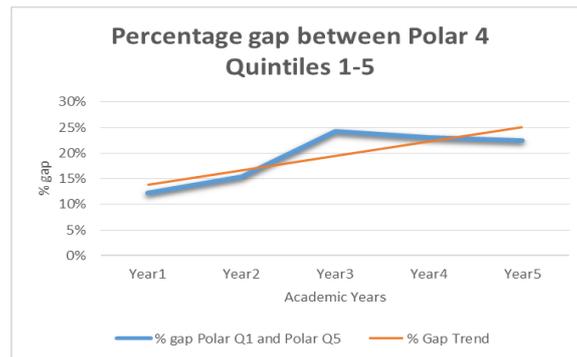
The following table sets out the offer rate per application - i.e. the number of applications per offer by Polar Quintile:-

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
2014	3.3	3.0	3.3	2.6	2.4
2015	3.4	3.0	2.8	2.5	2.2
2016	3.7	3.5	2.8	2.7	2.3
2017	2.8	2.7	2.2	2.2	2.1
2018	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.3

Table 1 represents offer rate per application, UK domicile and under 21 years of age by POLAR 4 quintile 1 to 5 for the academic year 2014 to 2018 (Source: UCAS Pers End of Cycle data)

This data suggests that applicants from Q4 and Q5 are more likely to receive an offer. The University interviews/auditions all candidates with the potential to meet the entry criteria but at present does not hold personal data for those candidates who attended interviews. It is not possible therefore to identify if applicants from Q1 attended interviews or if there are additional barriers for these candidates, which means that they do not attend and therefore cannot be offered a place.

Based on the 2017 entrants to the University approximately 10% of entrants were from POLAR 4 Q1 and 33% of students were from Q5. The gap between the participation of these groups has started to reduce from a high in 2015 as shown in the graph below, but at 23% the gap is greater than the national rate gap of 18%.



Graph 1 Access - represents gap in participation between students (aged under 21) UK domicile from Polar 4 Q1 compared to Q5 from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5) (Source: Student Record Database)

Another measure of participation is the proportion of entrants by indicator of multiple deprivation. The proportion of entrants from IMD 1 is low and has been falling as demonstrated below:-

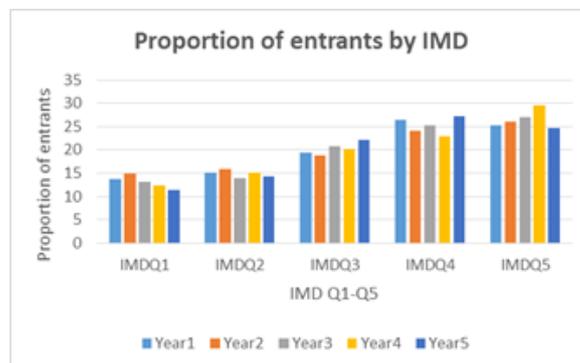


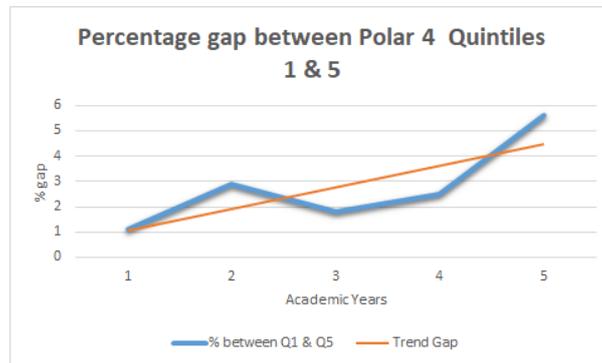
Chart 2 represents the proportion of entrants (under 21) from IMD 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5). (Source: Student Record Database)

Based on 2017 entrants to the University approximately 11% were from IMD1. There is a gap when comparing against the national sector data where the average proportion of entrants from IMD1 is 20.62%.

Continuation

The University has a very strong continuation rate for all students which is above the sector rate. The gap in continuation, based on the latest year, between POLAR 4 Q5 of 97% compared to Q1 of 91% shows a difference of 6%.

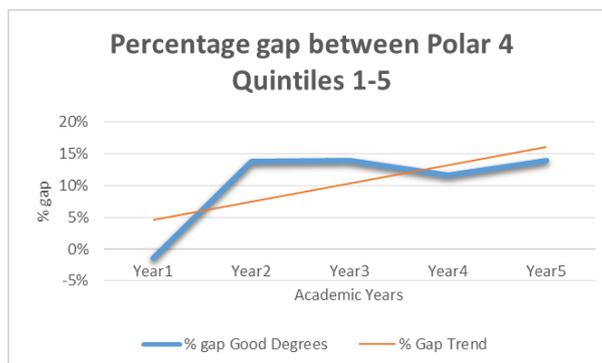
The 5 year analysis shows that this gap is also increasing. This gap is consistent with other sector data, the latest HESA performance indicator for continuation shows that the non-continuation of young students from a low participation neighbourhood was 12.5% compared to other students at 3.9%.



Graph 2 Continuation - represents the gap in participation between students (aged under 21) from Polar 4 Q5 compared to Q1 from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5)

Attainment

The low numbers of students from POLAR 4 Q1 entering the University means that the attainment gap is based on very small numbers and as a result there is a fluctuation in the data over the 5 year period which limits detailed analysis, but the graph below demonstrates that there is a material gap in attainment and ignoring year 1, the gap has remained relatively consistent at around 12%-14% with the proportion of students (achieving a first or upper second) from Q5 at 79% compared to the proportion of students from Q1 at 66%.



Graph 3 Attainment - represents gap in attainment (the proportion of those students awarded a first or upper second) between students from Polar Q1 compared to Q5 from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5) (Source: Student Record Database)

Progression to employment or further study

The impact of the low numbers of entrants from POLAR 4 Q1 results in significant fluctuations in the gap for progression to employment and makes longitudinal analysis difficult. Whilst there is no statistical significance to the data in this area, it is nevertheless the case that there are fewer students progressing to higher level employment from POLAR 4 Q1 & 2 compared to those from Q3, 4 & 5.

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

Access

It is recognised that in general BAME applicants have been less likely to apply to study the arts compared to other subjects but we also recognise that the numbers of BAME entrants (aged under 21) to the University is lower than we would like, with only around 10% of entrants in 2017. This proportion is significantly lower than the sector average of over 31%. Disaggregating the total BAME numbers over the 5 year period shows that some progress has been made improving access for black students but the % joining the University is still low, with black entrants accounting for less than 2% of total entrants in 2017 and 2018, which is similar to the population in Yorkshire and Humber as a whole of 1.5% but less than the population of 3.4% in Leeds.

Analysis of UCAS application data shows that over the 5 year period the proportion of applications from ethnic applicants has hardly changed.

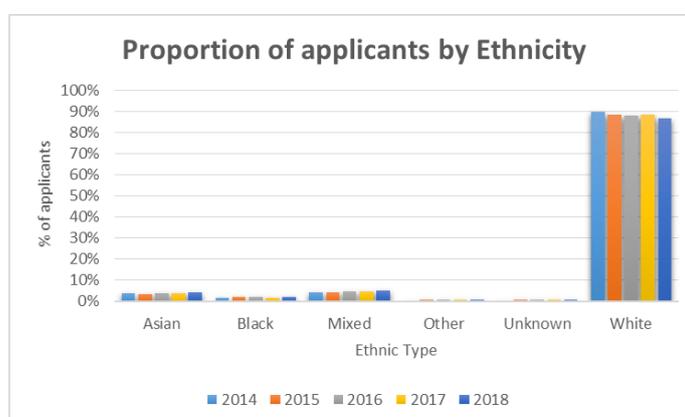


Chart 3 represents the proportion of applicants by ethnicity, UK domicile for the academic year 2014 to 2018 (Source: UCAS Pers End of Cycle data)

The following table sets out the offer rate in the University per application - i.e. the number of applications per offer by ethnicity:-

	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other	White
2014	3.6	3.7	2.9	NA	2.8
2015	2.7	4.4	2.7	2.8	2.6
2016	3.7	3.8	2.9	2.5	2.8
2017	3.5	2.9	2.5	3.0	2.3
2018	2.9	3.5	2.4	4.3	2.5

Table 2 - represents offer rate per application, UK domicile by ethnicity for the academic year 2014 to 2018 (Source: UCAS Pers End of Cycle data)

This data suggests that white and mixed ethnicity applicants are more likely to get an offer. The University interviews/auditions all candidates with the potential to meet the entry criteria but at present does not hold personal data for those candidates who attended interviews since this is not disclosed by UCAS at this stage. It is not possible at present to identify if non-white applicants attended interviews or if there are additional barriers for these candidates which means that they do not attend interview and therefore cannot be made an offer.

Continuation

There is only a small gap between the continuation of white and BAME students; less than 1% over the last 2 years, though this is based on small numbers of BAME students.

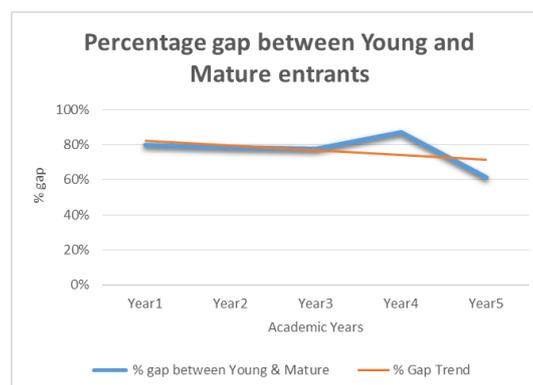
Attainment and progression to employment or further study

With such low numbers of black students historically entering the University, data on attainment and progression of black students is of limited statistical value. Across all BAME groups there are significant fluctuations in the gaps and this makes data analysis difficult. As is described in Section 3 of this plan, the University proposes that the first steps to addressing this area will be through diversifying the broader ethnic diversity of the student population and to progressively build upon the number of black students as a sub-group. Actions undertaken in these early years will have measurable impact on attainment and progression data towards the end and beyond of this plan.

1.3 Mature students

Access

Broadly consistent with the creative arts sector across the UK; our student population is predominantly white, young and female. The proportion of mature entrants is increasing and there has been an improvement in the access of mature learners over the period and the trend shows that the gap in participation is reducing.



Graph 4 Access - represents gap in participation between young and mature students from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5). Source: Student Record Database)

Continuation

There is a good continuation rate for mature learners. Over a 5 year average the continuation rate for mature learners was 93% compared to that for young learners of 95%.

Attainment

There is little difference in the attainment rates for mature learners and young learners. Over a 5 year period the average attainment of mature learners is better than the average for young learners by 3% (78% vs 75%).

Progression to employment or further study

There is no significant gap between the 5 year average progression indicator for young and mature learners (55% vs 57%).

1.4 Disabled students

Access

The University has a greater proportion of entrants that are disabled compared to the sector. The latest metric shows that 19% of entrants had a disability compared to the sector average of 15%.

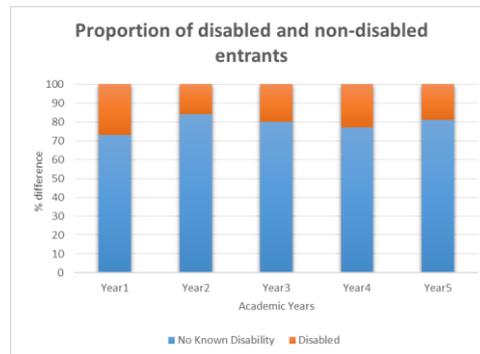


Chart 4 represents the proportion of disabled and non-disabled entrants from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5). Source: Student Record Database)

Disaggregating the disabled student metric by disability type gives much smaller numbers which makes trends and comparisons more difficult. In line with many specialist arts institutions the participation of students with cognitive and learning difficulties although declining over the period is higher than the sector average.

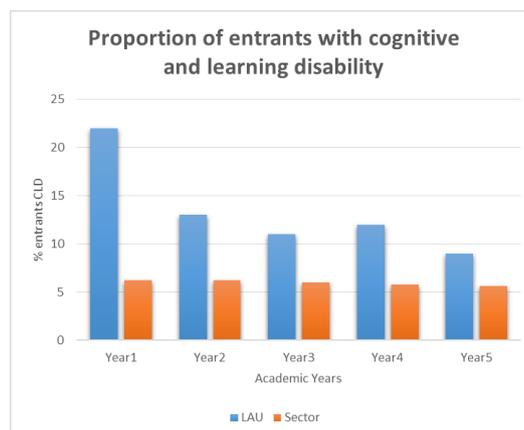


Chart 5 represents the proportion of entrants with cognitive and learning difficulties compared to the sector average from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5). Source: Student Record Database)

The proportion of students with a mental health disability remains higher than the sector average.

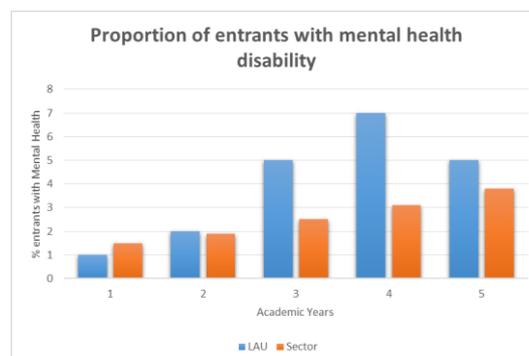
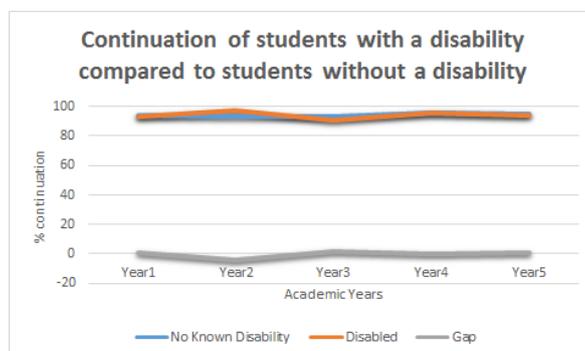


Chart 6 represents the proportion of entrants with a mental health disability compared to the sector average from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5). Source: Student Record Database)

There are specific challenges in entrants with sensory or physical conditions entering a creative arts institution which is practice-based and the proportion of students with this disability remains very low.

Success - Continuation

The continuation rate for both disabled and non-disabled students is high with only a very small gap between them.



Graph 5 represents the continuation rates for students with a disability compared to students without a disability from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5). (Source: Student Record Database)

Due to small numbers it is not possible to disaggregate and analyse continuation by disability type over a longer period.

Attainment

Analysis of the differences between the attainment of disabled students performance and non-disabled students performance shows that there have been significant fluctuations in attainment gaps (both against and in favour of those with a disability) over the last 5 years. Whilst the gap appears to be increasing, due to small numbers this has not been statistically significant and it is difficult to disaggregate this effectively into disability type to establish trends or patterns.

Progression to employment or further study

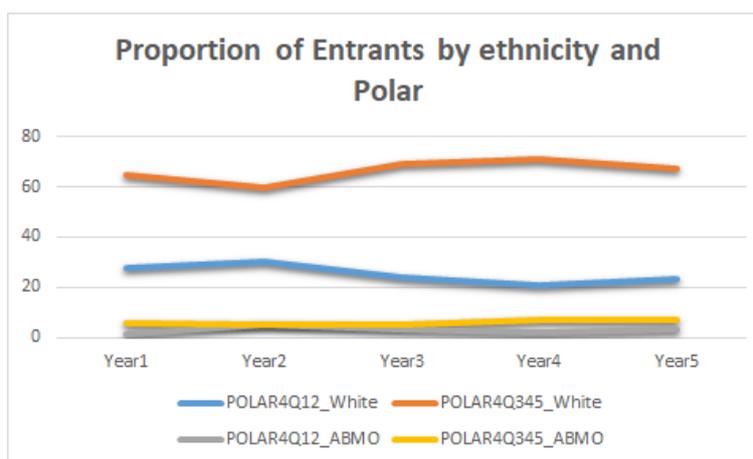
There is only a very small gap between the 5 year average progression indicator for disabled and non-disabled. Due to small numbers it is difficult to disaggregate this effectively into disability type to establish trends or patterns.

1.5 Care leavers

The number of care leavers is small and there were only 5 care leavers entering in 2018 (defined as someone who has been given accommodation by their local authority for a period of at least 13 weeks before the age of 16).

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

BAME students from the most disadvantaged postcodes are the least represented groups in the University, see graph below.



Graph 6 represents the proportion of entrants by ethnicity and from Polar 4 Quintile from 2013/14 (year 1) to 2017/18 (year 5)

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The overall size of the University is such that statistical analysis of other groups is difficult, the University is aware that, with the exception of those with a disability, in general the under-representation of other groups in the sector is mirrored here and a sensitivity to this is part of the ethos of this plan.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

Our Strategic plan states that the University's mission is 'to promote distinctive, critically informed, relevant practice in order to support the economic growth and cultural advancement of individuals and society' and a stated enabler within the plan 'to promote and support equality of opportunity for all staff and students in a healthy, safe and inclusive environment.'

Our self-evaluation has identified that whilst the University has attracted a greater number of applications over recent years as it has gained University title, the increase is from those more likely to enter higher education. There has been some improvement in the proportion of mature students and this follows from the direct action of the institution in providing an Access course, work which will continue. As a general result of the change in applicant profile our student population has shifted to represent more of those from higher quintile groups and progress in achieving a more diverse student cohort has been suppressed. It is therefore our priority to firstly, increase the proportions of students from lower socioeconomic groups and with greater ethnic diversity and subsequently to ensure that their achievement and progression matches that of their peers.

2.1 Target groups

It is clear from our assessment of performance that the groups that we must target for our Access and Participation Plan (APP) are closely aligned with the OfS Key Performance Measures. Principally these are the gaps between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 in access, participation and attainment.

In similar socioeconomic terms it is also clear that the access proportions of IMD1 and 2 are too low and stand substantially lower than against national rates. The University's targets are mainly based on using the Low Participation Neighbourhood as the measure of underrepresented groups rather than IMD.

Polar measures have been used across Higher Education and in the University for a long time and historically the University has had an access measure based on the Low Participation Neighbourhood metric. Discussions and monitoring of such students is beginning to be embedded within systems and processes and understood by staff throughout the University. There has not been the same emphasis on IMD and there is not the same level of data, information and understanding on entrants and students from areas of deprivation as there is with POLAR.

A greater understanding of the specific challenges students from IMD 1 and 2 face needs to be developed. Work will be carried during the first year of the plan to achieve this and in order to establish targets for the continuation, attainment and progression of these groups for the remaining years of the plan.

The University also recognises that whilst there is no statistical or material significance with regard to the gap in attainment between black and white students, the number of black students at the University is lower than we would like, particularly from POLAR4 Q1 and 2. This will therefore be a targeted group in this plan.

Though difficult to address through target setting, the University recognises the under-representation of other groups (particularly care leavers and those estranged from their families) within its numbers and will be working in this area as part of its collaborative work with other providers.

2.2 Aims and objectives

POLAR 4 & IMD

The University aims to achieve the following objectives over the life of this plan:

1. To progressively reduce the gap in participation rates between POLAR Q1 and Q5 to 8%. This is a challenging target given the 17/18 gap of 23% which is almost 5% greater than the national rate. Though challenging, this will set the University on course to align with the OfS KPM of eliminating the gap by 2038-39.
2. To progressively reduce the gap in non-continuation rates between POLAR Q1 and Q5 to zero. Both the gap between Q1 and Q5 and the non-continuation rate of Q1 are currently around that of the sector. The University believes it should remove this gap over the 5 year period in a linear manner.
3. To progressively reduce the gap in attainment rates between POLAR Q1 and Q5 to zero. Whilst there is insufficient critical mass to determine statistical significance, the gap in 2017/18 was 15% compared with a national gap of 9.4%. The University believes it should nevertheless reduce this gap to 5% over the 5 year period with a view to removing it by 2030/31.
4. To reduce the gap between IMDQ1&2 and IMDQ4&5 to 12% over the life of the plan. This is challenging given the 17/18 gap of 27%.
5. To have developed a robust and informed understanding of the progression rates between POLAR4 groups and the issues and experiences that impact on these in order to assess any trends and gaps in progression and identify appropriate measures (as discussed in section 3).

Ethnicity

6. To raise the participation rate of BAME students to 16%. This is part of a longer term strategy to diversify the ethnicity of the student body with a view to also increasing the participation of black students particularly those from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2. The last census data shows the regional BAME population to be around 10% but the target has been set to reflect that the University draws some of its applicants from further afield.
7. At the same time our objectives of increasing POLAR Q1 and BAME students will we believe also lead to an increase in the population of black students from Q1 areas, which although not set as a target during this plan due to lack of critical mass, will be expected to rise in number such that this may form a future target beyond the life of the plan.

Other Groups

8. In addition to these specific objectives, the University will continue to emphasise its work on addressing the attainment of those with a disability. Though without statistical significance, this has fluctuated both positively and negatively over the last 5 years. The University has set an attainment objective of +/- 2% between those with and those without a disability to be achieved in the first year of the plan and which it will seek to sustain. This is set as a range to reflect a volatility in data due to group sizes. The University's strategy for seeking to diagnose all its enrolling students will continue as will providing significant ongoing support regardless of DSA status. This is important as dyslexia in particular is of a high frequency amongst students of creative subjects and will remain an area of focus, activity, evaluation and review over the life of this plan.

Similarly significant work will be undertaken in supporting mental health amongst the growing numbers of students who declare in this area (p.14).

3. Strategic measures

Evidence informed theory of change

The University believes that for its graduates to enter high level employment they will need to have evidence of completing complex, high level work achieved from a highly informed understanding of the operations of the profession. This needs to have been achieved through both academic study and research but also through practical experience in the making of things as well as experiencing the world of work. For under-represented groups, the challenges to this are in; achieving access to the resources to develop the skills, knowledge and cultural capital to produce artefacts as evidence (portfolios of creative work); meeting the costs of study; building the confidence through experience to engage in an environment in which they are a minority.

Through its own findings and supported by the literature, the University proposes that the principal access barriers to Higher Education at the University for POLARQ1 and low income groups are;

- Adversity to debt / concerns over the costs of study (Callender & Mason 2017)
- Access to provision in schools to experience or study the arts at both GCSE and A level (JCQ data) or acquire the cultural capital needed to recognise possible careers in creative subjects. (Reports by the Arts Council and for the DCMS identify that engagement with the arts is significantly lower for both BAME and low income groups).

- Specific entry requirements that are associated with specialist study and which are unlikely to be offered by school curricula. These are therefore subject to discretionary parental resources and the additional costs of extra-curricular activity. These include; certificated grade 5 music theory and a grade 8 standard of music performance for BMus (Hons) Popular Music Performance; a portfolio of creative work involving a range of materials and processes for art and design degrees.
- Competition for places from other groups, for example the Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design is available for those students whose post 16 options have not enabled them to determine, nor prepare for, specialist study. Whilst free to 18 year olds this additional pre-degree year requires significant parental support for a further year of study without loan, which can preclude those from low-income families. Data analysis shows that only 8.4% of the current Foundation Diploma cohort at the University is POLAR4 Q1. Increasing this proportion in our FE would lead to increasing participation in our HE.

Access

Outreach and University provision at below undergraduate level will therefore be based on the following;

New, targeted partnerships with specific schools with high BAME populations in low income areas. This will include the provision of free extra-curricular courses and activities that enable pupils from under-represented groups to meet the University's entry criteria. These will be from year 9 through to year 13 and will be in the form of portfolio production for art & design and music performance and theory sessions, which will facilitate meeting the threshold standards and entry requirements as devised by the University. In addition pupils from the targeted schools who qualify (on the grounds of family income) but do not meet the portfolio entry threshold of undergraduate study will be able to apply for a bursary to support the costs of study for a Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art & Design at the University in order that they may do so within one further year.

Starting from a planned base of 6 partnerships in the first year of the plan and 50 planned participants achieving 4 to 5 contact points with the University, this number will rise over the course of the plan to 15 partnerships and 120 achieving 4 to 5 contact points. Planned activity in terms of the number of participants in young people's outreach is expected to grow from 150 to 400 over the life of the plan.

Comparisons can be drawn with the Access to Higher Education course which the University has successfully run for mature students for a number of years. The University's ongoing research and data in this area and the high rates of progression both to this and other universities supports building on the success of this one-year course and the support it provides in enabling mature students to access Higher Education who have otherwise yet to meet the threshold entry requirements. A planned cohort of minimum 25 students for 2019/20 and opportunities for growth may enable this to rise to 50 over the life of the plan. The University will extend its summer and Easter schools for adult returners and its outreach work in local centres, this is expected to grow from a base of 30 participants in year one to 60 in year five.

The University's own research identified the importance of attending interview/audition in order to set the first stake of belonging. Therefore all applicants from POLAR Q1&2 will receive financial travel support towards the costs of attending interview. Students from under-represented groups will also be offered interview preparation experiences with our WP team in order to build confidence and rehearse discussions that may occur.

Consideration of contextual admissions has identified that under-represented groups are less likely to have achieved grade 4 or above in GCSE English and that this can be the one outstanding requirement from an otherwise successful application.

The University has therefore decided to allow Functional Skills achievement at Level 2 to stand as equivalent for this, subject to an assessment of the candidates written English at interview to confirm their aptitude.

Work with primary schools will be built upon in order to promote the arts, and the wider promotion of higher education and sustainable careers in the arts will be developed through the life of the plan. Nationally this will be as part of GuildHE and its sub-group UKADIA which has the specific remit of promoting widening participation in the Arts. Regionally the NCOP partnership will assist in addressing access of care leavers and those estranged from their families, as this will enable the reach that is otherwise difficult for the University as a smaller specialist provider.

The University is contributing to supporting the access of care leavers through our membership of Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY). This is through our work on the Care Leaver Covenant and our contribution to collaborative activity with looked after children and care leavers, as well as GHWY's strategic liaison with the Youth Work Unit - Yorkshire & Humber to reach young people in their Children in Care and Care Leaver Councils, and with Local Authorities to reach the key influencers of looked-after children and care leavers.

To evaluate effectiveness, the governance structure for GHWY involves our representation as a Board member at quarterly meetings to hold the partnership to account for its delivery on our behalf. We receive updates about work and progress against targets and this is an opportunity to provide challenge to ensure delivery meets our expectations.

GHWY coordinates the following work on our behalf which all board members contribute to for the benefit of looked after children and care leavers:

- Interactive events aimed at those aged 5-18 and their carers, designed to provide HE experiences, build aspirations and connect study and career pathways.
- Developing, maintaining and showcasing the Care Leaver Covenant as our partnership's commitment to care leavers entering and in HE.
- Supporting, endorsing and being involved in external related events across the West Yorkshire region, esp. for care leavers aged 18-25.
- Coordinating participatory communications campaigns to celebrate care leavers entering and succeeding in HE to support further access, e.g. developing visual case studies and showcasing partnership good practice.
- Developing projects in partnership with Leeds City Council which will provide formal CPD for key influencers, aiming to sustainably raise aspirations for/of young people and equip carers/advisors to support decision-making. This follows research by NNECL (Harrison, 2017) which showed that the most cited difficulty for care leavers entering HE was Local Authority support.

Participation

As supported by the literature the University asserts that retaining students from low income groups into their second year (and beyond) is heavily impacted by the costs of study (Callender and Jackson 2005). The University has addressed the over progressive access agreements with bursaries and setting aside hardship funds. Continuation rates over this time have been high and in general evidence this success.

Building on success in this area, measures to support participation will include the provision to students from low-income families (family income of £25,000 or lower) of a rising bursary over the 3 years of study (£250, £350 and £500 respectively) to help fund the production of creative artefacts for assessment. A further £75 will be provided towards the end of their degree to help fund final outputs for student exhibitions and performances.

As well as forming part of the final assessment for degree these act as the principal artefact (a portfolio of work including recordings of performances) used to find first employment. In addition two in-year supplements of £55 will help students from low income families to meet the additional costs of external research visits or further materials. The table on p.13 shows the financial support which will be offered year on year.

The University will target BAME students and students from POLAR4 Q1 and IMDQ1 and offer employment as student ambassadors. Acting in an outreach capacity, this serves a triple function of assisting with their costs of study, acting as role models to encourage further participation from under-represented groups as well as offering the opportunity to acquire valuable work experience.

The concept of belonging has been central to work around retaining students over a number of years and features in the OfS ‘What works’ literature. Generating a sense of belonging for minority groups, including black students, (and as evidenced by the literature) is a further challenge when their rates of participation are low and cultural references within University life narrow. The University will therefore commission a number of practical and research projects for artists, designers and performers that will increase the presence of diverse practitioners in the University and promote a greater diversity of practice that will challenge and develop pedagogy away from the established and accepted norms that serve to reinforce existing participation rates.

Four high profile projects all leading to exhibition/publication will be commissioned each year that will be nationally promoted in order to articulate the University’s ambitions in this area and generate inclusive academic debate. The financial template identifies the investment set aside for this over the life of the plan. Work in this area will also serve to actively promote the University as a place that welcomes diverse groups. The impact of this work will be measured over time through further research amongst the University’s BAME students.

Name of Financial Support	Form of Support	Group	Amount
Internal Progression from Further Education to Level 4 Study.	(Home & EU students) Cash Scholarship for all internal progression from FE to Level 4 study. <i>Paid to all students progressing directly to Level 4 study from the University’s Further Education Provision</i>	Level 4	£500.
Contribution to travel to interview/audition	Cash contribution for applicants who reside in areas of low participation. <i>Paid to all applicants from POLAR4 Q1 & Q2 or Care Leavers (based on UCAS application form).</i>	Applicants	Up to 200 miles return £25. Over 200 miles return £50.
Creative Practice Support Bursary	Cash Bursary for recipients with household income up to £25,000.	Level 4/5/6	£250. £350. £500.
Cost of Materials contribution*	Cash bursary <i>Paid to all students</i>	Level 4/5/6	2 payments per academic year of £55

Name of Financial Support	Form of Support	Group	Amount
Final Project Contribution*	Cash bursary <i>Paid to all level 6 students</i>	Level 6	£75.
Hardship Fund Including support for students to attend work placement.	On application to Student Welfare <i>Support for work placement is available for students with household income up to £25,000.</i>	Level 4/5/6	£245,000 in 2020-21 and £250,000 thereafter
Support for application to DSA. Disabled, specific Learning Difficulty or Health Problems.	Students identified through dyslexia screening during induction in Level 4.	Level 4/5/6	Minimum £260 per student

* Whilst the cost of materials and final project contributions provide a baseline of provision to help ensure that all students are able to produce the required work for assessment and contribute to good continuation levels, they are particularly helpful for students from low income groups. This is because in addition to the ongoing bursary support towards the costs of living, it provides reassurance that they will have the resources needed throughout their course at the key times that they will need them independently of these other sources of support. Accumulative bursary support is therefore provided differentially according to financial need. Only amounts paid to underrepresented groups will be countable for access and participation investment purposes.

A further significant area of work will be developing support for students with mental health difficulties. Successfully piloted activity in the form of workshops designed to help build resilience that was carried out in 2018/19 amongst all level 5 students will be further developed and brought into place at levels 4 and 6 and offered to all students over the next 3 years. A number of initiatives will also be introduced in conjunction with the Students' Union that will provide face to face and 24 hour on-line support for students experiencing difficulties, this includes peer support and 'look after your mate' training for the Students' Union Executive and student reps. The University recognises that even long-term mental health issues are often not declared by students and therefore these matters should be addressed across the student body.

Progression

Undergraduate work placements are a recognised means of preparing for the world of work and for finding first employment after graduation. For under-represented groups the means of finding placements is more difficult without the support of family networks that are already established in the professions. This is compounded in the creative industries where in all but the rarest of cases work placements are not paid and are often located away from students' homes. Low income families are again unlikely to be able to provide this extra cost of support. The University will therefore set aside part of its hardship fund for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to apply for support to attend work placement opportunities. Targeted, wraparound support will also be provided for under-represented groups by our Careers, Employability and Entrepreneurship (CEE) team to ensure these students are able to source and manage these opportunities as well as develop the related employability skills. This includes mentoring from industry professionals and focussed activities that are designed to form part of core studies that will address preparing professional portfolios/performances, applying for work and commissions, preparing for interview and presentation and pitching skills.

It is intended that this work when carefully constructed as inclusive activities and nuanced to meet the needs of different groups and subject disciplines will assist in narrowing the gap between Q1 and Q5 in terms of high level employment. Our CEE team will also work with our student welfare team to review applications on a case by case basis for financial support for work placements from our hardship fund.

A new programme of ‘Creative Residencies’ will support students from under-represented groups to continue to receive support post-graduation, to further their portfolio and further prepare for employment. These will be based on a subject proposal and typically be achieved within 3 months and may involve the use of University based resources to further their practical work or incubation spaces outside of the University leased for this purpose to pilot new businesses. These have been shown to have a positive impact in achieving longer-term self-employment. The number of planned participants is set to rise incrementally from a base of 12 in year one to 30 in year 5 of the plan.

Our CEE team will also carry out an impact analysis of the progression of POLAR4 and IMD groups who take up the opportunities and activities outlined above and receive support in order to further target, refine and develop strategies to improve the relative progression rates of these groups. This work will be reported on through the annual departmental self-assessment report and action planning cycle.

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The University recognises the part that all areas will play in achieving this plan and has set out to engage all of its staff in addressing its aims and objectives. The lead responsibility for the plan is the University’s Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Resources who conducted a briefing to all University staff prior to the submission of this plan that shared the findings of the self-evaluation and proposed approaches to addressing the gaps that were determined. Similar briefings annually will be used to promote key messages and prompt open conversations amongst staff through the life of this plan. Two briefing papers have been presented to Governors as part of the development of this plan before its approval by them prior to submission.

The University has also set up a structure to monitor and evaluate our progress alongside embedding activity within the key deliberative committees; The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee reporting to the SMT, the Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Enhancement (LTE) Committee and The Higher Education Quality Assurance (HEQAS) Committee reporting to the Academic Board.

Alignment with other strategies

Our plan is carefully aligned with our EDI policy, considered through our EDI committee and in which it states;

“We will use the information available to us on equality to:

- identify barriers to access
- identify differences in the opportunities available to groups in comparison with others in relation to participation, achievement, progression and learning experience

- investigate the reasons for any differences and identify ways in which the gaps can be narrowed
- measure the effectiveness of our action plan”

Our Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Plan states that we will:

- ensure appropriate access to academic and personal tutorial support and the range of study support mechanisms;
- ensure our range of study support resources meets the needs of our student community and provide inclusive learning and teaching, thereby contributing to improvements in levels of student retention and success;
- continue to develop our student engagement framework with students as partners in learning, teaching and curriculum development and their own learning.

This is a particular area of new work that is in development. An equality impact review of the LTE plan identifies the need for the development of diversity themes within pedagogy.

Creative subjects are taught and explored through reference to a canon of established practice. Given the low representation of BAME groups within the history of creative subjects this frequent referencing can reinforce exclusion and ‘otherness’ which reinforces low participation and works against retention if groups are not seen to belong. Our research amongst our BAME students “Exploring the black and ethnic minority student experience using a community of enquiry approach” recommends that there be more visible work by diverse artists and that teaching examples reflect a wide range of diverse practitioners and practices. This is more than a matter of updating reading lists and requires staff to actively interrogate their own accumulated knowledge and understanding, supported in part by commissioned research (p.13). Whilst respecting academic autonomy across the University, course teams will nevertheless be tasked with reviewing curriculum on a progressive basis to address this. Developments will be reported through their Annual Course Evaluations (ACE). Summaries of these will be reviewed by both the EDI and LTE committees. The University’s peer review process, in which teaching staff observe each other’s practice with a view to sharing and developing good practice, will also carry an inclusivity theme. Summaries of the outcomes of peer review are reported to the LTE committee annually.

Collaboratively, we work strategically via Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) our NCOP by pooling resources in support of common goals. GHWY brokers collaboration between providers of higher study and its theory of change is that if people, particularly those from underrepresented groups, can access information about the range of HE options available to them it will support them to enrol and succeed in HE. Its strength is in delivering information and support to under-represented groups where they are and when they want it. This is done through an integrated programme of research, evaluation, long term engagement with providers and schools, individual activities and community engagement. Its short term aim is the continuation of existing projects and understanding their impact. Longer term its aim is the development of those activities that have evidence of impact - both as a collaborative group and individual organisations. A realist evaluation approach is used to evidence effectiveness.

As a GHWY NCOP partner, we play an active role in NCOP governance to ensure complementarity with outreach work in our institution. Our NCOP is supporting sustainability by delivering CPD to key influencers as a ‘Train the Trainer’ model.

We are a signatory to the national Care Leaver Covenant and (are working towards developing a) Stand Alone pledge, with collaborative versions of each drawn together by GHWY to showcase our local offer and commitment. The Care Leaver Covenant is a collaborative resource, available in

hard copy and online, which outlines the support across stages in the student lifecycle in order to support young people's decision-making. It has helped develop strategic relationships with Local Authorities, who disseminate copies to foster carers, residential children's homes, personal advisors, social workers and young people themselves.

To develop the Care Leaver Covenant, a period of consultation enabled us to identify all the existing ways in which care leavers were already being supported, and further ways in which we could support this group of learners. It is used by GHWY partners to benchmark and improve their offer. We have used it to improve our offer with a dedicated care leaver webpage, which provides easy and clear information along with where to find additional details and how to ask for support.

For the University, the Care Leaver Covenant and Stand Alone pledge represent a public commitment to vulnerable groups of students, and a vehicle to develop a whole-provider strategic approach to supporting them. Working together across GHWY allows us to review our offer in light of what other local institutions are offering, and to share good practice and lessons learned.

The Stand Alone Pledge will commence formally in 2019-20 (for 2020 entry). On notification, either in the pre-application stages or on the UCAS application, a nominated contact and support will be provided. There will be a nominated Estranged Student Support role providing necessary contact, support and signposting, similar to that provided for Care Leavers, to support Student Finance England application, transition into HE accommodation and ongoing welfare support. Each applicant will be regarded on an individual basis and their needs considered as bespoke. Staff information, development and training will be put in place in 2020 to inform all areas across the University. Support for care leavers as numbers grow over the life of the plan has been taken into consideration in planned staff growth in student welfare.

3.2 Student consultation

This plan has been derived through consultation with the Students' Union at different stages of its development. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Resources met with the Union Executive (made up of students from a range of backgrounds), before drafting the plan and agreed the main themes that should be present. These were confirmed in a meeting of the Executive and Vice Chancellor and academic Pro-Vice-Chancellors. The Executive's Welfare Officer considered the plan as part of a working group made up of members representing departments across the University, and finally an independent group including the outgoing and incoming Students' Union Presidents facilitated by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Resources considered the plan before its approval by Governors.

Consultation with the students included specifically exploring and testing the reasoning behind the targets in this plan and their alignment with OfS priorities. It also considered the financial support elements including the specific bursaries being made available to under-represented groups and their likely impact. As a result the aims, strategies and targets are the result of a shared agreement as to how the University should address access and participation.

The Students' Union Executive are in full support of this plan, in particular its aims to balance the diversity of our student community and the financial support elements it will provide, as these are seen as key to enabling the success of those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

In taking the plan forward, in addition to the Students' Union President, there is a further Student Governor elected to the role who will assist in monitoring the plan at Board level as updates are received from the Vice-Chancellor and through the monitoring process.

Students will assist in delivering the plan through their extensive activity as student ambassadors in hosting events, supporting interview/audition and Open Days, supporting teaching and learning in outreach work and their many interactions with outreach groups.

Students will be involved in the evaluation of the plan through their membership of key deliberative committees, the HE LTE Committee, the EDI Committee and the Academic Board. The Students' Union Executive will continue to be involved with evaluation and monitoring of the plan. Membership by all under-represented groups is not guaranteed through the democratic process of the formation of the executive therefore the University's student liaison team will work with the executive to seek and invite representatives of otherwise under-represented groups to attend meetings at which the APP is considered.

3.3 Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

Evaluation will be based around outcomes and primarily through measured data i.e. the number of applications, offers and acceptances according to student characteristics, some of the numbers will nevertheless be small while momentum is gained.

In these cases qualitative analysis will be used to support activities and measure success. Feedback from the target groups in the form of focus groups and case histories will be considered against wider research and data from the sector, as such a realist evaluation approach will be used.

Once the University has established further robust measures such as the Graduate Outcomes survey they will form part of the University's dataset to consider gaps in progression by POLAR4 groups and enable targets to be set in future plans.

We will use learning from the GHWY NCOP by engaging in dissemination and considering how this relates to our work. We will consider if and how we can use the GHWY Progression Framework as part of ensuring our outreach work is evidence informed. As a multi-layer consortium spanning universities and HE providers with FE provision, there is the potential to bring together relevant data sources to evidence impact, particularly in areas where we cannot achieve critical mass, such as care leavers (defined as those who have experienced a minimum of 13 weeks in care, some of which is after the age of 16), as well as test interventions in a variety of HE settings. Evaluation expertise within the consortium can be utilised by all partners, which hosts good practice events to share and disseminate learning.

Over the coming two years of NCOP Phase 2, a key focus of a new Project Assurance Committee (formerly NCOP Steering Group) is to ensure activities are evidence-based and evaluation is robust. Cross-project and partnership capacity building, and dissemination of findings, will be ongoing through the Project Assurance Committee, the GHWY Board and the partnership's Widening Participation Planning Group.

The timeline in our project plan for dissemination activity from our NCOP is to be a continuous cycle based on when evidence is available, with a review point during summer 2020 and again in summer 2021. Future work will be informed on a similar basis subject to NCOP project funding.

Programme design

Outreach activities and programmes have been considered according to a logic chain analysis with the aim of enabling successful applications to higher education courses.

These consider the inputs (staffing, materials and resources) and outputs (number of participants, completions) and identifies planned short, medium and long term impact (i.e. satisfaction of participants, number and extent of multiple engagements) against measurable outcomes (access rates). These cover the range of anticipated engagements with different under-represented groups.

Creative practice is self-reflective and our pedagogy is founded upon personalised learning, with students producing individualised responses through personalised research. Teaching mostly occurs through small groups and on a one to one basis.

Therefore the practice of teaching and learning in the creative arts can have intrinsic value in supporting students at an individual level. This can be especially helpful to students with mental health needs, provided it is supported appropriately.

To this end support for mental health is being addressed through joining up approaches across departments. Tutors, instructors, administrators and the Students' Union Executive are trained by, and are engaged with, the Student Welfare team to build confidence in supporting students and to encourage open conversations. A range of further support schemes are being evaluated to extend the reach of support including online systems, external speakers and supported student buddy schemes.

Employability activities and interventions are based on mixed methods and involve external practitioners and our own employability team. External speakers are selected as role models and these will be further selected and aligned for the benefit of under-represented groups. The employability team also work with students on an individual basis and are able to adjust their approach according to each student's context. The team are actively engaged with identifying progression barriers to employment (such as sourcing and carrying out work placements) and will adjust the support offered accordingly.

Evaluation design

The University has used the evaluation self-assessment tool and is satisfied it can meet the expected standards for outreach, access and participation evaluation. A data team is in place who have the skills to generate reports and offer analysis, although it is recognised that further data is needed in some areas and this will be addressed. Research expertise are present amongst the WP team who are active in adjusting activities in relation to expected outcomes. Systematic dissemination methods are in place for reports from working teams through the deliberative structure.

Further work has been identified in order to develop the evaluation of dimension 5 (learning) as outlined in the self-assessment tool, where much of the work has been determined as emerging or in development. These are principally related to progression outcomes and the work of our Careers Employability and Entrepreneurship (CEE) team who have developed a range of approaches and activities to develop this area, but have identified further work in nuancing their work to enhance the experience of under-represented groups.

Evaluation implementation

The Widening Participation team systematically evaluates the quality and impact of its activities through mixed methods, and adjusts delivery to meet the needs of groups according to their feedback. Our Marketing and Registry team evaluate the impact of their work through data on the applications and conversions of different groups.

The Employability team actively review and evaluate their activities and report to the Senior Management Team. All groups produce evaluative reports for consideration as part of the deliberative and management structure. Key external data from UCAS data around applications and HESA data regarding attainment and progression according to protected characteristics and under-represented groups, are considered by the EDI Committee.

An evaluation of the provision of our financial support framework took the form of comparisons of year on year non-completion rates. These rates have been shown to have improved as bursaries to support the cost of studies have been introduced, and our hardship fund extended. A review of comments included in the NSS showed that references to concerns over costs of study substantially reduced during this period.

A review of the quoted reasons for student withdrawals showed that concerns over the cost of study have also fallen. Focus groups consistently rank the provision of bursaries as highest in the factors likely to attract those otherwise deterred from entering Higher Education.

Student groups have also consistently stated the costs of studying creative subjects as being most likely to impact on their ability to complete. Use of the financial toolkit in the 16/17 cycle suggested a link between the provision of financial support and retention. As such financial support through a range of bursaries continues to be a core strategy of our plan. The toolkit will be applied again as part of an evaluation in the first 6 months of the plan.

The evaluation of the APP is also specifically addressed in the Departmental Self-Assessment reporting and action planning process (DSAR) for our CEE and Student Welfare teams. These reports are in turn monitored by the Senior Management Team. Course teams will evaluate their contributions to the APP as part of their Annual Course Evaluations reports and action planning (ACE) which will be monitored by the University's HEQAS Committee.

The LTE committee will evaluate the success of strategies that are designed to foster a sense of belonging and support the transition through to the second year of study and beyond. It will consider the impact of work to address the diversity of curriculum and the inclusion of BAME (and more specifically black) students.

The EDI Committee will play a key role monitoring and evaluating performance against the plan in all areas.

Learning to shape improvements

Internally, an effective feedback loop from Course teams to the EDI and HEQAS committees serves to communicate and inform groups about the impact of activities through reports and the use of standing agenda items across the provision. An approach that is also taken through the Academic Board and on to Governors.

Externally, members of our staff are active in attending and presenting at conferences and events around widening participation through national and regional partnerships. We are active in the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE), the Association for Research in Post Compulsory Education (ARPCE), the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON) and Advance HE for whom we also act as a host for meetings in the north. These outputs are reported through the committee structure on the good practice observed and lessons learned.

Further learning will include the consideration of research ethics by our Ethics Sub-Committee in relation to decolonising our curriculum, through to management reports on activities which will be disseminated across groups.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Each team will monitor its own progress against the plan as an element of annual review and self-assessment. This will be by course teams, the WP team, Registry, Student Welfare, Marketing and CEE. Departmental reviews will be considered by the Senior Management team in October each year and a new action plan proposed and approved.

Course team Annual Course Evaluations will be considered by the HEQAS Committee in October with a summary of the APP elements reported to the LTE and EDI Committees in November.

Progress against delivery of the plan will also be monitored through our deliberative and management structure and a reporting process including the use of standing agenda items for Course teams and support departments.

Data will be reviewed and considered according to its provision cycle. For example, internal enrolment and continuation data will be considered following enrolment in October, UCAS applications data will be reviewed in January, NSS results in September.

These timely reports will be considered directly by the Senior Management Team on receipt and subsequently through the deliberative structure. As well as monitoring against targets, the Senior Management team will also monitor performance in those areas the University has previously performed well in, in order to ensure performance in these areas is sustained. *In the event that progress is worsening or that there is a decline in areas previously performing well, the Senior Management Team will reallocate or extend further resources to address this. Any actions will be informed by more detailed analysis of internal and external data, careful review of existing strategies deployed and considering alignment with existing or emerging good practice in the sector.*

An annual monitoring plan will draw together key data on the investments made, determine the impact achieved and the conclusions to be drawn. This plan will propose adjustments to the plan where needed, and where appropriate, refer for approval by the Senior Management Team, Academic Board and the Governors. Monitoring will be reflective, allowing refinement and the adjustment of resources as required.

To monitor progress of our collaborative partnership work, we are a core member of the GHWY Board which receives updates and progress reports at its meetings 3 times a year.

The overall responsibility for monitoring this plan lies with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Resources.

4. Provision of information to students

The University recognises that to achieve the aims of the plan, potential recipients must be fully informed of the support available to them, something the self-evaluation process has identified as an area where heightened visibility would be helpful. Active and specific marketing that runs through the University's promotional apparatus will ensure up to date information on the applicable fees and the financial support provisions of this plan are clearly identified, promoted and maintained at all times from open days and careers events through to web and print. This will include the eligibility criteria and level of support available to students from under-represented groups for each year of their studies. This will also be in durable form and fully cognisant of the requirements of the Consumer Markets Authority.

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	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
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	*	*
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	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
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	*	*
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: Leeds Arts University

Provider UKPRN: 10003854

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 (£)	£345,791.00	£362,846.00	£379,173.00	£393,075.00	£408,056.00
Access (pre-16)	£128,035.00	£134,650.00	£140,972.00	£146,319.00	£152,093.00
Access (post-16)	£169,742.00	£177,701.00	£185,336.00	£191,886.00	£198,927.00
Access (adults and the community)	£32,000.00	£33,662.00	£35,243.00	£36,580.00	£38,024.00
Access (other)	£16,014.00	£16,833.00	£17,622.00	£18,290.00	£19,012.00
Financial support (£)	£533,085.00	£580,978.00	£622,202.00	£636,769.00	£642,289.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£70,533.00	£73,543.00	£77,574.00	£80,626.00	£83,698.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£6,348,930.00	£6,527,860.00	£6,540,200.00	£6,666,685.00	£6,666,685.00
Access investment	5.0%	5.2%	5.4%	5.5%	5.7%
Financial support	8.4%	8.9%	9.5%	9.6%	9.6%
Research and evaluation	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%
Total investment (as %HFI)	14.5%	15.2%	16.1%	16.2%	16.6%

