

University of Plymouth

Access and Participation Plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

1. Assessment of Performance

Overview and Context

Table 1. Gap Analysis for Underrepresented Groups (Year 5 only, full time undergraduates).
The gap represents the difference from Split2. Highlights represent OfS KPMs: yellow, KPM1; grey, KPM 3; orange, KPM 4; light orange, KPM 5.

1.1 Higher Education Participation, Household Income, or Socioeconomic Status

Figure 1 gives an overview of each stage of the lifecycle for our POLAR4 Q1 and 5 students and the gaps between the groups.

Figure 1.

Regionally, the South West has challenges with participation in HE. UCAS data⁵ indicate that 18-year old entry rates are 29% for the South West - the second lowest in the UK. The entry rate for London was 42.4% and for England was 33.7%. Participation rates (using POLAR) are particularly low in wards within Bridgwater, Tiverton, Barnstaple, Bideford, Newton Abbott, Bodmin, Camborne and Redruth, all of which fall below 20%, placing them in the lowest POLAR4 Quintile 1. The major urban centres within the region, Paignton, Exeter and Plymouth, all include multiple wards that fall below a 20% participation rate, including localised low wages and high housing prices, particularly within rural and coastal areas. Transportation can be challenging, students living rurally, at home or on placement further afield, can face a lengthy commute.

With respect to

Access : Our data in Figure 2 show that we have increased our proportion of Black, Asian and ethnic minority student entrants to the University of Plymouth over the last five years and in doing so we have reduced the White-Black, Asian, and ethnic minority access gap from $\pm 33.6\%$ to $\pm 79.7\%$. However,

and ethnic minority, 13.3%; Black, 3.0%⁸) outside of Scotland and NI (UK average: Black, Asian, and ethnic minority, 27.5%; Black, 8.5%⁶).

1.3 Mature Students

Our Access data show that the University of Plymouth has a significant population of mature students. Considering absolute values we had 36.6% Mature students in Y1 (2013/14) compared to 26.9% in Y5. Our Mature Student Access of 26.9% now sits at the Sector average (27.8%). The gap for Mature vs. Young (under 21 students) is $\pm 6.3\%$ for Y5 vs. the sector $\pm 4.3\%$ (Fig 3).

Across our portfolio, the proportion of Mature students is significantly higher than the University average in the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences (48.3%, Year 5); a large number of Mature students (611) are studying in our Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (61.7% Mature) and Health Professions (29.3% Mature).

Given that the majority of our Mature Students are studying nursing and health profession subjects, our institutional proportion of Mature students is in line with similar universities to ours that also have significant nursing and health programmes (cf. UWE and Oxford Brookes).

Figure 3. Overview of 5 year Access, Success and Progression trends and gaps between Mature (blue) and Young students (orange).

For Continuation, the sector has seen an increasing gap over five years and this trend is also reflected at Plymouth. We have moved from a Mature-Young gap of $\pm 4.3\%$ to $\pm 5.7\%$; the sector has maintained a larger gap moving from $\pm 6.7\%$ to $\pm 7.4\%$. Absolute values show we have improved from 87.6% to 88.3% in Year 5, whereas the sector has experienced a decline from 86.2% to 84.8%. Our Continuation rate is similar across all of our Faculties, but a little lower (77.3%) in Science and Engineering. However, this has occurred in programmes with a relatively small (<100) cohort.

Our Progression gap for Mature students is +10.1% compared to +3.4% for the sector. This variance is more pronounced for female mature students (see Section 1.6). Absolute values show a

Intersection between Age and Progression : Our overall Progression gap between Mature and Young students is +10.1% (77.7% Mature vs. 67.6% Young). This gap is larger for Female Mature students (81% vs. 67.2% Female, Young), for Disabled Mature students (78.5% vs. 66.6%) and for Non-disabled Mature students (77.5% vs. 67.8%)

We emphasise that our intersectional analysis is evolving; we

(b) groups where we wish to collect quality data, develop an evidence base and a clearer understanding of the gaps and barriers to success. These are listed in Section 1.7 above and see also Section 1.8. We will improve our capability and monitor these groups through our Student Success Committee;

(c) groups where we have identified significant gaps or challenges and we wish to improve our performance. These are listed below;

The following are the underrepresented students/lifecycle point that we will focus on in this APP:

1. Higher Education Participation, Household Income, or Socioeconomic Status and Access as measured by POLAR4 and IMD. We will continue to maintain our good performance with respect to W K H U D W L R R I 4 4 V W X G H Q W V W e will focus on closing the W K H 2 I Access gap between IMD1 and IMD5 students.
2. POLAR4 Quintile 1 students and Success (Continuation): we will focus on the gaps in continuation between Q1 and Q5 students.
3. POLAR4 Quintile 1 students and Progressio re W* n BT /F1 11.04 Tf 1 0 0 1 158.3 704.62 Tm 0 g C

Objective 9: Our long-term plan is to eliminate the gap between our POLAR4 Q1 and POLAR4 Q5 over 10 years. This APP objective will improve the gap from the 2017/18 baseline of 8.2% and reduce this to 3.2% by 2024/25.

Objective 10: To address the gap in Attainment between our IMD1 and IMD5 students we are committed to monitoring this gap over the 5 years, using the data to identify the barriers to success and incorporating them into our Success Theory of Change. Hence we will implement appropriate interventions to reduce this attainment gap.

Objective 11: We will reduce the Progression gap for Black students through a commitment to build a strand of work into our Progression Theory of Change and roll-out a series of suitable interventions. This objective will be underpinned by Objectives 5 and 6 and will be informed by the recent UUK/NUS guidance⁹.

2.3 Key priorities

Priority B: School partnerships to raise attainment

The University has established working relationships with both primary and secondary schools across the region. We will expand the footprint of our work across schools to support attainment raising, working collaboratively with schools to provide support in the way that best suits the needs of individual schools.

The University currently works with many local secondary schools, both through its own outreach and through the local Uni Connect partnership, Next Steps South West. Through Devon and Cornwall Ch L O G U H Q ¶ V and has strong links with many primary schools in the region.

To help identify which schools would be suitable to work with for attainment raising we will use the HEAT secondary planning data to identify schools with high numbers of students from TUNDRA Q1 & 2, from IMD Q1 & Q2 and from ethnically diverse backgrounds. We will cross reference this to schools where attainment at GCSE is below expectations, carrying out a needs analyses in our local areas in conjunction with Next Steps South West.

The University has a number of existing outreach programmes that support raising attainment for students:

- x The Junior Academy programme provides instrumental and music theory tuition to promising students who are interested in pursuing a degree in music.
- x Working with CoachBright, our student ambassadors provide subject specific coaching for Y10s from underrepresented groups.
- x \$ U W L F X O D F \ Z R U N V Z L W K V W X G H Q W D P E D V V D G R U V W R E X L O communication and presentation that results in English Speaking Board qualifications.
- x A Year 10 Maths three-day residential course for students who attended previous year 9 Maths Masterclasses that provides subject specific support and knowledge.
- x Exim Dance is a community organisation that provides tuition that leads to a Dance Leadership Level 2 qualification.
- x

In 2021-22 the University has 584 apprentice learners across 15 programmes from levels 4 to 7, meeting the needs of learners and employers and contributing to the growth of individuals, businesses and the broader economy with which the University engages. Modes of delivery include day release, blocked delivery, in-person and blended learning. The apprenticeship programmes are

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Equality and Diversity Policy embeds equality, diversity and inclusion relating to both staff and students, into our normal business processes. The policy is delivered through our Equality Scheme (2017 ±2021), an action plan developed around the Equality Act (2010) and which promotes an inclusive learning and working environment for our students (and employees). With regard to this APP, it should be noted that the Chair of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is also a member of the Student Success Committee (Section 3.1.2) which oversees Access and Participation preparation, strategy and operation at Plymouth. In terms of our E&D priorities and progress that overlap with the APP, our recent Annual Equality Report (2017-18) highlights our progress on the following issues: BME representation and engendering a diverse and inclusive culture; addressing attainment gaps (ethnicity, gender, disability, LPN); and d

Figure 5. Overarching Theory of Change for Access, Success and Progression

Table 2 ±University of Plymouth, Examples of Strategic Measures for Target Student Groups and Lifecycle Stage

Objective	Lifecycle Stage	Type of Impact Evaluation : Narrative Empirical	Theory of Change	Lifecycle Framework	Example Measures
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Objective	Lifecycle Stage	Type of Impact Evaluation :		Theory of Change	Lifecycle Framework	Example Measures
		Narrative	Empirical			
Disability and students with no disability						workshops to provide targeted support.
9. Reduce the gap in progression between POLAR 4 Q1 and Q5 students.	Progression	Yes	In development	In development	In development	Sector specific networking events for Business, Arts & Humanities and STEM
10.Reduce the gap in access between IMD1 and IMD5 students	Access	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	A programme of interventions from Primary School level through to adults to overcome barriers into HE identified in ToC.
10.Reduce the gap in access between IMD1 and IMD5 students	Access	Yes	In development	Yes	Yes	Regional outreach targeting schools in regions with high populations of IMD 1 & 2 students.
11.Reduce the gap in progression between Black and White students	Progression	Yes	In development	In development	In development	Professional Student Mentoring ±specifically for

For the Access part of the lifecycle we are working with a community based group to set up a programme aimed at Objectives 2 & 3 (Black, Asian, and ethnic minority & Black Students/Access). This will involve using existing Black, Asian, and ethnic minority/Black undergraduates to deliver sessions in schools, using Narrative Evaluation from Donnelly & Gamsu (2018) that suggests that Black, Asian, and ethnic minority students are more comfortable with, and react more positively to, interventions from people of a similar ethnic background. It will address the socio-economic and soft skills barriers from the Theory of Change.

For the Success part of the lifecycle aimed at Objective 4 (LPN/Continuation) is our Professional Mentoring Programme. This uses current undergraduates from underrepresented groups to mentor new students, to overcome the barriers of soft-skills, knowledge and identity from the Theory of Change. For this we use Narrative Evaluation which shows that mentors give encouragement to move ahead with a degree and succeed, from Collings et al (2016)¹³, and empirical evaluation from the mentoring scheme in the form of pre- and post-surveys.

Black & Black, Asian, and ethnic minority/Attainment (Objectives 5&6) are being addressed through a range of measures including: expanding our existing WP professional mentoring programme to targeting Black, Asian, and ethnic minority and Black students; nuanced auditing of School teaching portfolios with a view to ensuring critical, inclusive, and challenging curricula that provide opportunities for attainment regardless of individual cultural context ; and specific briefings for personal tutors about the Black attainment gap.

Contained within our Employability Action Plan are specific actions which form part of a programme designed to meet the relevant APP objectives for Success and Progression. For example for Objective 4 (LPN/Continuation), one of the measures is the Professional Mentoring Programme which supports students with their studies and adaptation to HE, helping them overcome the barriers in the Theory of Change of soft skills, knowledge and identity.

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education, for instance contributing to accommodation, living or transport costs. From our own evaluation of the Mayflower Award, using the OfS Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit (see Section 3.3.1), we know that more students who received the Mayflower Award continued into their second year of study, compared with those who did not receive it. We will continue to offer this support because our data and evaluation have shown that by supporting students from low-income households we are also reaching other underrepresented groups, in particular, low participation neighbourhood students, mature students, students with a reported disability and care leavers. This links to Objective 1 (IMD1/Access), Objective 4 (LPN/Continuation), Objective 7 (Age/Continuation), and Objective 8 (Disability/Continuation).

We will invest 4.2% of our higher fee income on Financial Support which is approximately £1.5M pa. Our eligibility criteria for this support are reviewed annually, our current criteria use the household income indicator in order to group students, initially by identifying the lowest household income group as £0 to £16,000 and a second tier of low household income of £16,001 to £25,000. In addition, students are also eligible if they have been granted the relevant SFE status as a care leaver or estranged student or are Young Adult Carers. This links to our commitment for Care Leavers.

The core criteria also include that recipients: must be England domiciled, must have no previous study at higher education level at any institution, their programme must be the first one they have started, they must not be studying at a partner college, and they must be regularly attending throughout the academic year. The criteria for financial support are publicised to prospective and existing students (see Section 4).

The level of the financial award is reviewed annually, on the basis of student demographics, and supports living costs. Broadly, the value of the award ranges from £400-£1500 (Table 3). The exact amount is usually provided in every year of study to the value of £1500 per student (see also Section 4).

Table 3 ±Summary of Financial Support Available for Students (2019/20 figures)

Student group	Financial award
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Devon. This is the key programme within our access strand through which we engage with primary level children and currently includes approximately 130 primary schools, as well as some secondary

Lifepilot – in addition, we use the Lifepilot website as a tool to engage and support mature and potential part-time learners in progressing to higher level education. The site provides information and advice to support a range of entry points to learning that are the starting points for progression to HE. The site also includes tools to help adults assess their HE level skills and activities to help them upskill ready for progression to higher education (Objective 7).

From the Lifecycle Framework for Access (Appendix 5), we show how the various programmes and interventions that we deliver with our partners impact positively on the barriers around attainment, socio-economic, lack of soft skills, lack of knowledge of HE, finance, the impacts of influencers and geography.

Building on the relationships developed through NCOP, the University is in discussion with the other HEI providers in Plymouth; Plymouth Marjon University, Plymouth College of Art and Plymouth City College, to develop a collaborative programme to address the shortfall in Black, Asian, and ethnic minority student access, which, as already noted, is a feature of our regional demographics (Objectives 2 & 3).

3.2 Student Consultation

The design and development of the five year APP was implemented through a number of work streams and a steering group. 7 KH 8 Q L Y H U V L W \ R I 3 O \ P R X U P S U 6 W X G H Q W V ¶ 8 Q L representatives¹⁸ were members of the steering group and the work streams responsible for student consultation. We asked key questions from each of the main work streams (Access, Continuation, Attainment and Progression), which were sent to a range of student ambassadors in the form of a survey. We built on this with a Student Focus Group to gain higher-level qualitative feedback. The outcomes were incorporated into the main workstreams to determine the key measures to address the gaps identified through analysis of the data provided by the OfS.

Student engagement with the institutional decision-making and the governance is well established. Our students are full members of all the major academic governance committees, including the University Senate and the Board of Governors. In addition, the Student Life Committee is jointly chaired by the UPSU President with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience. All Schools have staff- V W X G H Q W O L D L V R Q F R P P L W W H H V D V G R W K institutions. In collaboration with academic staff, students are actively involved in curriculum and programme development through their membership of Faculty and School Teaching, Learning and Quality Committees, Academic Programme Committees, programme approval events and periodic review panels. Furthermore, at least once a year, students are encouraged to engage in discussion with External Examiners, either in person or remotely. This enables the latter to obtain di ET Q()-4(E)4(du)3sb

The first planned step is to understand the representation pathways and how these operate, in order to make best use of these forums and channels. These include Course Student Representatives, School Student Representatives, Student Officers, Sabbatical Officers and part-time Officers elected by UPSU Council, and the UPSU Council itself. Since under-represented groups of students have roles on the UPSU Council, it was agreed that the Council would be a valuable focal point for consultation feedback. A detailed review will take place with UPSU over the coming months to map these representation pathways and groups and, in particular, how they interface with University governance and processes such as Quality Assurance mechanisms. This review will identify how best to make use of these pathways in order to optimise consultation so that it produces honest and effective feedback, allowing the institution to understand which measures will make a significant positive difference. In the first instance, the Academic Registrar, who is the Chair of the new APP Operations Group, will lead this review. The Group has representation from across the institution, including members of UPSU, and reports to the new Student Success Committee.

Secondly, as suggested by the UPSU representatives, we will develop a programme of areas for feedback, and from this we will focus on a specific issue each month. This single issue would then be subject to comprehensive consultation using the UPSU channels and forums. With the advice of UPSU, we will identify key platforms, such as the Union Council, where we can present the feedback to students. This will allow a timely response so that the consultation is dynamic. The APP Operational Group will oversee and co-ordinate the consultation. The

used, how to implement systematic data collection and utilise the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), the implications of GDPR and the required ethical standards.

We will

students towards overcoming individual barriers, with longitudinal tracking and follow-up surveys
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or knowledge of HE.

In addition, each activity in the Lifecycle Framework is mapped by the stage in the student lifecycle or age group to the barriers identified in our Theory of Change. This mapping allows us to identify areas where there may be shortfalls in activities and develop additional activities if required. Engagement of students in a

The use of longitudinal tracking on HEAT will allow the University to assess the longer-term impact of our interventions with students from our target groups and lifecycle stages. This will enable us to

Please note that fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Fees and the conditions that apply to them shown in the prospectus are correct at the time of going to print. Fees shown on the web are the most up to date. Continuing students may receive an annual increase in line with an appropriate inflationary measure (within the appropriate maximum fee cap).

Information regarding fees is available on our website at <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/study/fees/scholarships-bursaries-and-funding/bursaries>.

The University publicises information on our external website about financial support (https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/study/fees/scholarships-bursaries-and-funding/bursaries). This webpage describes the Mayflower Award, our access bursary for underrepresented groups. The eligibility criteria as currently listed are : students who are from a household where the income is less than £35,000 per annum, care leavers, estranged students, and young adult carers. To be eligible, students must also be in the first year of study of their first course (with no previous higher education study), and must be domiciled in England.

Students with a household income of £0-£25,000 per annum receive £1,000 in their first year of study, whereas those with a higher household income below the £35,000 per annum threshold receive a lower award of £400, also in their first year of study only). Care leavers and estranged students receive £1,500 each year of study. Students will receive the highest award they are eligible for if they meet multiple criteria, and must be in receipt of the full funding package from Student Finance England.

We continually review the level of award given, to ensure we are maximising our value for money and focusing the award on those groups for whom finance could be a significant barrier to access and success. The webpage describes the eligibility criteria, and students contact the Student Funding Team to find out the exact amount of award they may be eligible for each year.

5. Appendix

The following items from the fees and targets and investment documents have been appended, along with our Theory of Change and Lifecycle Framework documents:

1. Targets (tables 2a, 2b and 2c in the targets and investment plan)
2. Investment summary (tables 4a and 4b in the targets and investment plan)
3. Fee summary (table 4a and 4b in the fee information document)
4. University of Plymouth Theories of Change for (a) pre-16 and (b) post-16 Access
5. University of Plymouth Lifecycle Framework



Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	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	*	*	*





Inflationary statement:



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

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

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*

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Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University of Plymouth

Provider UKPRN: 10007801

Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£1,803,700.00	£1,748,477.00	£1,750,732.00	£1,696,650.00	£1,696,650.00
	£1,010,072.00	£1,276,388.00	£1,278,034.00	£1,238,555.00	£1,238,555.00
	£523,073.00	£174,847.00	£175,073.00	£169,665.00	£169,665.00
	£90,185.00	£87,425.00	£87,537.00	£84,833.00	£84,833.00
	£180,370.00	£209,817.00	£210,088.00	£203,597.00	£203,597.00
Financial support (£)	£1,515,108.00	£1,468,721.00	£1,470,614.00	£1,425,186.00	£1,425,186.00
	£541,110.00	£524,543.00	£525,219.00	£508,995.00	£508,995.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£36,074,016.00	£34,969,546.00	£35,014,631.00	£33,933,006.00	£33,933,006.00
	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%
	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%

