

2019 - 20 Access and Participation Plan

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Section one: Assessment of Current Performance

Current Performance

1. The University of Sussex has made good progress in fair access and participation over the past five years and has received awards for the quality of work undertaken¹ around access, retention and success. The University is committed to fair access and widening participation. This is written into the University's recently approved Strategic Framework to 2025: 'A better university for a better world'. The Strategic Framework states that 'we will be recognised globally as an inclusive educational community, widening participation, where the diversity of our student and academic body is celebrated.'
2. Analysis of the University's performance over the past five years demonstrates our success in a number of areas, including:
 - a) Increasing the number of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs) (see paragraph 8);
 - b) A more ethnically diverse student intake (see paragraphs 10 - 12);
 - c) The number of students with Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) (see paragraphs 14 and 15);
 - d) Our three-year average continuation rate continues to be 0.6% above benchmark (paragraph 17);
 - e) Evidence of sustained excellent performance of disadvantaged students at Sussex going into further employment or further training (paragraphs 21 - 23).
3. Where we have identified opportunities to be more ambitious, or our current evaluation suggests there is scope to sharpen our response, we have amended the strategy set out in this current Access and Participation Plan to reflect how we intend to target activity appropriately. Please see paragraphs 75 – 80 for details of the measures we will take to

¹ 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, the University also won the annual award from the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services for its work on social mobility.

increase access and reduce gaps in attainment for OfS countable student groups. Our performance in relation to work with target groups is set out in the remainder of Section One.

Context of our Access and Participation Plan

4. In reviewing our Access and Participation Plan, it is important to recognise how it sits within the context of the University's new Strategic Framework, approved in May 2018, and the implications for the institution as a result of a number of new senior appointments, including: the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students; the University's first Director for the Student Experience; and the Director for Student Recruitment, Admissions and International Development. As a result, over the coming academic year, the University will be reviewing and repurposing its access and participation activities to ensure they are evidence based; outcomes driven; and deliver value for money.
5. Within the context of the new Strategic Framework, the University continues to be committed to investing significantly in access and participation activities. Over the next year, and within the context of the principles-based approach outlined below and ensuring we are outcomes driven, the University is aiming to reduce its total investment of higher fees from 33.3% indicated in the Plan to 30%. It is our intention to achieve these efficiencies in discussion with the Office for Students and that changes are based on robust analysis of our existing performance. In addition, any future financial commitments will need to be reviewed within the context of the outcomes of the Augar Review.
6. The University's Access, Success and Progress work, and our performance, is overseen by the Access, Success and Progress Group, which is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Students, and attended by representatives from the professional services, faculty and student community. The contributions of colleagues from across the University ensures an institution-wide approach to achieving positive access, success and progress outcomes for students from under-represented groups. The Strategic Performance and Resources Committee (SPRC), a committee of Council, the University's governing body, monitors performance.
7. Our award winning '*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. The scheme is described in detail in paragraphs 49 - 50. As evidenced in section 2, there is a clear alignment between the work we currently undertake and our core values through an ambitious, embedded approach to Access, Success and Participation work in our new Strategic Framework through to 2025. The evaluation detailed below notes some of our successes in more detail.

Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs)

8. Tables 1 and 2 below set out Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) 2012 - 2017 end-of-cycle data. From this it can be seen that Sussex has made significant progress to 2017 with students from POLAR 3 Quintile 1 (Q1) neighbourhoods, accounting for 8% of applicants and 8.4% of placed students, compared with 8.3% of applicants and 7.4% of placed students (0.9% gap) for high-tariff institutions. Our Q1 target is 9% set in 2017/18 to be achieved by 2021/22. UCAS end-of-cycle data in 2017 report a Sussex Q1 intake of 8.4%, ahead of our scheduled yearly milestone of 8.2%. We are pleased to note that there has been an increase in placed Q1 students but will need to continue apace with our access and outreach activity if our 9% target is to be achieved. Relative to HESA benchmarks, our performance of 6.9% leaves us 0.1% ahead of our Location Adjusted Benchmark of 6.8%. We would like to improve still further against our benchmark.

Table 1: POLAR 3 – Applications and Placed students at the University of Sussex (source: UCAS end-of-cycle data)

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Q1	Applications	7.1%	7.4%	7.8%	8.3%	8.5%	8.0%
	Placed	5.7%	7.2%	8.5%	7.8%	8.3%	8.4%

Table 2: POLAR 3 - Applications and placed students at high-tariff institutions (source: UCAS end-of-cycle data)

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Q1	Applications	7.7%	7.7%	8.1%	8.1%	8.1%	8.3%
	Placed	6.4%	6.5%	7.0%	6.8%	7.1%	7.4%

9. We have seen a notable rise in intake from students who come from Q1 neighbourhoods, and we note that the proportion of the Q1 acceptances is higher than the proportion of Q1 applications. This is the reverse of other high-tariff institutions, who admit a smaller proportion of Q1 students than the share of applications from the same quintile.

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) Students

10. Drawing on the UCAS end of cycle report, Table 3 below shows that in terms of Ethnicity we have seen a greater diversity in our intake and applications each cycle between 2012 and 2017. Sussex has seen an increase in BAME applicants from 22.8% in 2016 to 23.4% in 2017 and an increase in acceptances from 17.9% to 18.2%. The 2017 cycle saw the proportion of applications who are from UK students defining themselves as something other than White go above 25% for the first time.
11. Whilst rising numbers of students from BAME backgrounds are accepting places, acceptances have fallen amongst students identifying themselves as Black. Although we achieve a higher proportion of BAME acceptances than other high-tariff institutions, we recognise there is work to do in this area and our strategy and measures will be developed accordingly.
12. HESA data provide evidence that Undergraduate UK domiciled first year entrants increased by 45% overall from 2012/13 to 2016/17, with an increase in BAME students over the same period from 375 to 686, representing an 83% increase. This growth was achieved due to a combination of access activity and the removal of student number control. We are pleased to have significantly increased BAME students to over 18% of UK domiciled UG entrants to Sussex, noting in 2016/17 the BAME population was 16% across the UK population. BAME participation will remain a key priority for the 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan.

Table 3: Ethnicity - Applications and placed (Source: UCAS end-of-cycle data)

		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Asian	A	6.9%	6.6%	7.3%	7.1%	8.8%	9.6%
	P	4.3%	4.6%	4.8%	5.0%	5.9%	6.6%
Black	A	6.2%	7.1%	7.8%	6.8%	7.5%	6.8%
	P	3.8%	5.7%	4.3%	5.0%	4.9%	4.1%
Mixed	A	5.6%	6.1%	6.4%	6.4%	6.5%	7.0%
	P	6.2%	6.4%	6.6%	6.6%	7.1%	7.5%
White	A	79.7%	78.5%	76.6%	77.6%	75.0%	74.4%
	P	84.2%	81.8%	82.5%	81.7%	80.6%	80.0%
Other	A	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%
	P	1.4%	1.6%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%

Mature Students

13. The proportion of full-time mature students (over 21 on 1st August on year of entry) LPN-domiciled first-degree entrants was 11.8%, an improvement from 11% in 2015/16. However, the latest published HESA data for 2016/17 shows an issue with mature student performance, with the figure of 11.8% entrants being 1.6% below our Location Adjusted Benchmark (albeit an improvement of 1% on 2015/16 performance). UCAS end of cycle reporting suggests that this is a national issue which has been flagged by both UCAS and the Office for Students (OfS) as a matter of concern to the sector. Our aim continues to be for 12.2% of our students to be LPN mature learners.

Students in Receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance

14. The latest HESA data for 2016/17 set out that the proportion of full-time first-degree students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance in 2016/17 was 6.8% which is 0.9% above our Location Adjusted Benchmark. We aim to work towards further improvement. We note that our internal data suggest that 18.7% of our students in the 2017 entry registered with our disability services on-campus. This suggests that not all the students who we support through our disability services are registered to receive the Disabled Students' Allowance.
15. The table below outlines details of UCAS (2012/2017) end-of-cycle statistics for UK domiciled first degree students with a self-declared disability at Sussex together with National data. From these data it can be seen that the University has made good progress from 2012, moving from 7.8% to 11.2% of students making a self-declaration of disability at the application stage (Table 4). The proportion of students accepting a place grew by over 2% between 2016 and 2017 to 12.4% and was over 1% larger than the proportion of applications where there was a declared disability. This compares positively to the national picture, where UCAS data shows that 10.7% of students self-declared a disability with 10.6% taking up a place (Table 5).

Table 4: Students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance – Applications and Acceptances

Source: University of Sussex internal Admissions data – Proportion of total Applications and Acceptances for year

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Application	7.8%	8.3%	9.5%	9.5%	10.3%	11.2%
Placed	8.0%	9.1%	9.8%	9.3%	10.2%	12.4%

Table 5: National Statistics – Proportion of total Applicants and Acceptances for year (Source: UCAS end-of-cycle data)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Applicants	7.4%	7.9%	8.6%	9.3%	10.1%	10.7%
Placed	7.3%	7.9%	8.5%	9.2%	10.0%	10.6%

Care Leavers

16. Table 6 below shows that the number of students from care experience backgrounds has continued to grow over the last few years. In 2012/13, 24 students were in receipt of a care leavers' financial assistance package. The number has risen steadily since, with 40 students in receipt of the same support in 2017/18.

Table 6: Students in receipt of care leavers' support package (Source: University of Sussex internal datasets)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Recipients	24	28	25	29	38	40

Student Success and Progression

17. Our average continuation rate of 95.9% (0.6% above benchmark) as presented in Table 7 (based on TEF metrics) is an outstanding achievement given the diversity of the student body and remains unchanged from last year. Sussex students perform better than benchmark in this metric across all demographic splits. Specifically:
- Our mature students have a continuation rate that is 2.4% better than the benchmark.
 - Students from BAME backgrounds have a continuation rate of 1.1% above the benchmark.
 - In order to better understand the continuation of students from the broadest range of disadvantaged backgrounds, we have also begun to analyse this in relation to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This shows that students from areas of high multiple deprivation perform 1.1% above the benchmark.
18. Whilst we are pleased to note these positive averages, we intend to understand further the wider performance of students, by intersection of characteristics, across the student lifecycle. To this end, we have invested in data support staff in our Planning Division to provide a thorough analysis of the impact and outcomes of all aspects of the Plan, ensuring future ongoing investments are evidence-led whilst also evaluating new initiatives as they come on-stream.

Table 7: Continuation (3 year average) following first year of entry (Source: TEF3 metrics)

Continuation year after entry	All	Age		POLAR		National IMD		Ethnicity		Disabled		Sex	
		Young	Mature	Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5	Q1 or Q2	Q3, Q4 or Q5	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female
Continuation	95.9	96.6	90.4	95.8	96.7	95.0	96.2	96.0	95.8	94.0	96.2	95.1	96.6
Benchmark	95.3	96.2	88.1	95.5	96.7	93.9	96.1	95.5	94.7	93.8	95.5	94.3	96.1
Difference	0.6	0.4	2.4	0.3	0.1	1.1	0.1	0.5	1.1	0.2	0.7	0.8	0.5

19. In 2016/17, 25% of undergraduate students received a first-class honours degree and 76% received a good degree (first or 2:1). Good degree outcomes for students graduating in 2010/11 to 2016/17 are broadly consistent, ranging from 76% to 80%. The latest sector average of 'Good degrees' is 72%² and increases to 81% for Russell and former 1994 group members. This enables the University to be confident that it upholds rigorous academic standards and performs well in relation to the sector and benchmark whilst avoiding grade inflation.
20. When analysing recipients of good degrees in 2017, we identified attainment gaps between our overall UK domiciled student population and target groups. Analysis showed the following:
- 6.7% attainment gap for care leavers (noting that care leavers themselves make up only 10 students of the 1,934 'qualifications obtained' population).

² Source: (2010/11 - 2015/16): HEIDIPlus - Student Record.

- b. 11.5% attainment gap for students from BAME backgrounds (and within this, 18% for Black students and 15.6% for Asian students).
- c. 3.5% attainment gap for students from POLAR3 Qs1&2.
- d. 2.6% attainment gap for students with a disability.

21. In terms of our success metrics, Tables 8 and 9 below set out data based on TEF3 metrics, providing evidence of sustained excellent performance of disadvantaged students at Sussex, for whom the split metrics are 16.9% above benchmark for highly skilled employment or further study compared with 11.0% for non-disadvantaged students. Conversely, in the sector as a whole, negative differences in employment outcomes tend to be evident at six months and reduce for most UK-domiciled groups between 6-40 months after leaving higher education, but are likely to persist for disadvantaged students.
22. Other groups that have outstanding outcomes for highly skilled employment and further study are: mature graduates at 13.4% above benchmark; disabled graduates at 10.9% above benchmark; and BAME graduates at 14.1% above benchmark.

Table 8: Employment or further study (3-year average) 6 months after graduation (Source: TEF3 metrics)

Employment or further study	All years	Age		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Sex		Level of study	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female	PG / UG boundary	First degree
Sussex	95.6	95.6	95.2	96.5	95.5	96.0	93.5	93.5	96.0	94.6	96.4	94.9	95.6
benchmark	93.6	93.8	92.0	93.4	93.9	94.1	91.3	91.4	93.9	92.0	94.9	94.9	93.5
Difference	2.0	1.8	3.2	3.0	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.5	1.5	-0.1	2.2

Table 9: Highly skilled employment or postgraduate study (3-year average) 6 months after graduation (Source: TEF3 metrics)

Highly skilled employment or further study	All years	Age		Disadvantaged		Ethnicity		Disabled		Sex		Level of study	
		Young	Mature	Yes	No	White	BME	Yes	No	Male	Female	PG / UG boundary	First degree
Sussex	85.0	84.7	88.4	87.2	84.2	84.7	86.4	83.3	85.4	85.7	84.5	94.1	84.2
benchmark	72.5	72.2	75.0	70.3	73.1	72.5	72.4	72.4	72.5	74.5	70.9	91.2	70.7
difference	12.6	12.5	13.4	16.9	11.0	12.3	14.1	10.9	12.9	11.2	13.6	3.0	13.5

23. Table 10 below provides a breakdown of progression to highly skilled employment and further study amongst BAME students, with notably excellent outcomes for all sub-groups, particularly in relation to Asian students and Black students. Data are provided as a three-year average.

Table 10: Progression to highly skilled employment and further study by ethnicity (Source: TEF2 and 3 metrics BAME Breakdown)

	Three years to 2015	Three years to 2016
Asian	87.1	87.6
Black	85.6	86.9
Other	85.6	85.4
White	84.0	84.7

24. Graduate employment or further study levels rose for care leavers from 75% to 100% between 2012 and 2016. It should be noted that these were comparatively small numbers and data are based on respondents to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey.
25. We continue to take an interest in Access, Success and Progress for white males from the most disadvantaged areas. However, we recognise that, similar to BAME, white males are not a homogeneous group, and, as part of our review, we plan to use the year ahead to understand better the nuances within this group of students, considering factors such as nationality, ethnicity, geographic location, cultural identity and prior educational experience. This will enable us better to devise and deliver appropriate opportunities and support at each stage of the student lifecycle.
26. We have a well-established evaluation strategy to understand better the successes of our access programme. We use the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT)³ tracking tool to determine the rates of progress to higher education from our cohorts of target participants. We have recently received the first report from HEAT about our performance in this area, tracking our first cohort of 209 students.
27. Overall, our HEAT analysis has shown that we have seen a 43% progression rate to university. Of those who progressed, 24% came to the University of Sussex, with 66% of all progressing students going on to higher-tariff universities. Of our tracked students, 46% of students who lived in POLAR4 Q1 or 2 areas progressed. Of this group, 61% went to a high-tariff institution.
28. We maintain robust evaluation of our high intensity projects, using focus groups and longitudinal surveys to understand the depth of impact on participants. We ask academic colleagues to evaluate specific activities to ensure continuous improvement. Academics are also involved in the design of evaluation tools, securing formal evaluative feedback from school and college staff.
29. Through evaluation we have secured a strong evidence base for our distinct strands of access activity: student ambassador programme; summer schools; revision days; collaborative programmes; subject enrichment activities; campus visits; information, advice and guidance events; extended programmes and staff CPD activities.
30. We will review our fair access and participation measures this year to ensure we continue to exhibit good practice in the sector. Whilst utilising recent national research on the impact of financial support for students and prior guidance from the Office for Fair Access, we also recognise that more in depth analysis of our own financial support package to students is required. In addition to increasing analytical capacity to evaluate the impact and outcomes, we will seek to utilise the OFFA toolkit to evaluate further the efficacy of our financial support package.

Section two: Ambition and Strategy

Strategic Context

31. At a time of significant change in the sector, the University's Council has recently approved our new Strategic Framework to 2025: "A better university for a better world". The pillars upon which the new Strategic Framework rests – Learn to Transform, Research with Impact, Engage for Change, Build on Strengths – have ambition and creativity interwoven throughout, and the new Strategy Framework to 2025 provides an opportunity to ensure an evidence based and

³ www.heat.ac.uk.

strategic approach to our Access and Participation work continues. The Strategic Framework is accompanied by a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, 'Inclusive Sussex,' which sets out an ambition to become a more equal, diverse, accessible and flexible University. The University also has a new senior leadership team, which has brought with them a passion for social mobility, ensuring that inclusion, diversity and equity will be centre stage in the new Strategic Framework.

32. At the heart of our new Strategic Framework are the principles of collaboration, courage, inclusion, integrity and kindness. We aim to promote and celebrate the diversity on our campus and will put collaborative working at the heart of what we do. Through our Framework we aim to ensure meaningful student participation. We aim to build on our success in widening participation, ensuring that the diversity of our student and academic body is celebrated and the individual needs of our students are both respected and supported through a personalised, holistic and inclusive approach.
33. Our collaborative work will see us working with a range of partners to co-deliver projects on the ground in local communities – making a real difference to people's daily lives and helping our partners to tackle big and small issues. Our aim is to be known as an anchor institution that convenes community dialogue and encourages social cohesion and this will be reflected in our Access, Success and Progress work.
34. Our Access and Participation principles both reflect and support the institutional strategy. A focus on enhancing the student experience and engagement will, along with our Access and Participation work, play a pivotal role in our regional and community engagement and supporting areas - from alumni and public affairs, to admissions and employability, welfare and student experience. Access and Participation work will also feature in other enabling strategies such as the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and the Internationalisation strategy among others.

Principles informing our approach

35. Our Access and Participation Plan will be underpinned by four recently approved Access, Success and Progress principles, and these principles will be factored into other enabling strategies such as the institutional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Internationalisation Strategy alongside others. These principles will run through the fabric of what we do and support the aim of creating an accessible campus.
36. *Principle One* - We will adopt an evidence-based approach. We will ensure our Access, Success and Progress work is of a high standard and evidence-led so that resource is directed to where it has most impact.
 - Evaluation activity will be overseen by the Access, Success and Progress Group and will draw on expertise from both the academic community and professional services within the institution and be underpinned by a range of indicators, including greater analysis of impact and outcomes, academic progression and attainment data and identification of gaps in provision. As part of our ongoing commitment, we will seek to disseminate best practice and ensure resources are appropriately deployed to deliver access, success and progression activities and support their effective monitoring and evaluation.
 - The University will strive to identify and reduce the attainment gaps between different student cohorts, including but not exclusively, students with a disability, or from a BAME, LPN or Mature background. We will achieve this by developing enhanced strategies and opportunities based upon a thorough understanding of the causes of differential outcomes.

- In order to understand how different student communities engage with the support on offer, the University will annually monitor activities and interventions to support student success and progression. We will identify gaps through a dynamic process involving improvement, evaluation and review resulting in clear opportunities to improve reach and impact in Access, Success and Progress provision.
37. *Principle Two* - We pledge to continue to support students most in need. Over the course of the Strategic Plan we will achieve this, by ensuring a) our Access and Participation Plan focusses on those most in need e.g. care leavers, carers, students from LPNs; and b) by developing a recognised programme to promote positive student physical and mental health and wellbeing. We will be known as a University that promotes good health and wellbeing throughout - and beyond - our students' education.
- The University will ensure that its approved financial support is targeted at students most in need, in line with OfS guidance. Support will be targeted at students from the lowest household incomes and where financial circumstances present a barrier to students accessing higher education and/or being successful in their studies.
 - The balance of expenditure set out in the Access and Participation Plan across the entirety of the student lifecycle (i.e. Access, Success and Progress) will be informed by the characteristics and needs of Sussex students. Any new additional investment in Access work will be prioritised towards post-16 widening access activity, and will be informed by evaluative evidence, as outlined in our Access and Participation Plan.
 - The financial support for students will be reviewed via the OFFA toolkit to ensure we are maximising our impact, focusing on those most in exceptional need and, if re-orientation is required, re-investing in ongoing Success and Progress activity and support. In order to maximise applications and uptake of financial support, we will ensure that our financial support packages are easy to understand and effectively communicated to all stakeholders (e.g. parents, prospective students and advisors). Current investment in student success and progression activities will be reviewed in 2018/19 to ensure the balance is right, but maintained until after the review, so that we can continue to reduce the gap in outcomes between different groups of students.
38. *Principle Three* - Our approach to Access will take into account feedback from our students, expert practitioners and the needs of the wider community. The University prides itself in being a listening organisation: listening to academic and professional service practitioners in this field, local communities and student communities; and, co-delivering projects on the ground in local communities to encourage students from under-represented groups to participate in Higher Education. We will strive to be recognised as an anchor institution in our locale and region, which convenes community dialogue and encourages social cohesion.
39. *Principle Four* - We will seek to provide the best possible student experience and, under the auspices of University Teaching and Learning Committee, our Access and Participation Plan will support this objective. We will ensure that activities and programmes that support student retention and attainment will be embedded and will be accessible for all students alongside targeted support for specific groups of students. We recognise that our activity will need to be responsive to the differing needs of students throughout their time at Sussex.
- In recognition of the necessity for early intervention to identify vulnerable students, we will strive to adopt the best possible systems and strategies. We will seek to ensure that all students are appropriately supported in their learning and that our staff are provided with the requisite skills through appropriate training and development.

Ambition

40. Our aim is to embed Access and Participation in the fabric of the University, drawing on a long tradition of supporting social mobility through radical and innovative methods. Our Access and Participation Plan, the Strategic Framework, and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will each support the development of the other. In adopting this strategic approach, we seek to make Sussex a University that is accessible, a place to thrive, and a springboard to achieving ambitions for all students, but especially for those from underrepresented backgrounds. Central to our approach is a continuation of the lifecycle progression framework detailed in section 3 below from paragraph 74 onwards.
41. Considering our performance in Section One, we will aim to:
 - a. Improve access for mature learners;
 - b. Improve access for students from POLAR 4 Qs1&2 neighbourhoods;
 - c. Reduce attainment gaps for students from care backgrounds;
 - d. Reduce attainment gaps for students from BAME backgrounds.

Measures are outlined in Section 3 below on how we plan to achieve these aims.

42. We have set stretching targets for ourselves (outlined in our resource plan) which drive our commitment to social mobility and inform our distribution of resource and activity (outlined in section 3) to where they will have the most impact. We are dedicated to ensuring our practice is evidence-led and is of the highest standard. We will use the time in advance of our next Access and Participation Plan submission to review, in detail, our work; ensure that our aims and objectives are understood by staff, students, partners and local community alike; and ensure that we continue to focus on the areas of greatest need.
43. Our Access and Participation targets and activity will seek to improve the balance in access and outcomes for students from under-represented groups, specifically those discussed in section 1. We will continue to target our resources in support of students from LPNs, low income households, carers, care leavers, mature students and students with seen or unseen disabilities. We will continue to address challenges surrounding fair access and reducing ethnicity attainment gaps. We will develop a recognised programme to promote positive student physical and mental health and wellbeing and have policies and procedures in place to promote safety on-campus, preventing violence, including sexual violence and hate crime, and promoting good and respectful relations between members of our community.
44. We will further ensure that our Access and Participation principles will support an inclusive and accessible campus, continually improving access to activities and services for people with impairments or disabilities. We will ensure that we will have appropriate expert mental health services which will sit alongside those which promote good physical wellbeing. We will also ensure that we develop early warning and support systems which will be sensitive, reliable and highly professional.

Achieving our ambitions through collaborative working

45. The University has carefully sought out and cultivated collaborations and partnerships with other universities and with community and third sector organisations, recognising a cumulative benefit in strategically combined effort. More details of our collaborative partners can be found in Section 3. Through our outreach programmes we will endeavour to prepare participants for student life – academic, social, and cultural – contributing to their success and progression whichever university they choose to go to.

46. Our Access and Participation work will seek to support and strengthen other strands of activity funded by the University, for example community liaison projects. We will continue our tradition of working with and through collaborative networks, such as, the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), to ensure opportunities for people in our local communities are maximised.
47. We take pride in being a good partner with stakeholders – including schools, collaborating organisations, parents / carers and participants themselves – to ensure a suite of relevant, responsive and results-orientated projects are maintained. Over the course of the next Access and Participation Plan, we will actively seek additional links with community organisations within the region not only to fulfil our civic mission in line with the Strategic Plan, but to ensure our activity continues to have real impact, supporting under-represented groups.

Increasing participation in Higher Education

48. The University has two key roles in supporting students from under-represented groups to access higher education. The first is to provide a range of initiatives to encourage participants to fulfil their potential and make well informed choices about progressing to higher education (outlined in Section 3).
49. The second role is to facilitate entrance to university of students from under-represented groups who might otherwise be discouraged. The principle vehicle for meeting this objective is our *FGS Scheme* (delivered since 2012), which provides a wide range of support and initiatives to increase participation in higher education. As part of the *FGS 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).
50. The *FGS Scheme* explicitly addresses the issue of improving the employment and / or further study opportunities for our students from the OfS qualifying groups. The First Generation Scholars' Study-Work Programme includes competitive access to:
 - a. Work shadowing in year 1;
 - b. Funded internships (UK or China) in summer of year 2;
 - c. Funded international summer school (on-campus or at a partner institution overseas) in summer of year 2;
 - d. Funded undergraduate Junior Research Associate opportunity (on-campus or at a partner institution overseas) in summer of year 2.
51. We will, over the course of the next year, undertake a thorough, evidence-based, review of the *FGS Scheme* to ensure it continues to create real and demonstrable impact, including an impact assessment of our financial support element.

Financial support for Access and Participation

52. We will ensure that our financial support is targeted at students most in need, where funding can enable a student's participation and success on their course at the University of Sussex. Need in this context is defined as being from the lowest household incomes and/or where financial circumstances present a barrier to students accessing or being successful in their studies. This includes the group of students defined as having 'exceptional need' due to their particular background circumstances.

53. We will ensure that our financial support packages are easy to understand, clear, accessible and effectively communicated to maximise applications to and uptake of support.
54. As indicated in paragraph 51, the financial support on offer to students will be reviewed over the course of the next year. We will achieve this using the OFFA toolkit to ensure we are maximising our impact, focusing on those most in exceptional need and, if re-orientation is required, we will seek, where possible, to re-invest in ongoing Success and Progress activity and support.

What has changed in the Access and Participation Plan for students entering in 2019/20

55. In 2017/18, reflecting an increasing spend on scholarships, due to the success of the *FGS Scheme*, we reviewed its long-term sustainability. We also took into account the steer of OFFA to look at the balance of spend between Access, Success and Progress and financial support. In 2018/19, we retained a £2,000 rent reduction for first year of study for students entering a three or four year degree (restricting this to either year 0 or year 1). We continued with the £1,000 per year in subsequent years of study.
56. It is the University's intention to continue to support First Generation Scholars, and those from low income backgrounds to access and participate fully in their studies throughout the entire duration of their course.
57. Following internally-commissioned research into the impact of the First Generation Scholarship Scheme, the University will be undertaking more in depth analysis of our financial support package for students during 2018/19 as we detailed in Principle Two and in paragraph 54 above. This will be used to make adjustments to the package for future cohorts. Any recommended changes to the support package will be publicised widely.
58. In recognition of the need to develop further and target Success and Progression activities, we have invested in staff, including the appointment of a Director for the Student Experience. Such roles will be pivotal in undertaking a thorough review, listening to our students, staff and Success and Progress practitioners to ensure that our Success and Progress programmes continue to support our identified milestone groups within this Access and Participation Plan.

Our approach to ensuring we continue to target those most in need

59. We will continue to listen to both practitioners and academics in this field, local communities and student communities, co-delivering projects on the ground to encourage students from under-represented groups to participate in Higher Education. This approach reflects our strategy that seeks to position Sussex as an anchor institution in our locale and region that convenes community dialogue and encourages social cohesion.
60. One of our key priorities is reducing the gaps in outcomes between different groups of students. We recognise the importance of better understanding the causes of differential outcomes but also the challenge of that work. We seek to understand what interventions will have the most impact and deliver strategies to address these. We have included targets in our resource plan to drive our work in this area.
61. Student feedback has suggested that being 'targeted' for additional support can make some students uncomfortable. Therefore, activities directed towards student retention, progression and attainment will be a blend of support which is accessible for all students alongside designated support for specific groups of students. We recognise and respect that the under-

represented student groups identified by OfS are not homogenous and the University's teaching and learning strategy and student experience strategy will ensure the highest quality experience for all our students. Our Student Experience teams will deliver effective systems and strategies which identify vulnerable students for early intervention.

62. Our data analyst will take steps to ensure that our activities and services are carefully monitored in order to understand the engagement of different groups of students with this support. Where gaps in engagement are identified, particularly where correlated with differential outcomes, clear strategies are being developed to effectively communicate the range of activities available and improve uptake.

Consultation with students

63. Consultation to agree the Access and Participation Plan 2019/20 has primarily been through formal meetings with the Students' Union Sabbatical team and through student representation on the Access, Success and Progress Group, which has two student representatives: a nominee of the President of the University Students' Union; and a representative who is a First Generation Scholar. The Access, Success and Progress Group, which meets at least twice per academic year, monitors progress against targets and is involved in annual revisions to the Access and Participation Plan.
64. The Access, Success and Progress Group also uses feedback from our Widening Participation team, Open Days, Student Barometer and 'acceptors and decliners' surveys, to inform further developments.
65. The Students' Union is an active partner in our Outreach activities, as are our academic Schools, which regularly bid for funds to support this work:

"The Students' Union routinely works with the Widening Participation department on a range of different projects, and we have a really effective working relationship: from involvement in university governance on WP, to Role Models projects, and the Students' Union's Wonderful Buddy Scheme.

The Widening Participation team also helped with setting up the Students' Union Role Models scheme, part funding it in the past, and supporting our staff members to grow the project.

Students' Union Officers also have regular input to the Access, Success and Progress Group, and are part of setting the direction for this alongside the University."
Welfare Officer, University of Sussex Students' Union

66. As part of the strategic review of our access, success and progression programmes prior to writing the 2020/21 APP we have scheduled an Access, Success and Progress Group Away Day in July 2018. This working group will consist of senior managers, stakeholders across the professional services team, academics, and student representatives. In addition, we will invite students from the wider student body to have input and help shape the programmes moving forward.
67. Furthermore, a Schools 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 inform Outreach programme development.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

68. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is fundamental to the success of the University of Sussex. We value the diversity of our student and staff community. 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.’

69. The University is aware of its responsibilities in respect of this Access and Participation Plan, 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.
70. Our new Strategy to 2025 is to become an Inclusive Sussex, where all members of our community have equal access to opportunities and experience the University as an organisation that enables and supports them to meet their potential. Our focus is on reducing inequalities, promoting and celebrating diversity, becoming fully accessible for those with seen and unseen disabilities, and flexible in the provision of our services.
71. We believe that our *FGS Scheme* contributes to this vision and demonstrates our drive to provide 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.
72. Our inclusive Teaching and Learning Strategy and our annual Academic Quality Enhancement Plan seek to address issues related to students with protected characteristics where data suggest that they may not be reaching their full potential. We will continue to close gaps in attainment where they are identified.
73. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is overseen by a Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equalities and Diversity), supported by our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Unit. The University aims to secure continued recognition for its work on promoting gender equality from Athena SWAN and is signing up to the Race Equality Charter, Stonewall, and Disability Confident. Our DPVC Equality and Diversity has subjected this Access and Participation Plan to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Section three: Access, student success and progression measures

74. Central to our ambitious, strategic approach is our lifecycle progression framework. This will continue to inform our priorities. Our *FGS Scheme* has a number of threads running through each stage of the student lifecycle. Whilst this scheme has been highly successful, we will use an evidence-based approach to review the programme in the next year. We will target groups that we have identified in the previous sections and seek to address the BAME attainment gap that has been identified. We will ensure that the *FGS Scheme* continues to be understood by prospective students, explore how it can be improved, and ensure that it continues to create impact. We propose to deliver an outcomes-orientated programme that is responsive to the needs of its participants and is inclusive of students from under-represented 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.

Achieving our strategic aims

75. In recognition of our performance detailed in Section One, and our associated strategic ambitions in Section Two, our programme of access activities is concentrated in areas of low participation. Schools are selected based on a combination of factors, POLAR4 status being highest amongst these. By undertaking concentrated and sustained work in these areas, we expect to increase the number of applications to Sussex and the wider sector. Internal data suggest there has been an increase in applications to university from target schools.
76. We have deliberately increased our presence in ethnically diverse areas to develop pre-entry relationships with students from BAME backgrounds. We anticipate that this targeting will increase applications from these students. We have actively recruited students from BAME backgrounds to our student ambassador programme. Currently, 34% of ambassadors

identify as being from a BAME background.

77. We have a number of activities which seek to address access issues for other target groups, which are detailed in paragraphs 99-103.
78. As noted in Section One, we have identified gaps in attainment between students in OfS countable groups and our wider student population, specifically amongst students from BAME backgrounds and those who have been in the care of a local authority. We have stated our aim to reduce attainment gaps for students from these groups in Section Two, and this work will be supported by a range of evidence-based activity. As part of our review, we anticipate deploying a variety of consultative and research methods to understand why this might be and to understand local and national factors. Our activity will be guided by what we discover through the insight we gain from this research.

Access

79. Our Outreach work is currently framed by the pre-entry *FGS Scheme*. Learners are selected by their schools and colleges to participate in this programme based on an inclusive range of indicators with 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 and in curriculum development and staff development events. As we review the impact of the scheme, we will also explore whether we need to build on our Sussex Student Experience Outreach programme to meet better the needs of mature learners and BAME students and to ensure a greater number of enrolled students from these groups.
80. Longitudinal programme: We recognise that 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

Key educational stages

81. Our portfolio has been designed around educational key stages to build a cumulative outreach offer that complements and enhances learning:
82. Key Stage 2: We undertake a range of activity and are currently in partnership with IntoUniversity⁴, which has set up a community hub on the Moulsecoomb estate, a POLAR3 Quintile 1 area of Brighton. IntoUniversity has 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 our *FGS* 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 Q1 neighbourhoods, reflecting our prioritisation of working with learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds over a sustained period.

⁴ www.intouniversity.org Intouniversity Brighton works with a minimum of 900, Year 7 -13 students, each academic year. Since we opened the centre in 2014, 2,396 students have received support through the centre.

83. 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 standard school curricula. The programme incorporates a range of activities including campus tours, taster sessions and information, advice and guidance, delivered in the school or college. 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;
 - 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;
 - Promote personal development and motivation.
84. Key Stage 4: The Widening Participation team works closely with all academic units in 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.
85. Key Stage 5: We offer individual academic enrichment days in a range of subjects and more intensive subject specific programmes for Year 12 students at our residential summer schools and non-residential Sussex Study Experience (SSE)⁵. These programmes give students the opportunity to experience university-style teaching and learning over four teaching days in one single subject, culminating in a research project. 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.
86. 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 host regular meetings with this network, with a view to expanding to include school students as part of the group. We also work with the University of Sussex 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.
87. Although we will review our approach in 2018/19 to inform our work in 2019, we will aim to continue to offer an extensive array of aspiration-raising activity, subject to thorough analysis of outcomes. As set out in Section One, we are using the tracking tool HEAT to try to determine the success of our interventions and activity.

Raising Attainment

88. 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 that works with a number of schools in low progression neighbourhoods to provide intensive,

⁵ www.sussex.ac.uk/about/access-to-education/students/sse

attainment raising support in a way that suits their individual requirements. We have embedded principles 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. Our partner schools will benefit from curriculum-linked Outreach activity, such as SSE's subject-specific strand, which is linked to the A-level curriculum and the expansion of days supporting the GCSE curriculum.

89. These initiatives will be part of the Widening Participation 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 under one strand, we hope to maximise the options available to young people after Year 13. We believe that all of these projects and strands combine with our core Widening Participation outreach activity, and in the commitment of our academic colleagues in Schools, to provide a cumulative benefit to participants.
90. We run various Year 10 curriculum enhancement study days. For example, working in conjunction with the Sussex Musical Theatre Society, 120 Year 10 and 11 students, are currently studying 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde', a GCSE English set text. Students have also benefitted from an on-campus theatre production to enhance their understanding of the text. This will be expanded to be an annual event based on local schools set texts.
91. The SSE, initiated in 2012, was designed to add value to A-level studies, enhancing and complementing learning with academic content informed by the curriculum. By 2019/20, we plan to have enhanced 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 already, 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 have acknowledged the positive impact of the programme on their A levels.
92. We recognise the quality of this programme by offering a reduced grade offer for SSE students who successfully complete the programme.

Collaborative outreach activity sponsoring work in schools

93. We recognise the cumulative value in collaboration and are continuing to work with our local partner HEIs and through the southern regional networks. We are active members of the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON)⁶ and the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE)⁷ with staff leading on working groups which contribute to the development of knowledge and expertise in the sector.
94. To support the raising of attainment with partners, we have carefully selected a range of specialist organisations with which to collaborate, providing schools in areas with the lowest progression to University with high quality support.
95. Along with the Moulsecoomb Intouniversity Centre, we have an embedded partnership with Villiers Park Educational Trust⁸ in all Crawley schools, identified as a target area by the high number of Q1 wards and gaps in outreach provision. Enhanced support for our Sussex and London cohorts is also provided through our partnerships with Realising Opportunities⁹, The

⁶ NEON www.educationopportunities.co.uk

⁷ FACE www.face.ac.uk

⁸ www.villierspark.org.uk

⁹ www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk

Brilliant Club,¹⁰ of which we are the founding HEI partner, and Access HE¹¹ which provides additional support for students from a care background and with a disability.

Widening access to medicine

96. The University shares a collaborative outreach project with the University of Brighton, based in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), and will continue to offer the BrightMed programme to state school pupils in Sussex from Year 8 to Year 13. In line with the recent announcement of the expansion in medical school places, BSMS will be expanding the scope and reach of its BrightMed programme outside of Sussex, working with young people in Kent, Surrey, South London and Hampshire from 2019 onwards. Each year in excess of 300 students from our partner schools apply for, and are accepted on, a course at Sussex.
97. In addition to these targeted projects, we are exploring 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, such as The Hastings Opportunity area, we will aim to make a significant difference to both the attainment in those schools and the culture of progression to higher education.

Fair and contextualised admissions policy

98. Our aim is to ensure that we maintain a culturally diverse 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 students satisfying the 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.
99. **Foundation Years Online Pre-Arrival Platform**
The central Foundation Years programme at Sussex is currently piloting an on-line pre-arrival platform for new students to access over the summer before their first term of study. This platform includes information on studying at Sussex, what to expect (primarily using student voice), advice on settling in, as well as details of each module and preparatory activities. It includes spaces for students to interact with one another in a structured environment before arrival. The aim of this is to support student transition into university study, reduce anxiety and uncertainty, and help students to start building peer networks as early as possible. This is particularly intended to support students with little or no family/social experience of higher education, or those from low participation backgrounds, and includes bespoke student-led sections for groups such as mature students or those with caring responsibilities.
100. **Care leavers**
Students from a care background are prioritised by our partner schools to be included in our partnership cohorts. We work closely with the regional Virtual Schools and provide dedicated outreach programmes for these students. Our membership of National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL),¹² Sussex Care Leaver networks and NEON working groups will continue to inform our care leaver engagement. On application to the University

¹⁰ www.thebrilliantclub.org

¹¹ www.accesshe.ac.uk

¹² www.nnecl.org

of Sussex, a dedicated care leaver co-ordinator supports individual students with their transition to the University and introduces the student to the care leaver contact in the Student Life team ensuring students access the range of services available.

101. **Mature students**

Enhancing our work with mature students is a priority for 2018/19. A cross-university working group has been established to identify how best to support mature students through access, success and progression. We will commission a research project working with focus groups to understand more about the challenges and barriers with a view to creating a bespoke structured coherent programme. We plan for this to be undertaken by PhD students. Additionally we will both host dedicated on-campus events as well as support the delivery of local FE colleges mature student events. The mature student package will include establishing a mature student ambassador group, hosting a mature student week and having a visible presence in local community events.

102. **Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

Our Widening Participation team have begun to scope how we might further enhance our work with refugees. We have met with the Croydon Youth Refugee Network and have had exploratory meetings with *Let Us Learn* and staff administering the *Compass Project* at Birkbeck, University of London. The aim of these meetings has been to ascertain what support already exists in this area and to learn from best practice elsewhere. Supporting young people from these backgrounds can be complex and we will ensure our staff receive appropriate training from the Refugee Support Network's specialist Higher Education team. In addition, we are supporting the development of a National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) funded research project delivered by an academic from the School of Education and Social Work at Sussex that will use peer researchers to examine the experiences of young refugees in Sussex secondary schools. The aim is to use the results of this research to inform effective interventions that our team can introduce in partnership with other key stakeholders such as local charities and the University of Brighton. We currently have one scholarship per year for Article 26 students not eligible for Student Loans Company (SLC) funding. This is used for undergraduates whose immigration status precludes them from SLC funding.

103. **Students with a disability**

To ensure our Outreach provision is accessible to all students pre-entry, we have a range of support measures in place. Additional ambassador staffing is offered to provide 1:1 support as required for the duration of the visit. Pre-event liaison with parents, carers and schools is undertaken to ensure all measures are in place with free provision for a carer to be accommodated overnight for residential events. We are exploring a partnership with Royal Society for the Blind and having our Outreach materials available in Braille. For students with hearing impairments, we ensure hearing loops are available and a signer is provided free of charge as required. A member of the Widening Participation Team now sits on the NEON working group for disabled students and will help inform future targeted interventions. As part of our work with students with a disability we have also run activities for students with Autism Spectrum Condition.

Student ambassadors and graduate interns

104. Our Widening Participation Student Ambassadors provide positive peer role models for young people aged 9 -18, many of whom have little or no family experience of Higher Education. Some of their key responsibilities include; interacting with pupils, teachers and parents in a friendly and approachable manner; leading campus tours; providing information and advice on higher education; delivering talks and presentations (such as Student Life talks, subject taster sessions and subject specific table top activities); and facilitating workshops and academic sessions.

105. These activities provide opportunities for ambassadors to develop key employability skills including: interpersonal skills; public speaking skills; leadership; time management & organisational skills; team work; using initiative and independent working. Our Yellow ambassadors, who attend additional training to support our Outreach programmes in schools, also attend an end-of-year appraisal to review their participation in the programme, in addition to an employability workshop designed to enable ambassadors to provide concrete examples of key competencies from their experiences as ambassadors when applying for graduate roles. We will give consideration in 2018/19 as to how we systematically recognise and develop the skills of our ambassadors as part of a wider Sussex Award Scheme.
106. Each year, the Widening Participation Team employs a graduate intern to provide an individual typically from a first generation background with an opportunity to develop skills to support their employability in the sector. By doing this, we are investing in the future of the sector whilst providing an opportunity for an individual student to develop valuable skills.

Student success

107. The University will be reviewing our on-course opportunities for students during 2018/19 to ensure activities are targeted towards our specified milestone groups. The impact and outcomes of our Student Success Programme will be evaluated to ensure continuous improvement and improve retention, progression and attainment levels of participating cohorts on a year by year basis.

Transition

108. 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. We provide an extensive range of support programmes for students to support retention, academic excellence and enhance employability skills.
109. We recognise the importance of a sense of belonging and that this may be harder to achieve for many *FGS* students, including those from a care background, those with carer or parental responsibilities, mental health difficulties, students who commute, students with special requirements etc. Working with our Students' Union, we are developing our induction and Welcome Week provision to include more low key and targeted events to provide opportunities for as many students as possible.
110. To aid the transition to University, the Residence Support team visits each residence and resident during the first three weeks to facilitate 'kitchen meetings' and to seek out any specific issues. The Residence Support team are appropriately trained and members receive training from disabled student support staff to raise awareness of issues, additional support needs and signposting.
111. The University is improving pre-arrival communications to offer holders (even pre-results) to provide more information and preparation for the transition to University. The emphasis is on reducing the number of sources of these communications to encourage trust in and engagement with valuable material.
112. We will explore how we can provide appropriate information for parents to encourage their ability to and confidence in supporting their students to access support at an early stage. This is particularly important for parents with no direct experience of HE.
113. Students are actively encouraged through a range of support mechanisms and through academic advising to challenge themselves to academic and personal stretch.
114. 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

Careers and Employability Centre 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 2016/17 academic year, over 1,551 students attended over 65 Skills Hub workshops and there were over 285,063 page views of Skills Hub materials.

115. 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.

Academic skills

116. The University will seek to embed Academic Study Skills in the curriculum. Additional support will also be provided online through the Skills Hub and physical resources through workshops and materials. In 2017/18, we have increased the staffing of Academic Skills and are looking to develop a centrally-located skills hub in the future. We are co-ordinating with key stakeholders including the Library, Technology Enhanced Learning, Academics, and the Careers and Employability Centre.

Academic advising

117. We continue to develop our communication plan with academic advisers particularly using the University virtual learning environment. Academic advisers are able to signpost *FGS* students to appropriate study skills support and resources. In 2018/19 a review of the University Employability Strategy will further strengthen the relationship between central services, including careers and academic skills, with the Schools of Study where Academic Advisers are based.

Progression

118. The University will be reviewing our progression opportunities for students during 2018/19 to ensure activities are targeted towards our specified milestone groups. The impact and outcomes of progression programme of activities will be evaluated to ensure continuous improvements in the offer to our students.

Employer engagement

119. A dedicated central employer engagement team continues to develop new relationships with appropriate organisations, and enhance pre-existing partnerships for the benefit of our *FGS* students, enhancing their employability and increasing their probability of a positive graduate outcome. A series of work experience programmes will continue to offer targeted opportunities for *FGS* students. Opportunities include both UK and overseas internships.

Careers Consultancy and Guidance

120. We continue to provide a central team of CEC staff which works with students and academics to support the development of careers management skills. The team of CEC have specialist portfolios, which are detailed below in paragraph 125.
121. *FGS* graduates have access to the Careers and Employability Centre for three years after completion in recognition of the potentially narrower options to access employment opportunities and advice outside the university.
122. As noted in paragraph 50, *FGS* students also have a range of competitive opportunities open to them to enhance their skills.

123. We propose to increase means-tested funding in the following year for summer placement students who would otherwise be relying on UK-based earnings at that time to supplement funds to support themselves in term time.
124. There is a range of work experience opportunities for *FGS* students. As well as increasing individuals' experience, this acknowledges the potential for narrower networks compared to students with more family links into valuable work experience.

Events

125. We offer a range of opportunities for students to engage with University services and external organisations. These include recruitment fairs, skills development sessions and motivational alumni talks. In addition to the above programmes, we provide additional support mechanisms for targeted student groups:
- Mature students - Careers and Employability Consultant with an additional Mature Student Support specialist portfolio, creating additional online resources and workshops.
 - Disabled students - Careers and Employability Consultant with an additional Disability Support specialist portfolio, creating additional online resources and offering extended 1:1 student support.
 - Care leavers - Careers and Employability Consultant with an additional Care Leavers specialist portfolio, creating additional online resources and 1:1 support.
 - Mental Health services - Careers and Employability Consultant with an additional Disability Support specialist portfolio, creating additional online resources and offering extended 1:1 support.

The School Placement module

126. The School placement project module is a work-based learning module to be delivered collaboratively with partner secondary schools/colleges, with the aim that most of these will have a high proportion of students from low HE-participation backgrounds. The module involves third year undergraduate students in English preparing for, through University-based workshops and supervisions, and then undertaking a placement working with a secondary teacher to support pupils in a specific class.
127. Students will shadow, observe and then directly support the classroom teacher over a period of nine weeks, culminating in the delivery of a project that the student has designed (through discussion with the paired teacher). Students will gain first-hand experience of teaching (under supervision) and/or supporting teaching, and be required to apply the skills and knowledge that they have developed through their course of study in a classroom setting, building an excellent transferrable experience. Schools will directly benefit from the work of placement students, which will be targeted through the teacher's knowledge to have the highest impact on pupils, and the module will also function to foster cross-sector subject-specific networks between the University and selected schools.

Section four: Investment

128. For 2019/20, the University's intention is to spend 33.3% of the additional income derived from higher fees on access, support and progression activities for target groups (Table 11). To date we have invested significantly more than this figure and more than our peer group, predominantly due to a higher than expected spend on financial support to students.
129. Over the period of this Plan, we will review the investment made in our access, student success and progression activities to identify how they can provide better value-for-money

and support us in achieving our objectives in these areas. We will use this investment flexibly to address areas of weakness as they are identified, but commit to staying within the guidelines for use of the funds. We will discuss any significant proposed changes with OfS.

130. A summary of forecasted expenditure in support of our Access and Participation Plan from 2019/20 to 2022/23 is included below. This investment is shown on the basis that the higher tuition fee remains level at £9,250. Should the Government allow maximum fees either to increase beyond this level or reduce over the period for students who are covered by this Plan, the University would expect to continue to charge the revised maximum fee and will review investment levels accordingly.

Table 11: Summary of Access and Participation Plan expenditure

	2019/20 (Expenditure)	2019/20 (% of HFI)	2022/23 (Expenditure)	2022/23 (% of HFI)
Access investment	£2,480,000	6.8%	£2,540,000	6.8%
Success investment	£1,460,000	4.0%	£1,530,000	4.1%
Progression investment	£1,970,000	5.4%	£2,020,000	5.4%
Investment in financial support	£6,204,965	17.0%	£6,257,963	16.7%
Total investment / % of higher fee Income	£12,114,965	33.3%	£12,347,963	33.0%

Section five: Provision of information to students

131. We will provide 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
 - A schedule of age-appropriate communications
 - A *First-Generation Scholars Scheme* passport which records every activity undertaken in Years 9 and 10 (e.g. campus tours, subject specific session etc)
 - Wall planners for Schools and other partners
 - Ensuring an up to date version of this and future Access and Participation Plans are available on our website for information.

* course type not listed.

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

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

The University will review tuition fees each year. This will be in line with future Government reviews of university fee levels. The current expectation is that we will increase fees for each year of study as specified by parliament and will be related to the published Retail Price Index (RPI-X).

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		£9,250
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other		*
Franchise 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		*
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 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	State school	HESA T1a - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To ensure we remain 2% above Location Adjusted Benchmark	No	2014-15	86.7%	2% above LAB	2% above LAB	2% above LAB	2% above LAB	2% above LAB	Following discussions with OFS, we have amended our target for state school entrants. We will aim to achieve 2% above our location adjusted benchmark. This represents a commitment to an ambitious but realistic mix of students from state and independent schools, ensuring we remain ahead HESA KPIs in the years going forward.
T16a_02	Access	Socio-economic	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To increase the proportion of NS-SEC groups 4-7 from 22.5% to 25%	No	2014-15	22.5%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	We need to remove this target as NS-SEC data is no longer provided
T16a_03	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	To increase the proportion of entrants from LPN from 7.8% to 9%	No	2014-15	7.8%	8.2%	8.5%	8.8%	9%	9%	
T16a_04	Access	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	To increase the proportion of entrants from BAME groups from 18.3% to 20%	No	2014-15	18.3%	19.2%	19.5%	19.8%	20%	20%	

T16a_05	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To reduce the proportion of non-continuation following 1st year of entry from 3.9% to 3%	No	2014-15	3.9%	3.6%	3.4%	3.2%	3%	3%	
T16a_06	Access	Mature	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	To raise within the national top quartile	No	2014-15	11.3%	12.2%	12.2%	12.2%	12.2	12.2	We recognise we need to put more measures in place to improve our position on this target amongst our comparator group. A working group is currently researching measures to impact access, success and progression of this group.
T16a_07	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	To maintain 80% graduate highly skilled destinations	No	2014-15	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	
T16a_08	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	To maintain 30% progression to further study	No	2014-15	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	
T16a_09	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To increase the proportion of POLAR 3 QUINTILE 1 AND 2 from 21% to 25% (REPLACE nssec)	No	2016-17	21%	22%	23%	24%	25%	25%	Polar 3 Q 1 and 2 target of 25% to replace NSSEC target

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To create a network of 40 full, 40 associate and 40 collaborative partner schools and colleges.	No	2013-14	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	This target will be replaced by T16b_08 from 2017-18 onwards, as agreed with OFFA
T16b_02	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To raise individual enrolments in our First-Generation Scholars pre-entry scheme from 4000 to 7000 across the scheme	No	2013-14	4000	7000	7000	n/a	n/a	n/a	This target will be replaced by T16b_11 from 2019-20 onwards, when data from HEAT becomes available
T16b_03	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	School staff engagement of full partner school staff to attend an annual staff development opportunity	No	2013-14	70%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	This target will be replaced by T16b_15 from 2017-18 onwards
T16b_04	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Parents / guardians in full partner schools to attend at least one event	No	2013-14	4364	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	This target will be replaced by T16b_18 from 2017-18 onwards
T16b_05	Student success	Socio-economic	Student support services	Study skills, personal development, careers and leadership engagements of First-Generation Scholars involved in one or more of these activities	No	2013-14	75%	90%	90%	n/a	n/a	n/a	This target will be replaced by T16b_16 and T16b_19 from 2017-18 onwards

T16b_06	Progression	Socio-economic	Student support services	Funded internships and work placements for First-Generation Scholars involved in one or more opportunities by their final year	No	2014-15	20%	30%	30%	n/a	n/a	n/a	This target will be replaced by T16b_09 from 2017-18 onwards
T16b_07	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	COLLABORATION: Realising opportunities targets for the progression of RO participants to an RO partner university	Yes	2015-16	25%	25%	25%	n/a	n/a	n/a	Funding is agreed for Realising Opportunities until 2019-20, and RO are not in a position to set a target for 2020-21 pending discussions around the future of the programme.
T16b_08	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	PARTNERSHIP: To develop and maintain a network of 120 schools	Yes	2015-16	90	120	120	120	120	120	We are reviewing our partner schools and intend to target new schools in Croydon, North Sussex and South London. This will allow us to grow our presence in areas with high populations from BAME backgrounds. Simultaneously, we will seek new partner schools in coastal, rural and Q1 neighbourhoods, through which we will develop our work with local working class communities. The proposed target will allow us flexibility to define these new partnerships in a consultative fashion, leading to a bespoke offer for these schools. This target will replace T16b_01 from 2017-18 onwards
T16b_09	Progression	Socio-economic	Student support services	PARTNERSHIP: To develop and maintain a network of 1500 employers for FGS student and graduate engagement.	Yes	2015-16	500	900	1100	1300	1500	1600	Whilst the Careers and Employability Centre advertises over 6000 vacancies annually and engages with a wide range of employers, building partnerships with employers who showcase social mobility will be important. This target will replace T16b_06. Target aligned to more realistic achievement.
T16b_10	Student success	Socio-economic	Student support services	PARTNERSHIP: To widen our existing work shadowing opportunities for Foundation and Yr1 FGS students to look at group engagement with students on programmes of study and encourage participation in a wider basket of developmental outcomes including work-shadowing, internships, extra-curricula activities, volunteering and part-time work.	Yes	2015-16	50	310	400	500	500	500	Our review of engagement with this target and progress to date has shown that we would benefit from widening our focus to engaging with students through an enhanced group of development activities to include not only work-shadowing but also internships, extra curricular activities, volunteering and part time work.

T16b_11	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	OUTCOMES: 50% of students from FGS cohort engaging intensively* to progress to higher education within 3 years of completing a level 3 qualification	Yes	2014-15	42%	n/a	50%	50%	50%	50%	This target replaces T16b_02, the basic number of students we work with, and will allow us to focus on monitoring the intensity of our work, and whether it affects the progression of young people on our programme. We will use HEAT to track students and have established a baseline of 42% 2018.
T16b_12	Progression	Socio-economic	Student support services	OUTCOMES: To develop cultural capital and employment opportunities by providing Internships in China for FGS students	No	2015-16	45	100	100	100	n/a	n/a	Programme is funded until 2020
T16b_13	Progression	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	OUTCOMES: continue to provide level of training and experience which has allowed previous WP interns to move into continuous employment	No	2014-15	1	1	1	1	1	1	Internships to FGS who go on to work in wp sector
T16b_14	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	RESPONSIVENESS: To develop customised mechanisms which allow teaching staff in partner schools to have a guiding input into the programme. All full partners to receive a bespoke package of partnership meetings, stakeholder forum to meet twice yearly or CPD opportunities to be offered to School staff, based on their requirements	No	2014-15	4700	90%	95%	100%	100%	100%	As part of our commitment to responsiveness, and taking into account feedback from school partners, this target builds upon the previous target of offering a single school event, and ensures that we have multiple channels and appropriate mechanisms for understanding the challenges, concerns and ideas of our partner schools. This target will replace T16b_03 from 2017-18 onwards
T16b_15	Student success	Socio-economic	Student support services	RESPONSIVENESS: To develop an Academic Partnership Agreement to enable the Careers and Employability Centre to establish curricular embedded version of the Sussex Plus Employability Award in all Schools	No	2015-16	100 students	400	500	600	700	700	Tracking First-Generation student completion of the Sussex Plus Employability Award through a model delivered in the curriculum/timetable and using impact measures to track impact for success and progression. In conjunction with target T16b_13, this target replaces T16b_05

T16b_16	Progression	Socio-economic	Student support services	RESPONSIVENESS: To develop stronger channels of communication for academic colleagues to better equip them with information and themed advice sessions about progression opportunities for first-generation scholars	No	2015-16	limited communications	termly newsletter and 5 advice sessions	termly newsletter and 6 advice sessions	termly newsletter and 6 advice sessions	termly newsletters and 6 advice sessions	termly newsletters and 6 advice sessions	Impact measurement required of improved communications and themed advice sessions so that academic advisers and other academic staff undertake effective referral to student services
T16b_17	Access	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	INCLUSIVITY: To develop channels of communication for parents / carers to better equip them with knowledge of the HE sector and the FGS programme. To increase the number of parents / carers reached through targeted communication - newsletters, 2 themed advice sessions to be held at the University, project specific events.	No	2015-16	4364	5300	5500	6000	6000	6000	We seek to further enhance the role of parents in our programme. To this end, we have re-envisioned our target to allow us to develop multiple channels of communication to reach as many parents as possible, particularly those who might be harder to reach and find it difficult to get to events for whatever reason. This target will replace T16b_04 from 2017-18 onwards
T16b_18	Student success	Socio-economic	Student support services	INCLUSIVITY: To develop the Skills Hub on-line resource integrating Study Success at Sussex and InfoSuss the Library resource into a one-stop shop resource and further develop channels of communication with FGS students to foster academic/study skill success.	No	2015-16	none	2000 students tracked	2500 students tracked	3000 students tracked	3000 students tracked	3000 students tracked	This target is about establishing impact measurement for the Skills Hub integrated resource as whilst currently 461K page hits to this on-line resource were identified in 2014/2015 with the most hits on developing critical skills for essay writing; referencing and assessment we need to develop impact measurement. In conjunction with target T16b_14, this target replaces T16b_05
T16b_19	Progression	Socio-economic	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	INCLUSIVITY: to maintain the number of student ambassadors from recruited FGS backgrounds to develop employability	No	2014-15	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	80%	75% of outreach/ WP student ambassadors to have wp background
T16b_20	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	ATTAINMENT: To ensure 50% of Villiers Park Crawley Scholars achieve 3 A*-B A levels	Yes	2016-17	First year of activity	50%	50%	Subject to review	Subject to review	Subject to review	As part of our commitment to support the raising of attainment, we have established a partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust in Crawley, a POLAR3, Q1 area. Our contract with Villiers Park is until 2019-20, after which time it will be subject to review.