

# Access Agreement 2018-19



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## **Context of our access agreement**

1. The University of Sussex was the first of the universities created in the 1960s from the vision of the socially responsive leaders of the day<sup>1</sup>, who believed that expanding opportunity in higher education, creating and sharing knowledge at the cutting edge of disciplines, breaking down social and academic barriers and applying knowledge to the real world issues, was the way in which our country and wider society grow.
2. This is a vision that holds true today and which underpins our access agreement. We remain committed to our founding principles of inclusivity and will continue to attract and support talented students, irrespective of their personal or financial background, and will continue to be an exemplar of widening access to higher education.
3. The Higher Education Green Paper, published in November 2015, highlighted the Government's aim to double the number of socially disadvantaged students entering higher education from 2009 levels by 2020 and to increase the number of BAME students going to university by 20 per cent over the same period.
4. The 2016 Higher Education and Research White Paper- Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice- further reinforced the Government's ambition on "widening access and success for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to support social mobility. Accountability for widening participation will be brought into a streamlined governance structure. We will: Merge the functions of the Director of Fair Access (DFA) into the Office for Students (OfS); Include a requirement for a specific OfS Board member, the Director for Fair Access and Participation, appointed by the Secretary of State, with responsibility for these functions within the OfS; and Give OfS a statutory duty to cover equality of opportunity across the whole lifecycle for disadvantaged students, not just access."<sup>2</sup>
5. At the heart of our University of Sussex access agreement is our First-Generation Scholars' Scheme. This has been designed to span the student lifecycle, allowing us to prepare learners for higher education before they start, provide support to enable those who choose to come to Sussex to succeed during their studies and help them to progress to a graduate job or further study.
6. The University's widening participation work is overseen by the OFFA Steering Group, which is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning, and attended by a number of Heads of School, representatives from the Student Union and senior staff from Professional Services. The contribution of colleagues from across the University ensures a whole institution investment and belief in the access, success and progression of our widening participation students. The senior university committee that has oversight of our performance against the commitments of this agreement is Performance Committee, which reports directly to Council.
7. Our widening participation ambitions are integrated within our current University strategy 'Making The Future 2013-18'. There are specific widening participation KPI linked to 'teaching, learning and the student experience', 'external engagement' and most notably 'economic and social engagement'. At the time of writing the University is consulting on a new strategy for the period 2018-2025 and our new Vice-Chancellor, Adam Tickell, has committed to further demonstrate the value we place on widening participation by continuing to embed it within our future strategy and core values.

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<sup>1</sup> Committee on Higher Education report, 1963 (Chair: Lord Robins)

<sup>2</sup> Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, 2016

## **Summary of First Generation Scholars' Scheme for students entering in 2018/19**

8. Our award winning<sup>3</sup> 'First Generation Scholars' scheme (FGS) delivered by the University of Sussex since 2012 provides a wide range of support and initiatives to increase participation in higher education amongst under-represented groups.
9. As part of the scheme every full time, UK domiciled undergraduate student, with a household income below £42,875, qualifies for financial support (annually assessed by student finance England or equivalent). £2k is provided in the first year of study to eligible students (year 0 or 1 on entry) towards campus accommodation costs. Each qualifying student also receives £1k in each subsequent year of study. This additional funding is increased to £2k for a full year of study abroad (year 3).
10. Care leavers (defined as being in care for a minimum of 13 weeks from the age of 14, and under 25 on entry) are eligible for an increased scholarship to £3k per year of study, including a study abroad year with an additional £500 on entry (year 0 or 1) to support transition and £1k as an exit award at point of graduation to support entry to work or further study.
11. Progression: The First-Generation Scholars Scheme explicitly addresses the issue of improving the employment and/or further study opportunities for students from the OFFA qualifying groups, with a household income below £42,875, through our First-Generation Scholars' Study-Work Programme which includes competitive access to:
  - Work shadowing in year 1
  - Funded internships (UK or China) in summer of year 2
  - Funded international summer school (on campus or at a partner institution overseas) in summer of year 2
  - Funded undergraduate junior research associate opportunity (on campus or at a partner institution overseas) in summer of year 2.

## **What has changed in this access agreement for students entering in 2018/19**

12. Our spend on scholarships, has increased year on year, due to the success of the FGS scheme (46% of UK domicile qualify) causing us to take stock of the long-term sustainability of our offer. We have committed to continue with a household income below £42,875 and to retain our £2k rent reduction for first year of study (equivalent to £50/week for 40 weeks tenancy) for students entering a 3 or 4 year degree, but have restricted this to either year 0 or year 1 and not both (previously both year 0 and 1 were funded for students entering a 4 year degree starting at year 0). We will also continue with the £1k per year but restrict to subsequent years of study (previously £1k cash was given alongside the rent waiver).
13. We have removed the means tested (family income below £25k) £400 travel grant for those living off campus in years 2 and 3 and have increased the hardship fund from £200k in 2018/19 to £250k in 2019/20 and £300k in 2020/21 to ensure that our students from the most deprived backgrounds continue to be supported to engage with their studies. Current loan arrangements with Student Finance England make fee waivers unattractive so we have replaced £2k fee waver with cash award for those living off campus.

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<sup>3</sup> In May 2016, the University of Sussex received the NEON Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Success) Award at the House of Commons. In September 2016 Sussex also won the annual award from the [Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services for its work on social mobility](#).

## Section 1: Fees, student numbers and fee income

14. Tuition fees across all undergraduate courses for Home/EU students will be charged at £9,250 plus any Government approved inflationary rise for 2018/19. This fee will also apply to postgraduate initial teacher training (ITT) courses (Primary and Secondary). To maintain the value of fees in real terms, the University's intention is to apply annual increases to fees, up to the maximum tuition fee level as established by Government each year.
15. The only exception to these Home/EU fees will be:
- Home/EU students undertaking a full year study abroad as part of their degree course, who will be liable for fees at 15% of the maximum fee applying for that year;
  - Home/EU students undertaking a full year professional or industrial placement, who will be liable for fees at 20% of the maximum fee applying for that year;
  - We do not plan to recruit part-time undergraduates, but if students need to vary mode of attendance, including repeating all or part of an academic session, then eligibility of fees and financial support would be assessed in the same way, but on a pro-rata basis;
  - B Medicine/ B Surgery students in the joint Brighton Sussex Medical School, where tuition fees for the fifth year of study will be met by the Department of Health. If this funding were to be withdrawn, these students will be required to pay the full fee for each year of undergraduate study.
16. The University expects to recruit 4,600 undergraduate students and 202 postgraduate ITT students in 2018/19. This will bring the total Home/EU undergraduate and postgraduate ITT student population to 11,600 and 202 respectively. The estimated fee income above the basic fee level for Home/EU undergraduate and postgraduate Initial Teacher Training courses in 2018/19 is estimated as £35.3 million.
17. In March 2011, the University of Sussex's Council (governing body) committed the University to OFFA countable spend of a third of the additional fee income on widening participation and scholarship. **Table 1** provides a summary of forecast OFFA countable expenditure to inform students entering in 2018/19.

**Table 1: Forecast OFFA countable spend on widening participation and scholarship**

<b>Overall investment in widening participation</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Higher fee income (HFI)	£35,315,630	£36,214,075	£36,288,115	£36,288,155
Access activity	£2,400,000	£2,450,000	£2,450,000	£2,450,000
Success activity	£1,400,000	£1,450,000	£1,450,000	£1,475,000
Progression activity	£1,900,000	£1,950,000	£1,950,000	£1,950,000
Scholarships	£6,410,399	£6,547,033	£6,186,222	£6,133,132
Hardship fund	£200,000	£250,000	£300,000	£300,000
Total expenditure	£12,310,399	£12,647,033	£12,361,222	£12,308,132
(% of HFI)	(34.9%)	(34.9%)	(34.1%)	(33.9%)

18. We have invested around £90m during the period 2011 to 2016 on projects to improve the physical and digital estate to enable access and aid student learning. 91% of the University's non-residential space falls within condition categories A and B as a result of this investment and is an increase from 85% since 2011/12. Similarly, over 91% of space falls within functional suitability categories 1 and 2, an increase from 80% in 2011/12. The University is within the upper quartile of its HEFCE Peer Group B in respect of both these statistics.

## Section 2: Access, student success and progression outcomes

19. The Higher Education Statistics Agency key performance indicators (HESA KPIs) relating to the requirements of the new access agreement cover:
- Access indicators for students from underrepresented groups in Higher Education
  - Non-continuation rates and projected outcomes
  - Progression to work and further study (EPI) and highly skilled work and graduate level study
20. The following assessment makes use of Sussex’s location adjusted benchmark (LA BM) or Sussex’s Benchmark (BM) where LA BM is not available to evaluate the relative performance of the University to the sector. Sussex’s BM is set by HESA, and uses adjusted sector averages weighted according to our subject (s) of study, qualifications on entry and age on entry. Sussex’s LA BM is also set by HESA with weightings as for BM with a further adjustment for location.

### 2.1 Summary of Access KPIs for University of Sussex

**Table 2: Under-represented groups of UK domiciled, full-time, first degree entrants**

Performance indicator (PI)	2011/12 Sussex	2012/13 Sussex	2013/14 Sussex	2014/15 Sussex	2015/16 Sussex	2015/16 LA BM	2015/16 (+/-)
State school entrants <sup>4</sup>	81.3%	86%	87%	86.7%	88%	85.6%	+2.4%
Low participation neighbourhoods <sup>5</sup>	6.5%	5.1%	5.7%	7.8%	7.2%	6.8%	+0.4%
Ethnicity- % <sup>6</sup>	15.5%	16.5%	19%	18.4%	19.7%	NA	NA
Mature students <sup>7</sup>	12.5%	10%	10.3%	11.3%	11%	13.6%	-2.6%
Disability <sup>8</sup>	7%	7.7%	8.4%	8.1%	7.7%	6.2%	+1.5%

### 2.2 State School Entrants

21. The University’s reputation for the quality of its provision is demonstrated by our standing in international and national league tables (Top 150 in Times Higher Education (THE) World Tables; and top 20 in National THE Table of Tables 2016 & 2017) and reflected in student demand to study at Sussex.
22. In our 2012/13 OFFA access agreement we set a 5 year target of 90% and achieved 88% by 2015/16 which is an incredible achievement with an increase of 7.5% from baseline and 88% is 2.4% above our location adjusted benchmark (**Table 2**). Our standard offer for entry is AAB, which makes Sussex a UCAS High Tariff institution. We have reconsidered the original 90% target for state school entrants and think it is not realistic, instead we would prefer to consolidate this 7.5% rise by aiming to maintain 88% and remain 2% above LA BM as our state school target for the foreseeable future whilst focussing on increasing our proportion of students from low participation neighbourhoods to better reflect our aims to improve social mobility of the most disadvantaged students.

<sup>4</sup> HESA T1a-State School (Young, full time, first degree entrants)

<sup>5</sup> HESA T1b-Low participation neighbourhood (LPN, Polar 3, young full time, undergraduate entrants)

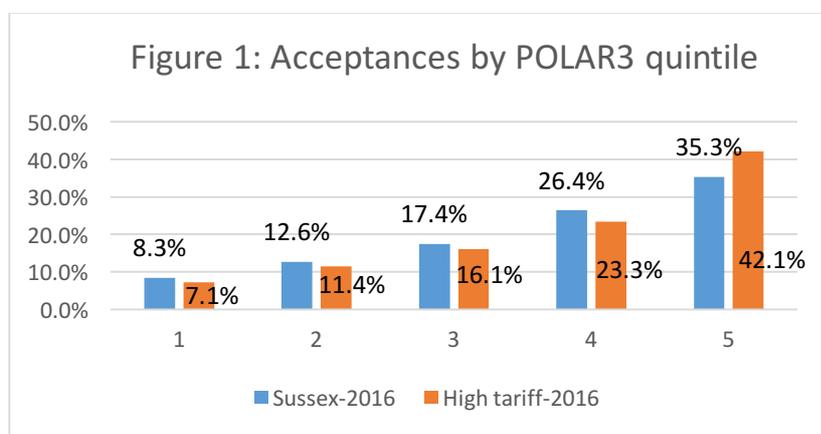
<sup>6</sup> HESA Other statistic- Black & Minority Ethnicity (BME, full time, first degree entrants)

<sup>7</sup> HESA T2a-Mature (LPN, Polar 3, mature full time, first degree entrants)

<sup>8</sup> HESA T7-disabled students in receipt of disabled student allowance (DSA)

### 2.3 Low Participation neighbourhoods (LPN)

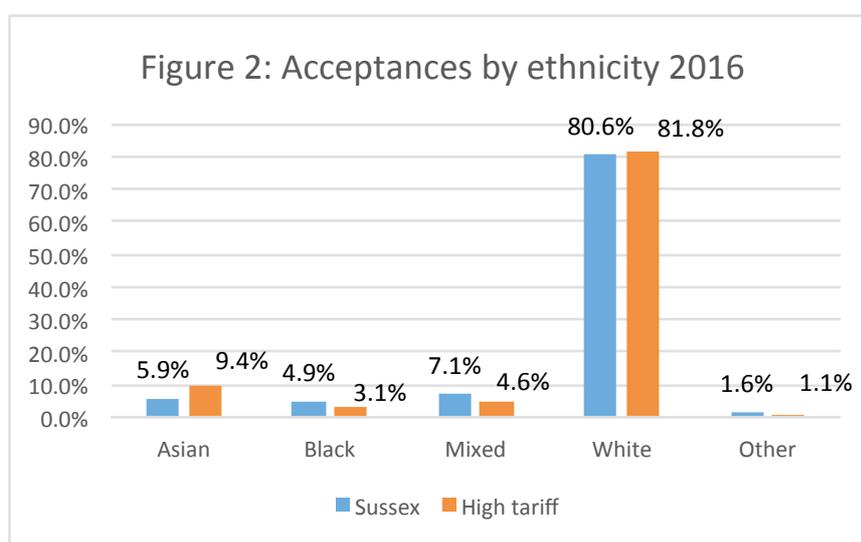
23. In our 2012/13 OFFA access agreement we set a 5 year target of 7.5 % and achieved 7.5% on average for 2014/15 and 2015/16 which represents an increase of 1% from baseline and at 7.2% for 2015/16 is currently 0.4% above our location adjusted benchmark (**Table 2**).
24. Developed by HEFCE, POLAR3 classifies small areas across the UK into five groups according to their level of participation in Higher Education. It is based on the proportion of HE participants aged 18 or 19 between 2005 and 2009 compared to those predicted to be of a similar age by the 2001 census. Each of these groups represents around 20% of young people and is ranked from Quintile 1 (lowest participation rates) to Quintile 5 (highest).
25. LPN refers to quintile 1, with a new stretching target of 9% set in 2017/18 to be achieved by 2020/21. HESA 2016/17 data is not yet available however UCAS 2016 end of cycle data reports a Sussex LPN intake of 8.3% versus 7.1% for High tariff institutions as detailed in **Figure 1**.



26. **Appendix 1** contains details of UCAS (2012 to 2016) end of cycle statistics for UK domiciled students for Sussex together with High Tariff institutions. From this it can be seen that Sussex was clearly underperforming in 2012 with LPN applicants accounting for 7.1% of all applicants but only 5.7% of acceptances- a gap of 1.4%. Sussex data was below high tariff institutions in 2012 with LPN accounting for 7.7% of applicants and 6.4% acceptances. Sussex has made much progress to 2016 with LPN accounting for 8.5% of applicants and 8.3% of acceptances (0.2% gap) compared to 8.1% of applicants and 7.1% of acceptances (1% gap) to high tariff institutions.
27. Sussex is proud to have closed the gap in placing LPN students to 0.2%. However, we will need to step up our access and outreach activity if our 9% LPN 2020/21 target is to be reached.
28. We would like to add a further access target related to Polar 3 quintiles 1 and 2, which accounted for 16% of acceptances in 2012 rising to 21% of entrants in 2016. Equivalent figures for high tariff institutions were 17% in 2012 rising to 18% in 2016. Polar 3 quintiles 1 and 2 accounted for 22% of all Sussex applicants in 2016 with 21% placed so clearly we will need to step up our access and outreach activity if we are to achieve a 25% acceptance target of polar 3 quintile 1 and 2 by 2021/22. HESA data provides evidence that Undergraduate UK domicile first year entrants increased by 36% overall from 2012/13 to 2015/16 with a 51% increase in Polar 3 quintile 1 & 2 students from 352 to 531. This growth was achieved due to a combination of access outreach and the removal of student number control.

## 2.4 Black Asian and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) students

29. The University of Sussex is an international and ethnically diverse institution with a growing international staff and student population. The government has set a target of increasing the number of UK domiciled BAME student entering higher education by 20% by 2020. This is challenging for high tariff universities as some British minority ethnic groups achieve less well at A-levels on average and are less likely to study the A-levels needed for certain degree courses (Arts and Humanities). Sussex is also located in an area that is not very ethnically diverse so we have to reach out to other areas to recruit BAME students. (**Table 2**).
30. In our 2012/13 OFFA access agreement we set a 5-year target of 15% based on 2009/10 baseline of 12% BAME UK domicile students. This was achieved at baseline and a revised target of 18% set and quickly met such that our new target is 20% by 2021/22.
31. UCAS 2016 end of cycle data reports a Sussex BAME intake of 17.9% versus 17.1% for High tariff institutions as detailed in **Figure 2**.



32. **Appendix 2** contains details of UCAS (2012 to 2016) end of cycle statistics for UK domiciled BAME students for Sussex together with High Tariff institutions. From this it can be seen that Sussex has made good progress since 2012. Sussex data was below high tariff institutions in 2012 with BAME accounting for 18.7% of applicants and 14.3% acceptances. Sussex has made much progress to 2016 with BAME accounting for 22.8% of applicants and 17.9% of acceptances (4.9% gap) compared to 21.8% of applicants and 17.9% of acceptances (3.9% gap) to high tariff institutions.
33. HESA data provides evidence that Undergraduate UK domicile first year entrants increased by 36% overall from 2012/13 to 2015/16 with a 74% increase in BAME students from 375 to 651. This growth was achieved due to a combination of access outreach and the removal of student number control. Overall Sussex is proud to have significantly increased BAME students to 18% of UK domiciled UG entrants. However, we will need to step up our access and outreach activity if our 20% BAME 2021/22 target is to be reached. BAME participation will therefore remain a key priority for this 2018/19 OFFA access agreement.

## 2.5 Mature students

34. The proportion of full time mature (over 21 on 1<sup>st</sup> August on year of entry) LPN UK domiciled first-degree entrants fell from 12.4% to 10% in 2012/13 and has slowly recovered as our student intake numbers have grown since 2012. The most recent HESA 2015/16 figure is 11%, which is 2.6% below our LA BM.
35. However, we will need to step up our access and outreach activity if our 12.2% LPN Mature student 2018/19 target is to be reached. LPN Mature student participation will therefore remain a key priority for this OFFA access agreement.

## 2.6 Students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance

36. The proportion of full-time first-degree students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance decreased in 2014/15 was 7.7%, which is 1.5% above our LA BM of 6.2%.
37. **Appendix 3** contains details of UCAS (2012 to 2016) end of cycle statistics for UK domiciled first degree students with a self-declared disability for Sussex together with National data. From this data it can be seen that Sussex has made good progress since 2012 moving from 7.8% to 10.3% making a self-declaration of disability at the application stage with only a 0.1% gap between application and acceptance for the 2016 entry cohort.
38. Following changes to DSA we are moving to a system of declaration of a disability. In 2014/15 14% of our UK domiciled undergraduate entrants declared a disability, either at application stage or following registration, with an increase in the proportion of disability arising from mental health disorders lasting or expected to last 12 months or more.

## 2.7 White males from Polar 3 quintiles 1 & 2

39. **Appendix 4** contains Sussex data compared to high tariff institutions by gender for UK domiciled students. We now have a female dominant intake ratio of 56:44 for Female: male acceptances. From 2012 to 2016 we reduced the gap in male applications to acceptances from 3.9 to 3.6% but there is more work to be done in terms of access and outreach.
40. In response to national concerns about the under-representation of white British men from the most disadvantaged backgrounds we have reviewed our intake of white UK domicile by polar 3 quintiles 1 and 2 and gender. We were surprised to note that it was female students that were underrepresented in 2012/13 with only 14.5% of female first degree entrants from quintiles 1 and 2 compared to 18.7% of males. We are pleased to note an increase to 17.5% for females from quintiles 1 and 2 by 2015/16. In 2018/19 we have added a 25% target for both white male and female Quintiles 1 and 2 for 2021/22.

**Table 3: White males from Polar 3 quintiles 1 & 2**

Entrants	2012/13 UG UK FT		2015/16 UG UK FT	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
POLAR3				
Q1&Q2	18.7%	14.5%	18.6%	17.5%
Q3-5	81.3%	85.5%	81.4%	82.5%

## 2.8 Student success and progression

41. We operate a contextual admissions policy, which has resulted in a diverse student population. In 2014/15 19% of our UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants (with known data) came from polar 3 quintile 1 and 2 neighbourhoods; 43% were first generation to study for a degree; 18% described themselves as BME; 14% declared a disability; and 87% came from state schools (Source: HESA UKPI).
42. Our average non-continuation rate of 4% (0.6 below benchmark) as presented in **Table 4** (the core TEF metrics) is an outstanding achievement given the diversity of the student body. Our mature students have a significantly lower non-continuation rate, 2.6% better than benchmark; and BME students have a non-continuation rate of 1% better than the benchmark.

**Table 4: Non-continuation (3 year average) following first year of entry (Source TEF metrics)**

Non-continuation year after entry	All years	Age		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Sex	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
Sussex	4.0	3.2	9.6	4.7	2.9	3.9	4.1	6.4	3.6	5.0	3.2
benchmark	4.6	3.6	12.1	4.2	3.2	4.3	5.1	6.3	4.4	5.5	3.9
difference	0.6	0.4	2.6	-0.4	0.2	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.5	0.7

43. The University of Sussex provides a consistently excellent student academic experience. Our approach to teaching and learning engages students as co-creators of new knowledge and pedagogy. We provide opportunities for all students to participate in work and research placements, study abroad, elective modules and pathways leading to major/minor awards.
44. Students who qualify for support under our Access Agreement (family income of below £42,850) participate in Sussex's First Generation Scholars (FGS) Scheme. The Scheme promotes social mobility and empowers disadvantaged students to achieve outcomes that are as good as or better than those of their non-disadvantaged peers.
45. Of the 6,812<sup>4</sup> UK-domiciled students entering Sussex in 2012, 2013 and 2014, 3,202 (47%) are eligible for inclusion in our FGS Scheme following means testing of income by Student Finance England (2,930 of whom are first in family to attend university).
46. All FGS students have access to additional support from arrival through to graduation. The FGS Scheme includes a tailored package of extra-curricular activities, linked to study stage, delivered by the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC).
47. The University recognises that not all skills are developed in the curriculum and that some softer skills are better developed through discrete activities including sports, clubs and societies, and specially designed careers events. There are high levels of student satisfaction with clubs and societies, with a 2-year average of 82% of students satisfied with the range of activities on offer, compared to the sector average of 73% (NSS additional question banks, question B4.2 Source: 'NSS2016\_MyData\_T\_10007806').
48. Scheduled extra-curricular skills development activity is managed by the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC). CEC is nationally recognised through its achievement of the Matrix quality standards for information, advice and guidance (last accredited in October 2013). CEC annually delivers approximately 300 events involving an average of 250 employers and Sussex alumni, and attended by approximately 8,000 students each year.

49. FGS students who qualify for means tested support can access work shadowing in year one. Between years 2 and 3, students participate in a range of home and overseas placement options. These fully-funded opportunities include an international summer school; a Junior Research Associate Scheme for 4 or 8 weeks, working on a research project at home or overseas; a 4 or 8 week overseas work placement as part of a British Council China Scheme; or a 10 week UK work placement drawing on opportunities from across the whole UK.
50. The University takes steps to promote integration between different groups of students. In on-campus accommodation we mix home and international students to break down the social barriers that may prevent mobility. We observed that FGS and international students are less likely to participate in team sports. To encourage participation we secured funding from Sport England, match-funded through our Access Agreement, to deliver a volunteer buddy scheme in which FGS and international students take part in team sports facilitated by a volunteer student.
51. The impact of these activities is clearly demonstrated by degree outcomes and rates of progression to highly skilled employment and further study.
52. In 2015, 1,623 UK-domiciled students graduated from Sussex, of whom 700 were the first cohort of students who had received a First Generation Scholarship<sup>9</sup>. 650 (93%) of the 700 graduates received a good degree, compared to 85% for students not eligible for FGS. This difference in degree outcome demonstrates learning gain for our FGS cohort, which is statistically highly significant (chi-squared = 23.5, 1df; p< .01).
53. **Tables 5 and 6** replicate TEF metrics as evidence of the exceptional performance of disadvantaged students at Sussex, for whom the split metrics are 15.8% above benchmark for highly skilled employment or further study compared to 9.9% for non-disadvantaged students. Conversely, in the sector as a whole, negative differences in employment outcomes tend to be evident at 6 months and reduce for most UK-domiciled groups between 6 and 40 months after leaving higher education, but are likely to persist for disadvantaged students<sup>10</sup>.

**Table 5: Employment or further study (3 year average) 6 months after graduation(Source TEF metrics)**

Employment or further study	All years	Age		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Sex	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
Sussex	95.7	95.8	94.8	97.1	95.6	96.0	93.8	93.7	96.1	94.4	96.7
benchmark	93.4	93.6	91.6	93.3	93.7	93.8	91.1	91.6	93.6	91.7	94.7
difference	2.4	2.2	3.3	3.8	1.9	2.3	2.7	2.1	2.5	2.7	2.1

**Table 6: Highly skilled employment or postgraduate study (3 year average) 6 months after graduation**

Highly skilled employment or further study	All years	Age		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Sex	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
Sussex	84.3	83.7	89.5	86.1	83.2	84.0	86.5	82.4	84.7	84.8	84.0
benchmark	72.4	72.2	74.0	70.3	73.3	72.5	72.2	71.5	72.6	74.0	71.2
difference	11.9	11.4	15.5	15.8	9.9	11.5	14.3	10.9	12.1	10.7	12.8

54. The University has won two national awards in recognition of our retention and success of our First Generation Scholars: National Education Opportunities Network Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Success), 2016; Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services Student Engagement Award, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Our OFFA Access financial support was delivered through Student Finance England in 2014/15, which allows us to separately measure degree outcomes for FGS students from the wider cohort

<sup>10</sup> Differences in employability Outcomes: Equality and Diversity Characteristics, HEFCE September 2015/23

55. Sussex is proud of the success of our First Generation Scholarship Scheme, which was designed to mitigate the negative effects of increased tuition fees becoming a barrier to participation for disadvantaged groups.
56. Our highly skilled graduate destinations stem from a University-wide programme of major curriculum reform, which was implemented from 2012. This new curriculum is flexible and inter-disciplinary in structure and content, and empowers students to tailor their studies to meet their academic and career goals.
57. The core TEF metrics show that Sussex is + 11.9% above benchmark for progression to highly skilled employment and further study. The split metrics show exceptional performance across all groups. Disadvantaged students are 15.8% above benchmark for highly skilled employment or further study, compared with 9.9% above benchmark for non-disadvantaged.
58. Other groups that have outstanding outcomes for highly skilled employment and further study are: mature graduates at 15.5% above benchmark; disabled graduates at 10.9% above benchmark; and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) graduates at 14.3% above benchmark.
59. **Table 7** provides a breakdown of progression to highly skilled employment and further study amongst BME students, with notably excellent outcomes for all sub-groups.

**Table 7: Progression to highly skilled employment and further study by ethnicity by graduate cohort 2013-2015**

<b>BME Ethnicity</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>Average 2012/15</b>
<b>Asian</b>	85.7	87.2	88.4	87.1
<b>Black</b>	81.8	83.6	91.4	85.6
<b>Other</b>	84.9	83.8	88.2	85.6
<b>White</b>	78.2	86.1	87.5	84.0

*Source: Sussex TEF individualised data 2012, 2013 and 2014*

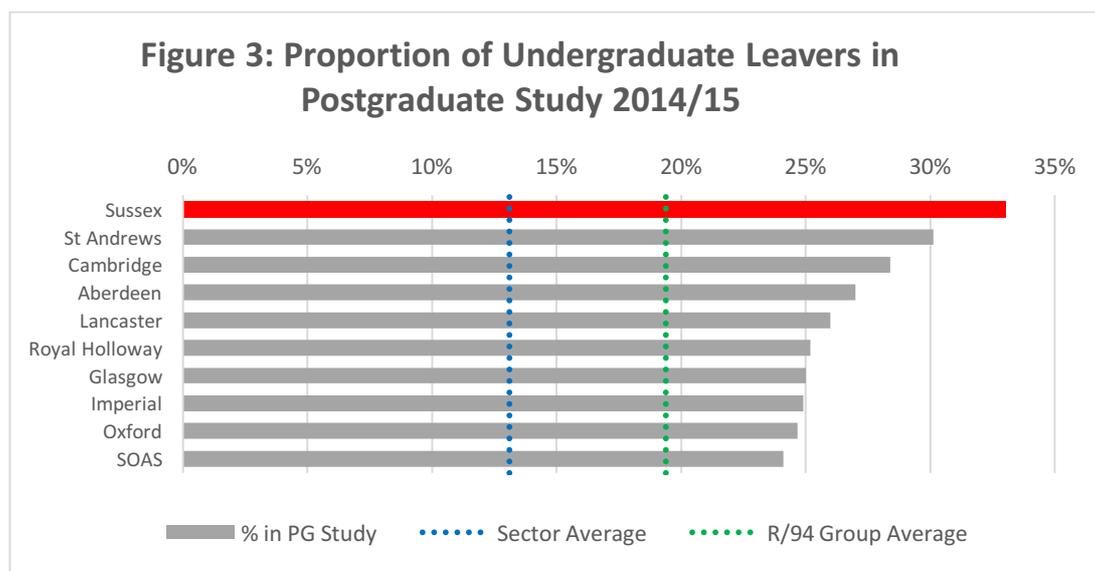
60. Our contextual data show that only 34% of our students enter the University with a high UCAS tariff (>390 points). This equates to 39% of our home EU students. The remainder have medium and low tariff entry profiles. **Table 8** compares the destinations of low, medium and high tariff entrants for 2013 to 2015. The parity of outcomes between high tariff entrants (84.2% highly-skilled employment or further study) and low tariff entrants (84.5%) is evidence of significant learning gain by the latter group.

**Table 8: Progression to highly skilled employment 2013-2015 by entry tariff**

<b>Entry tariff</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>Average 2012-15</b>
<b>High &gt;390</b>	80.2	84.8	88.0	84.3
<b>Medium ≥280≤390</b>	75.7	85.6	86.8	82.7
<b>Low &lt;280</b>	81.4	80.5	91.7	84.5
<b>None</b>	86.9	95.0	89.4	90.4
<b>Overall</b>	79.1	85.9	87.7	84.2

*Source: Sussex TEF individualised data 2012, 2013 and 2014*

61. In 2015/16, 23% of undergraduate students received a first class honours degree and 79% received a good degree (first or 2:1). Good degree outcomes for students graduating in 2010-11 to 2015-16 are broadly consistent, ranging from 76% to 80%. The latest sector average of 'Good degrees' is 72%<sup>11</sup> and increases to 81% for Russell and former 1994 group members. This enables the University to be confident that it upholds rigorous academic standards, performs well in relation to the sector and benchmark whilst avoiding grade inflation.
62. Over the last three years more than 30% of our graduates have immediately transitioned onto postgraduate study. **Figure 3** illustrates that 33% of our 2015 graduates continued to full time postgraduate study within 6 months of graduation giving Sussex a ranking of 1<sup>st</sup> for this measure<sup>12</sup>.



63. The University has always required a minimum of 80% attendance at scheduled classes. Students can view and monitor their own attendance and performance data relative to their cohort via the virtual learning environment (VLE), as can their academic advisors. The use of analytics from the VLE informs the work of the academic advisers and ultimately the School Student Progress Committees, who will make positive interventions when the pattern of student attendance or engagement in learning changes significantly.
64. We offer a wide range of opportunities to personalise learning through elective modules, minor pathways, placements at home and abroad, and study abroad. We refer to this range of options as *Sussex Choice*, which enables students to individualise the design of their course after entry to meet their academic and career aspirations. Sussex Choice has proved very popular with students. In 2015/16, 11,000 students registered for 174 undergraduate degrees. 5,000 of these students took part in the study of elective modules (1,000 studied a language) and 1,000 registered for elective pathways. 326 students participated in Study Abroad, 71 students were professional placements and over 100 were in funded 4-6 or 10-week summer internships (46 in China).

<sup>11</sup> Source (2010/11 – 2014/15): HEIDIPlus - Student Record; Source (2015/16): Standard Registration Population, HESA Student 2015-16 - Data Supply

<sup>12</sup> Source: HEIDIPlus – Destinations (Undergraduates – Type of Further Study: Postgraduate). Sector: All multi-faculty HEIs

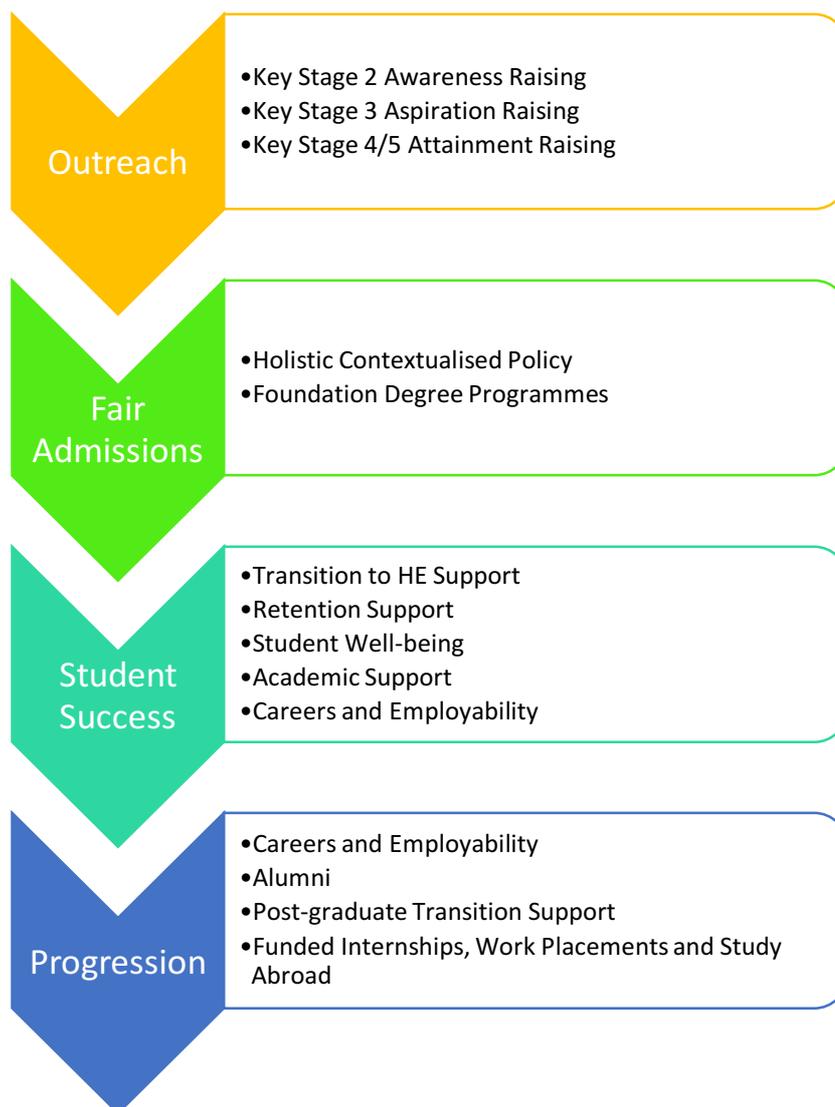
65. Students are actively encouraged through a range of support mechanisms and through academic advising to challenge themselves to academic and personal stretch.
66. The Skills Hub, designed in consultation with students, has brought together, under a single interface, all cross-campus academic skills training and support for students. Library and CEC staff work together to offer an extensive programme of face-to-face and online self-service workshops to develop subject mastery, academic integrity and research skills. In the 2015/16 academic year, over 1,000 students attended a Skills Hub workshop and there were over 550,000 page views of Skills Hub materials.
67. Students are increasingly accessing learning resources online. The Sussex Mobile App enables students to locate the nearest free PC or study room for group or individual working.
68. Lecture recording is available in all lecture theatres. This technology enables the increasing use of flipped classrooms and supports engagement by allowing students to interact with lecture material at their own pace. The deployment of lecture capture and its use in teaching strategy has been set in an overall institutional policy. Locally, academic staff and students agree how to implement lecture capture in the approach to teaching on the course. This is widely used across all subjects and at all levels of study.
69. Recorded lectures are published in the VLE and can be streamed or downloaded. £3m investment in campus broadband ensures that students are always connected wherever they are and that there is no barrier to equal access to learning.
70. The practice of lecture recording is now well-embedded. From 2010/11 to 2015/16 the number of recorded lectures increased tenfold from 1,992 to 11,996. The viewing figures for uploaded recordings have continued to increase annually, with the most recent figures of 348,000 lectures accessed for the autumn term 2014 growing to 441,000 for the autumn term 2015, an increase of 26% and equating to an average of 3,000 lectures viewed per day 7 days a week, with peaks at assessment times.
71. In a concerted effort to systematically improve assessment and feedback for our students the University has designed a complete end-to-end process for the electronic submission, marking and provision of feedback on assessed work. Over 50,000 (66%) undergraduate text-based assignments (coursework and submitted formal assessments) are now submitted electronically each year and this has reduced the rate of non-submission from 8% to 5% over the past two years. This project was initiated in 2014/15 for all new undergraduate stage 0/1 students and rolled out across all years as this cohort has progressed with no impact likely on NSS results until the first cohort graduate in 2016/17.
72. The e-submission system enables Schools to plan and monitor the timing of feedback, in order to ensure feed forward into future assessments. The system also allows faculty to personalise feedback in a number of ways including audio, video, text-based, individual and group feedback. E-submission enables faculty to use learning analytics to improve curriculum delivery and content. Student evaluations to date have shown significant improvement.

## **Conclusion**

73. Teaching and learning at Sussex nurtures, challenges and transforms our students. Our graduates, from diverse backgrounds, consistently achieve outstanding outcomes with regard to degree performance and progression into graduate level work and postgraduate study.

## 2.9 Our priorities for 2018/19

74. Central to our strategic approach is our lifecycle progression framework. This will continue to inform our priorities.
75. The First-Generation Scholars' Scheme has a number of threads running through each stage of the student lifecycle. We propose to deliver an outcomes orientated programme, which is responsive to the needs of its participants and is inclusive of students from underrepresented groups. We will continue to work in partnership, with other universities, charitable organisations and employers, to ensure the students we work with have access to the fullest range of opportunities.



## **2.10 Overview of outreach**

76. **Longitudinal programme:** Intervention and aspiration raising needs to start at the earliest stages of a child's development. In order to achieve this we have developed partnerships with primary schools in areas where pupils traditionally have not progressed into higher education. We have designed our programme around educational key stages, working with pupils from primary age through to Year 13 pre-entry. This work is further supported by our partnership with IntoUniversity. In 2017-18 we will be in the fourth year of an initial five-year programme with IntoUniversity, working with primary schools and in the community, to improve academic standards and to raise aspirations.
77. **Raising attainment:** Recognising that raising awareness and motivation can sometimes fall short, we have developed several attainment raising project which support our broader outreach offer. We have invested considerable resources in both activities run by our WP team and selected external partners, and anticipate this blended strategy will support participants to achieve their full potential.
78. **SLNCOP:** The University of Sussex is part of a local National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) partnership hosted by the Sussex Learning Network (SLN). We are actively working with SLNCOP, including taking a lead on the attainment raising strand of work. We expect this to complement and enhance the core activity and existing attainment raising work of ourselves and partners, with a greater emphasis on structural support through CPD and enhanced tutoring.
79. **Most able, least likely:** We have extended this early intervention work by entering into a new collaboration with Villiers Park and have brought together the work we do through this project and our partnerships with IntoUniversity, the Brilliant Club and Realising Opportunities to form a 'most able, least likely' outreach strand. This encourages and enables students to fulfil their potential, preparing them to succeed at a research intensive university.
80. **Smarter collaboration:** Working with our collaborative partners, we are developing a nuanced approach to outreach delivery, avoiding saturation and allowing us to focus on colder spots across the county and South London. By focusing on a collaborative approach to delivery, we hope to open up new strands of work in rural, harder to reach areas in Sussex as well as Crawley, Croydon and South London more widely and the coastal towns where there are significant issues around progression to higher education.
81. Our outreach work is framed by the pre-entry First-Generation Scholars' Scheme Learners are selected by their schools and colleges to participate in this programme based on a range of indicators; students being drawn from households with no prior family history of higher education and/or, a history of qualifying for free school meals. This typically gives us a cohort of around 2,000 learners per year from across our partnership schools. These learners have access to a range of outreach initiatives including campus visits, cohort welcome workshops and information, advice and guidance sessions. Additionally, our partner schools and colleges seek our input at parents' evenings, in curriculum development and staff development events.

## 2.11 Key educational stages

82. Our portfolio has been designed around educational key stages to build a cumulative outreach offer which complements and enhances learning:
83. **Key Stage 2:** In partnership with IntoUniversity, we have set up a community hub on the Moulsecomb estate, a POLAR3 Quintile 1 area of Brighton. IntoUniversity have developed partnerships with local primary schools and with the local community by offering homework clubs and curriculum enhancement. We work closely with IntoUniversity on transitioning pupils into the First-Generation Scholars' Programme. Through our Explorers Programme we work with primary schools in Eastbourne. This activity brings Year 5 and 6 pupils on to the University campus and encourages them to explore student life, culminating in a graduation ceremony. These schools are also in POLAR3 Quintile 1 neighbourhoods, reflecting our commitment to working with learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds over a sustained period. The Explorers programme has also been designed to segue into the pre-entry First-Generation Scholars' Scheme.
84. **Key Stage 3:** We offer Years 7 and 8 a range of multi-taster days that give young students the opportunity to learn more about subjects that may not be taught through the standard school curricula. We have developed Making Choices, a specific programme to work with pupils in Year 9 to link with GCSE option choices which continues through to Year 13. The programme aims:
- ❖ To enable pupils and parents to make informed and critical choices about courses, institutions and careers;
  - ❖ To develop skills and raise attainment by focusing on activities that develop the skills necessary for pupils/students to succeed in school, college and university, including direct interventions to support attainment at key transitions and in key subjects;
  - ❖ To promote personal development and motivation – participants will be given the opportunity to develop transferable skills to help in education and employment. In addition we support pupils to understand what motivates them and how to remain motivated;
  - ❖ The programme incorporates a range of activities including campus tours, taster sessions and information, advice and guidance, delivered in the school or college.
85. **Key Stage 4:** The Widening Participation team works closely with all Academic Schools within the University to develop a range of subject-specific, age appropriate resources and activities. All involve current academic staff and students as ambassadors, tutors and mentors. Activities are designed to engage learners in subjects they could study in higher education and typically involve a taster session, department tour and question and answer sessions with student ambassadors. We carefully ensure that each event enriches learning by supporting national curricula in GCSE subjects. Our Year 10 residential Summer School aims to give young people a taste of University life and includes both academic content and leisure activities all supported by a team of our academic staff and experienced student mentors. We are proud of the significant changes we see every year in the confidence, knowledge and skills of participants.
86. **Key Stage 5:** We offer individual academic enrichment days in a range of subjects and more intensive subject specific programmes for Year 12 students on both our residential summer schools and non-residential Sussex Study Experience (SSE). These programmes give students the opportunity to experience university style teaching and learning over four teaching days in one single subject culminating in a piece of work. They include information and guidance about careers, application processes and other academic skills such as revision strategies. The programmes also enable students to develop relationships with both our

academic staff and our student ambassadors, helping them develop confidence in their abilities and address any anxieties they may have about higher education. Students participating in these programmes are also offered a suite of activities to help develop self-confidence and cultural capacity.

87. We have built a network of primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges in order to facilitate a responsive partnership for stakeholders in our scheme. We also work with the Students' Union who help to provide a voice for the learners on our programmes, so that we can better understand the needs and opinions of our participants.
88. We are committed to delivering this extensive range of activity to raise aspiration and improve access to University. We are using the tracking tool HEAT to try to determine the success of our interventions and activity.
89. Whilst we are clear that this activity is not delivered as a recruitment tool for the University of Sussex, each year in excess of 300 students from our partner schools apply for, and are accepted on, a course at Sussex. These students often work as Ambassadors for us, or assist in developing and delivering some of the programmes that initially inspired them.
90. To ensure that applicants from a widening participation background can transition smoothly to University we have a programme of support in place underpinned by our fair and contextualised admissions policy.

## **2.12 Collaborative outreach activity**

91. We recognise the cumulative value in collaboration and are continuing to work with our local partner HEIs and through the Southern Region Widening Participation Practitioners' Network. We are active members of NEON and FACE, and have staff who lead working groups which contribute to the development of knowledge and expertise in the sector.
92. The University shares a collaborative outreach project with the University of Brighton, based in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), BrightMed. Each year 50 Year 8 pupils who have no family background in higher education are recruited from local state schools. Work continues with these students into Year 13 with the aim to contribute towards increased diversity in the medical profession.
93. The University also offers degrees in conjunction with the University of Brighton in medicine and automotive engineering. Collaborative partnerships have continued to be a priority and form an integral part of our range of targeted activity across the learner progression framework.
94. We have carefully selected third party organisations to collaborate with, which enhance and extend the range of our in-house offer.

### **❖ Realising Opportunities**

95. The University of Sussex is a member of Realising Opportunities (RO), a unique collaborative partnership of research intensive universities developing and delivering a national fair access scheme which promotes social and geographic mobility for students from under-represented groups. RO has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the longitudinal tracking of students through the HEAT database and UCAS.

Our work with Realising Opportunities is a major component in our work with the most able but least likely students to attend a research intensive university.

❖ **The Brilliant Club**

96. The University of Sussex is a founder partner university of The Brilliant Club, a charity which exists to increase fair access to selective universities by recruiting, training and placing PhD students in low HE participation schools to deliver programmes of university-style learning to small groups of high-performing pupils aged 9-18 years. Our work with the Brilliant Club also contributes to our most able, least likely strand of outreach work.

❖ **Villiers Park**

97. The University has entered into a partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust, which will begin in 2016-17. Villiers Park Educational Trust helps able young people to develop a passion for learning and the study and life skills to ensure they reach their full academic potential. Through the Scholars Programme, the Trust provides a comprehensive pathway to help able students from less advantaged backgrounds reach their full academic potential and gain access to leading universities and thrive once there. The collaboration will allow the University to both solidify its most able, least likely work and open up new partnerships with schools and colleges in Crawley, an area with POLAR3 Quintile 1 neighbourhoods.
98. Villiers Park also makes up our most able, least likely strand of provision, and has been recognised by schools as offering opportunities to their gifted widening participation students which go beyond their internal capacity.

❖ **IntoUniversity**

99. The University has formed a collaborative partnership with IntoUniversity, investing £100,000 per annum for five years into the opening of an educational centre based in Moulsecoomb. The centre works with local primary and secondary schools, as well as offering academic support and mentoring for children and young people from the local community. The centre opened in October 2014, and has since developed strong links with five primary schools and four secondary schools. They have so far hosted three FOCUS weeks for primary schools, which culminate in an on-campus day which includes a campus trail and a graduation ceremony. They have also run a number of events on campus for secondary students, including buddy days and a student-led debate day.
100. This partnership has contributed to the University's presence in the local community, and led to 96. more engagement with local parents. Additionally, the outreach work IntoUniversity undertake complements the work of our own widening participation team, deepening the level of engagement of pupils from this POLAR3 quintile 1 neighbourhood.

❖ **AccessHE**

101. We continue to develop a collaborative partnership with AccessHE, whose aim is to deliver services that support progression to HE for learners from under-represented groups in London, including a strand working specifically with students with a disability or from a care background.

### **2.13 Attainment raising**

102. The University of Sussex has a strong tradition of developing and delivering high quality attainment raising activity within our outreach programme. We have taken an approach which works with a number of schools in low progression neighbourhoods to provide intensive, attainment raising support in a way which suits their individual requirements. We have begun to embed the principle of attainment raising into our team structure. This will see all activities designed and delivered in a way which considers all opportunities to raise attainment. In 2016/17 the WP will spend approximately £400,000 on this activity in real terms, as well as provide significant infrastructural resources to support its success.
103. These initiatives will be part of the WP team's developing most able, least likely strand of outreach work, which has an overall aim of supporting talented pupils and students from underrepresented backgrounds to achieve their full potential. By bringing together our work in this area together under one strand, we hope to maximise the options available to these young people after Year 13. We believe that all of these projects and strands combine with our core WP outreach activity, and the hard work of our colleagues in schools, to provide a cumulative benefit to participants.
104. The Sussex Study Experience, which was initiated in 2012, was designed to add additionality to A level studies, enhancing and complementing learning with academic content informed by the curriculum. In 17/18 we plan to enhance this programme to include developing a network of A level teachers and Sussex academics to work together on adding value to A level curriculum studies. Four cohorts of students have benefited from this programme, translating to approximately 350 students. The programme has seen a marked improvement in motivating students to excel in their studies. Reflective evaluation has shown that past participants in their first year of undergraduate study acknowledged the positive impact of the programme on their A levels:
- “I changed my 4th subject from English literature to politics as I became more and more aware of what I wanted to study and SSE allowed me to see that even a short course in politics would be more relevant to what I wanted to study.”
105. The university has recognized the quality of this programme by offering a reduced offer for SSE students who successfully complete the programme. The University also recognises that the expertise of leading third sector providers can add a high level of strategic value to our core outreach work. To help raise attainment in the county, we have carefully selected a range of specialist organisations to collaborate with, providing schools in areas with the lowest progression to University with high quality support. The University sponsors an IntoUniversity centre in Moulsecoomb, a P3Q1 neighbourhood which has also been identified as a target ward for NCOP activity. The centre is not only a higher education presence in the community, but also provides a space for children from the local area to come together for academic support sessions delivered by graduate staff and student volunteers. Alongside FOCUS study weeks, these sessions aim to improve academic performance.
106. The 2016/17 academic year has seen the start of a close partnership with the Villiers Park Educational Trust in the Crawley area of mid-Sussex, a town which has several Q1 wards and with little University outreach presence. The collaborative venture – Crawley Scholars' Programme - has worked with 60 pupils in five schools in 2016/17, increasing to 120 from 2017/18. The programme aims to encourage talented students from underrepresented backgrounds to apply to research intensive universities, as well as achieve a high standard of academic performance. Ambitions for this programme are stretching, with

targets of 90% of the Year 11 cohort to achieve five or more A\* to B GCSE grades, and 50% of the Year 13 cohort to achieve a minimum of three A\* to B A-Level grades.

107. Our participation in the Realising Opportunities programme has enabled talented students from 8 schools in areas of low participation to enhance engagement with their studies, as well as providing support to progress to a research intensive university. A key element of the programme is the completion of an academic assignment which is supported by the academic staff from the University, and gives students the chance to explore an aspect of their studies in more detail. This adds a depth to their understanding of their current studies which would not have been possible without the structure and support of the programme. The WP team has added a summer school to support writing academic assignments, as well as encouraging engagement from teachers in partner schools. We have a dedicated member of the team who supports participants to get the most from the programme.
108. In addition to these targeted projects, we are seeking strategic alliances with schools which go beyond our current partnership model. By providing intensive outreach in a small number of schools, or clusters of schools, in areas of high deprivation and / or low progression, we will aim to both make a significant difference to the attainment in those schools and the culture of progression to higher education. We are currently in discussion with a number of schools about the possibility of a developed relationship, and will be seeking input from teachers around the type of activity this will involve. It is likely to include deep level support for the school through, for example, CPD programmes for staff or intensive guidance support for target pupils.
109. The University has taken a leading role in the Sussex NCOP in relation to attainment raising, and has set aside significant resource to participate in the development and implementation this collaborative strand. Through NCOP we have sought to further spread our tutoring programme across the county. This programme is currently available in Brighton, but we will lend our expertise to ensure a consistent service is available in both colleges and target schools across a much wider geographical area.

#### **2.14 Fair and contextualised admissions policy**

110. Our aim is to ensure that we maintain a diverse, multicultural undergraduate student community that is open and welcoming and which will continue to attract and support talented students to pursue our courses successfully. Sussex has a long tradition of welcoming applicants with varied qualifications and backgrounds. We work towards this by:
  - ❖ providing educational opportunities for all types of student satisfying criteria of the policy, irrespective of their previous educational attainment, and reviewing each application individually on its merits;
  - ❖ recruiting a diverse community of undergraduates with regard to gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, socioeconomic background and disability;
  - ❖ providing specific progression routes for identified groups, including mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds in the locality and region.

## **2.15 Transition to the University and achieving success**

111. Having raised aspirations, the University is acutely aware that supporting student transition into University and supporting students through their studies is key to student success and progression.
  
112. One of the reasons frequently cited by students for intermitting or withdrawing from University is as a result of financial difficulty including the negative impact that having to work long hours in paid employment, to meet the costs of being a student, has had on their ability to study. This informed the University's original decision to provide a financial package that would have a meaningful impact on a student's ability to engage fully with their studies. The high retention levels, excellent degree outcomes and successful progression into graduate employment, as demonstrated by the first cohort of First-Generation Scholars, coupled with our extensive programme of skills development and placement and internship opportunities, demonstrates the success of our approach.

### **Section 3: Financial Support**

113. The University is proud of, and committed to, the First-Generation Scholars' Scheme, which has been designed to provide both generous financial support and developmental opportunities to help students to gain the most out of higher education. We seek to remove some of the financial barriers that might act as a deterrent to considering coming to university or which lead to high dropout rates.
114. A UK domiciled student with a household income below £42,875, on an Initial teacher training course will receive £600 per year.
115. As part of the scheme every full time, UK domiciled undergraduate student, with a household income below £42,875, qualifies for financial support (annually assessed by student finance England or equivalent). £2k is provided in the first year of study to eligible students (year 0 or 1 on entry) towards campus accommodation costs. Each qualifying student also receives £1k in each subsequent year of study. This additional funding is increased to £2k for a full year of study abroad (year 3).
116. If a student is required to repeat any year of study they will receive £1,000 cash as long as the means tested criteria continue to be met.
117. Care leavers (defined as being in care for a minimum of 13 weeks from the age of 14, and under 25 on entry) are eligible for an increased scholarship to £3k per year of study, including a study abroad year with an additional £500 on entry (year 0 or 1) to support transition and £1k as an exit award at point of graduation to support entry to work or further study.
118. Progression: The First-Generation Scholars Scheme explicitly addresses the issue of improving the employment and/or further study opportunities for students from the OFFA qualifying groups, with a household income below £42,875, through our First-Generation Scholars' Study-Work Programme which includes competitive access to:
- Work shadowing in year 1
  - Funded internships (UK or China) in summer of year 2
  - Funded international summer school (on campus or at a partner institution overseas) in summer of year 2
  - Funded undergraduate junior research associate opportunity (on campus or at a partner institution overseas) in summer of year 2
  - Support of £3,500 for Psychology who are successful in being offered an unpaid professional placement year with the Sussex Partnership NHS Trust (or other related social enterprise/charitable organization working with the Sussex Partnership NHS Trust) to support progression into graduate level employment.
  - Support of £3,500 for students electing to take the intercalated 'Year in Computing'. This one-year course, (which requires no prior computing skills or qualifications), will enable Sussex students studying a non-computing discipline to develop valuable digital skills to support progression into graduate level employment.
119. Students with a household income above £42,875 will not be eligible for direct financial support or the Study-Work Scheme but if they are the first in family to go to University however they are eligible for the skills development workshops.

### 3.1 Evaluation of our financial support package

120. The University of Sussex advises undergraduate students to allow for between £161 to £236 per week for rent, fuel, stationary and food and an additional £21-50 per week for socialising and clothes. If we calculate living costs for 40 weeks students need between £7,319 and £11,446 to avoid getting into debt. It is also anticipated that students will seek employment in the summer months or be supported at home for the 12 weeks of the year not included in this calculation.
121. Student Loans for full time study outside of London for 2017/18 are dependent on family income with a 'standard maximum loan' of £8,430 for those with family income below £25k and no other qualifying allowances such as disability or dependents.
122. **Table 9** sets out the 'standard maximum loan' by family income together with minimum living costs (£7,319) that we are advising our applicants for 2017 entry. Details of student loan for living costs for those entering in 2018/19 are not yet available.

**Table 9: Student loan against minimum living costs**

<b>Family income</b>	<b>2017/18 LOAN</b>	<b>LIVING COSTS</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE</b>
<b>≤£25k</b>	£8,430	£7,319	£1,111
<b>£25,001-£35,000</b>	£7,220	£7,319	<b>-£99</b>
<b>£35001- £42,820</b>	£6,273	£7,319	<b>-£1,046</b>

123. We present the data in **Table 9** as evidence of the need for Sussex to provide support up to a family income of less than £42, 875, as such students' need that additional support due to the reduced loan available from the student loans company based on family income.
124. We considered limiting our means tested financial support to those with family income below £25k. We rejected this as we felt it would leave the squeezed middle in a really difficult situation. This group previously qualified for non-repayable grants as the government presumed that their family would have limited available finance to meet this income gap. The First generation Scholars scheme was set at this non-repayable grant level (originally £42.6k in 2011/12) and designed to promote social mobility and inclusion by widely defining those students in need of financial support.
125. We have had a ring-fenced OFFA countable hardship fund targeted to this group over the five years of our first generation scholarship scheme and have not exceeded £100k spend between 2012/13 and 2015/16. We take from this that students have been able to budget.
126. We have evaluated a number of outcomes such as: positive retention, improved degree outcomes and progression into graduate jobs for those in receipt of funding but it is difficult to determine causation. In addition 85% of students choose to use their £2k rent waiver to live in the more expensive accommodation on campus which complements our social mobility focus of our first generation scholarship scheme. We observed improved degree outcomes linked to receiving the £1k payment in final year of study versus those who previously qualified but then failed the means test in final year, although numbers are small. In summary we have lots of positive data but no hard evidence of impact of our financial package. We have commissioned an economic analysis from our academic department within our business school with results due summer 2017, which will inform future Access agreements.

#### **Section 4: Targets, Milestones, Monitoring and Evaluation**

127. Outcomes to date have been reviewed in detail in section 2 in relation to access, success and progression and key priorities for 2018/19 set out in detail. The OFFA 2018/19 recruitment, access, success and progression targets are set out in this access agreement's accompanying resource plan.
128. We regularly and consistently monitor the progress/performance of disadvantaged (and equalities) groups in relation to: retention data, annual grade performance of cohorts, degree outcomes and employability DLHE figures. We also receive qualitative feedback on the effectiveness of First-Generation Scholars offerings and interventions.
129. As noted in section 2, the first cohort of First-Generation Scholars graduated in 2015, and we have analysed the outcomes for this group. We are exceptionally proud of the achievements of all of our students, but have been particularly pleased to note that participants in the programme have performed very well against the overall student population. Similarly, DHLE results show that First-Generation Scholars have done very well in securing graduate level employment or further study compared to the overall population.
130. In terms of outreach we monitor inputs and levels of engagement but are lacking hard outcomes to strengthen the evidence base. This will be an area of focus over the next year.
131. All activities are monitored and the results used to inform the further development of activities. A report is produced containing key findings, a review of contextual data relating to participating institutions and the effectiveness of targeting with recommendations for improvement or development. These aim to maximise the activity's contribution to the achievement of wider programme goals. This process has led to the development of a more collaborative approach towards the delivery of activity, and improved understanding of what the different stakeholders can bring in terms of resource and expertise. Academic staff are involved in the design of evaluation tools and in discussion of the findings and securing formal evaluative feedback from School and College staff.
132. Evaluation activity has resulted in securing an evidence base for our ten distinct strands of activity (summer schools, subject tutoring, revision days, subject enrichment activities, campus visits, information, advice and guidance events, higher education tasters, extended programmes and staff Continuing Professional Development activity).
133. The University of Sussex is a new member of the collaborative Higher Education Access Tracker Service (HEAT), which assists members in the targeting, monitoring and evaluation of both their individual and their collaborative Fair Access activities. It allows member universities to demonstrate outreach participation in relation to success at key transition point, collectively explore best practice in combining qualitative and quantitative research on outreach and in the future, perhaps, facilitate the development of collaborative targets.
134. Membership of the HEAT service will assist the University of Sussex in fully understanding patterns of participation in outreach and the effectiveness of different types and combinations of outreach, something which is made possible by the collaborative nature of the service. Individual members use the HEAT database to record outreach activity and can see where individuals have engaged in activities with more than one HEAT university. Collectively this allows the central HEAT service to analyse the timing and combinations of activities that show most impact on enrolment in HE.
135. It can take some time for data about young participants in outreach to mature to the point of understanding their patterns of enrolment in higher education as well as their retention and success rates. In the meantime the HEAT service has developed a model of matching a

number of different administrative datasets to the HEAT database which will afford the University of Sussex a better understanding of the relationship between outreach and key educational outcomes at both pre and post 16, before any enrolment takes place. The collective size and diversity of the database will mean this relationship can be explored against multiple participant characteristics, contributing to the University of Sussex and the sector's understanding of outcomes for different underrepresented groups and recognising that widening participation students are not a homogenous group.

136. Where HEAT data has matured it allows the University of Sussex to understand the relationship between outreach participation and HE enrolment, retention and success. The University of Sussex will be able to see if and when its outreach participants enrol in higher education. Crucially this data will show enrolment not only to the University of Sussex but to all other HEIs. This will allow the University of Sussex to demonstrate its contribution to the sector as a whole. Furthermore, as data further matures, the University of Sussex will be able to build a picture of the retention and degree classification of its outreach participants, as well as seeing destination and postgraduate enrolment data.
137. We also periodically commission research on more long term projects, and use these findings to both improve the quality of our programmes and increase our understanding of students from widening participation backgrounds.

## **Section 5: Equality and diversity**

138. The University is committed to embedding its responsibilities under the Single Equalities duty into all we do. We value the diversity of our student and staff community, and our vision at our inception, which holds true today, is that “expanding opportunity in higher education, creating and sharing knowledge at the cutting edge of disciplines, breaking down social and academic barriers and applying knowledge to the real world issues, is the way in which our country and wider society grow.”
139. The university of Sussex achieved an Athena Swan Bronze in April 2013 and successfully renewed our award in 2016. During the last few years all 6 of our STEMM schools have achieved Athena Swan awards with Life Sciences achieving a Silver award. In addition Law, Politics and Sociology have achieved a bronze award from ECU with a number of our arts and social science schools actively pursuing this award.
140. The University has recently appointed two academics as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Equality and Diversity and is the process of establishing an Equality and Diversity office.
141. We believe that our First-Generation Scholars Scheme reflects this vision and demonstrates our commitment to providing equality of opportunity, and that our Widening Participation activities ensure that we will continue to attract and support talented students, irrespective of their personal or financial background.
142. The University is aware of its commitments in respect of this Access Agreement, and also its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Our inclusive teaching and learning strategy and our annual academic quality enhancement plan seeks to address issues related to students with protected characteristics where data suggests that they may not be reaching their full potential. The only action related to groups with protected characteristics is our 9% gap in ‘good degree’ attainment for UK domiciled BAME students that we addressed through a workshop delivered in December 2016 by the Equality Challenge Unit. However, the outstanding continuation rates and graduate employment rates of BAME students as reflected

in our TEF data show that degree classification does not adversely effect this group. Nevertheless we will continue our action plan to reduce this gap further.

143. Section 2 of this document report on the excellent continuation rates and outstanding graduate destinations for all students with protected characteristics: age, gender, disability, ethnicity. We do not have sufficient data on sexual orientation to include within our metrics.

### **Section 6: Provision of information to prospective students**

144. We are committed to providing prospective students with clear, accessible and timely information relating to our fees and support schemes, including the cost of tuition. This information will be communicated through:
- Website and web-prospectus
  - Direct communications with both current applicants, entrants and enquirers
  - Information available at our Open Days
  - Other direct/tailored communications to widening participation groups via our First-Generation Scholars Scheme
  - A schedule of age-appropriate communications
  - A First-Generation Scholars Scheme passport
  - Wall planners for Schools and other partners.

### **Section 7: Consultation with students**

145. Our original 2012/13 OFFA access agreement (with 5 year targets) was extensively discussed with students, student union officers and staff and approved by our Senate and Council with regular reporting across a range of committees.
146. Consultation to agree this 2018/19 has primarily been through the student representation on the OFFA Steering Group, which has two Students' Union representatives (welfare and education officers). The OFFA Steering Group, which meets at least three times per academic year, monitors progress against targets and is involved in annual revisions to the Access Agreement. The OFFA Steering group also uses feedback from our Widening Participation team, Open Days, 'acceptors and decliners' surveys to inform further developments.
147. The students union have signed off changes to our First generation scholar financial package for 2018/19 entry following two meetings held in March and April 2017. The students Union are an active partner in our outreach activities as are our academic schools who regularly bid for funds (£400k annual budget) to support the planned work streams.
148. In addition a School and Colleges stakeholder group, with head teachers and students across the age groups has been formed to help develop our programmes, and to ensure we are meeting the needs of both partner schools and pupils. Age-appropriate focus groups have also been initiated to further inform outreach programme development.

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**Appendix 1: Sussex compared to the aggregate high tariff institutions for Applications and Placed students (acceptances) for UK domiciled applicants by POLAR3<sup>13</sup>**

<b>Sussex</b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Quintile 1	Apps	1,045	960	885	1,000	1,275	7.1%	7.4%	7.9%	8.3%	8.5%
	Placed	120	160	190	195	240	5.7%	7.2%	8.5%	7.8%	8.3%
Quintile 2	Apps	1,665	1,535	1,280	1,450	1,895	11.3%	11.9%	11.4%	12.0%	12.6%
	Placed	220	260	245	285	365	10.4%	11.7%	11.0%	11.4%	12.6%
Quintile 3	Apps	2,705	2,510	2,210	2,350	2,875	18.4%	19.4%	19.6%	19.5%	19.1%
	Placed	395	455	410	470	505	18.7%	20.5%	18.4%	18.8%	17.4%
Quintile 4	Apps	3,715	3,235	2,925	3,070	3,850	25.2%	25.0%	26.0%	25.4%	25.6%
	Placed	555	565	620	625	765	26.3%	25.5%	27.9%	25.0%	26.4%
Quintile 5	Apps	5,600	4,685	3,970	4,205	5,160	38.0%	36.2%	35.2%	34.8%	34.3%
	Placed	820	775	760	930	1,025	38.9%	35.0%	34.2%	37.1%	35.3%
Total	Apps	14,730	12,925	11,270	12,075	15,055					
	Placed	2,110	2,215	2,225	2,505	2,900					
<b>High tariff</b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Quintile 1	Apps	47,870	50,605	54,605	58,080	59,555	7.7%	7.7%	8.1%	8.2%	8.1%
	Placed	5,670	6,185	6,805	7,060	7,435	6.4%	6.5%	7.0%	6.8%	7.1%
Quintile 2	Apps	74,335	78,560	83,305	88,785	91,245	11.9%	12.0%	12.3%	12.5%	12.5%
	Placed	9,280	10,450	10,830	11,595	11,990	10.5%	11.0%	11.1%	11.2%	11.4%
Quintile 3	Apps	104,075	110,200	115,250	121,590	125,090	16.6%	16.9%	17.1%	17.1%	17.1%
	Placed	13,695	15,095	15,415	16,460	16,915	15.4%	15.9%	15.9%	16.0%	16.1%
Quintile 4	Apps	146,445	152,355	155,805	165,630	169,955	23.4%	23.3%	23.1%	23.2%	23.2%
	Placed	21,025	22,395	22,720	24,465	24,475	23.7%	23.6%	23.4%	23.7%	23.3%
Quintile 5	Apps	252,415	261,995	266,400	278,380	286,770	40.4%	40.1%	39.4%	39.1%	39.1%
	Placed	39,030	40,780	41,470	43,560	44,210	44.0%	43.0%	42.6%	42.2%	42.1%
Total	Apps	625,140	653,715	675,365	712,465	732,615					
	Placed	88,700	94,905	97,240	103,140	105,025					

<sup>13</sup> Developed by HEFCE, POLAR3 classifies small areas across the UK into five groups according to their level of your participation in Higher Education. Each of these groups represents around 20% of young people and is ranked from Quintile 1 (lowest participation rates) to Quintile 5 (highest). Applicants with no POLAR3 are not reported.

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**Appendix 2: Sussex compared to the aggregate high tariff institutions for applications and Placed students (acceptances) for UK domiciled applicants by declared ethnic group<sup>14</sup>**

<b>Sussex</b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Asian	Apps	1,010	850	815	855	1,320	6.9%	6.6%	7.3%	7.1%	8.8%
	Placed	90	100	105	125	170	4.3%	4.6%	4.8%	5.0%	5.9%
Black	Apps	915	915	870	820	1,130	6.2%	7.1%	7.8%	6.8%	7.5%
	Placed	80	125	95	125	140	3.8%	5.7%	4.3%	5.0%	4.9%
Mixed	Apps	815	790	720	765	970	5.6%	6.1%	6.4%	6.4%	6.5%
	Placed	130	140	145	165	205	6.2%	6.4%	6.6%	6.6%	7.1%
White	Apps	11,675	10,085	8,595	9,295	11,225	79.7%	78.5%	76.6%	77.6%	75.0%
	Placed	1,765	1,795	1,815	2,035	2,320	84.2%	81.8%	82.5%	81.7%	80.6%
Other	Apps	240	215	215	240	325	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	2.0%	2.2%
	Placed	30	35	40	40	45	1.4%	1.6%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%
Total	Apps	14,655	12,855	11,215	11,975	14,970					
	Placed	2,095	2,195	2,200	2,490	2,880					
<b>High tariff</b>											
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Asian	Apps	67,170	72,245	77,000	82,820	87,215	10.8%	11.1%	11.5%	11.7%	12.0%
	Placed	7,625	8,235	8,575	9,525	9,855	8.6%	8.7%	8.9%	9.3%	9.4%
Black	Apps	28,500	30,275	33,000	35,775	37,765	4.6%	4.7%	4.9%	5.1%	5.2%
	Placed	1,970	2,335	2,550	2,965	3,250	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%	2.9%	3.1%
Mixed	Apps	23,990	26,335	28,305	31,425	33,685	3.9%	4.1%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%
	Placed	3,280	3,790	4,005	4,460	4,760	3.7%	4.0%	4.1%	4.4%	4.6%
White	Apps	493,445	512,510	523,410	546,705	558,535	79.4%	78.9%	78.0%	77.3%	76.7%
	Placed	74,430	79,120	80,600	84,340	85,485	84.4%	83.8%	83.3%	82.4%	81.8%
Other	Apps	8,235	8,460	9,730	10,650	11,350	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%
	Placed	860	885	1,005	1,125	1,175	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Total	Apps	621,340	649,825	671,445	707,375	728,550					
	Placed	88,165	94,365	96,735	102,415	104,525					

<sup>14</sup> Applicants declaring themselves as 'Unknown' are not reported in the UCAS tables

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**Appendix 3: Sussex compared to the National data for applications and Placed students (acceptances) with a self-declared disability for UK domiciled applicants**

<b>Disability</b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
<b>Sussex</b>		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Declared	Apps	1,293	1,223	1,255	1,386	1,839	7.8%	8.3%	9.5%	9.5%	10.3%
	Placed	202	239	261	302	369	8.0%	9.1%	9.8%	9.3%	10.2%
Not declared	Apps	15,232	13,529	11,918	13,131	16,062	92.2%	91.7%	90.5%	90.5%	89.7%
	Placed	2,315	2,380	2,407	2,932	3,258	92.0%	90.9%	90.2%	90.7%	89.8%
Total	Apps	16,525	14,752	13,173	14,517	17,901					
	Placed	2,517	2,619	2,668	3,234	3,627					
<b>National</b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Declared	Apps	38,055	41,925	47,055	51,640	55,910	7.4%	7.9%	8.6%	9.3%	10.1%
	Placed	27,840	31,950	35,665	39,900	43,495	7.3%	7.9%	8.5%	9.2%	10.0%
Not declared	Apps	475,825	485,715	497,460	501,875	497,740	92.6%	92.1%	91.4%	90.7%	89.9%
	Placed	354,790	373,555	383,905	391,875	391,130	92.7%	92.1%	91.5%	90.8%	90.0%
Total	Apps	513,880	527,640	544,515	553,515	553,650					
	Placed	382,630	405,505	419,570	431,775	434,625					
<p><i>Note: UCAS data is from end of cycle reports (rather than the UCAS equality reports); Sussex from our UG admissions system The data relates to all end of cycle acceptances (not just main scheme). It therefore includes Clearing, Adjustment and RPAs</i></p>											

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**Appendix 4: Sussex compared to the High Tariff institution applications and Placed students (acceptances) by gender for UK domiciled applicants**

<b><u>Gender</u></b> <b><u>Sussex</u></b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Men	Apps	7,095	6,090	5,405	5,715	7,235	48.0%	47.0%	47.9%	47.2%	47.8%
	Placed	935	965	990	1,115	1,285	44.1%	43.5%	44.5%	44.4%	44.2%
Women	Apps	7,685	6,875	5,890	6,390	7,890	52.0%	53.0%	52.1%	52.8%	52.2%
	Placed	1,185	1,255	1,235	1,395	1,625	55.9%	56.5%	55.5%	55.6%	55.8%
Total	Apps	14,780	12,965	11,295	12,105	15,125					
	Placed	2,120	2,220	2,225	2,510	2,910					

<b><u>High tariff</u></b>		<b>Applications and Acceptances</b>					<b>Proportion of total for year</b>				
		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Men	Apps	291,290	304,290	311,290	327,005	332,490	46.5%	46.4%	46.0%	45.8%	45.2%
	Placed	41,045	43,845	44,365	46,425	46,380	46.2%	46.1%	45.5%	44.9%	44.0%
Women	Apps	335,745	351,145	365,625	387,670	403,820	53.5%	53.6%	54.0%	54.2%	54.8%
	Placed	47,870	51,240	53,055	56,995	59,120	53.8%	53.9%	54.5%	55.1%	56.0%
Total	Apps	627,035	655,435	676,915	714,675	736,310					
	Placed	88,915	95,085	97,420	103,420	105,500					

*Note: Applications and placed relate to main scheme (ie. June deadline), UK domiciled applicants only. All ages. Do not include 'unknowns'*