University of Brighton: Access Agreement 2015-16

Executive summary
This Access Agreement sets out how the University of Brighton will continue to improve access, student success and progression amongst people from groups currently under-represented in higher education. In writing this agreement we have taken a strategic, whole-institution approach, responding to both national and regional agendas for widening access as well as objectives and key performance indicators identified within the university's own Strategic Plan 2012-2015.

This agreement also aims to show that we will meet our objectives through collaboration, both internally and externally, and by continuing to work towards embedding widening access into work across the institution, addressing the whole student lifecycle.

The main focus and priorities for our widening access work in 2015-16 are summarised as follows:

- We will continue our emphasis on evidence, evaluation and outcomes. Robust monitoring and evaluation will be used to prioritise programmes and activities that have the greatest impact. We have developed an Outreach Evaluation Framework which underpins and informs our outreach work and we will develop a similar institution-wide approach to evaluating the impact of our student success measures and activities.

- Through our Compact and Compact Plus programmes we will consolidate our work with our identified schools and colleges and WP cohorts in order to continue to build sustained and targeted outreach, directing investment towards activities that deliver the greatest impact for students.

- We will continue to work to embed widening access, outreach, student success and progression initiatives throughout the fabric of the university

- We will build on our successes in collaboration; including working with other partner FE colleges and other HEIs in developing joint outreach activities and collaborative targets. We will continue to build our internal collaborative networks which will help to drive forward improvements in student engagement, student success and progression.

- We intend to continue to offer a financial support package for the most disadvantaged students which is easy to understand and readily available to those who need it.
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Section 1
Fees, student numbers and fee income

We propose to charge the following fees for UK and EU entrants in 2015-16:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time undergraduate courses (degree and</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foundation degree)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time PGCE / PG ITT</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton and Sussex Medical School</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner Colleges:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sussex Downs College and Sussex Coast College</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hastings:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time Foundation Degree</td>
<td>£7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time Degree top-up</td>
<td>£7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City College Brighton and Hove:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Foundation Degree and Degree top-up</td>
<td>£7,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- We do not expect any new entrants in 2015-16 under our franchise agreement with Plumpton College. Continuing franchise students at Plumpton College will be subject to the fees submitted in previous access agreements;
- We intend to charge part-time students on a pro rata basis, up to the maximum permitted fee of £6,750;
- Students who commence their studies in 2015-16 and who later take student placement will be charged £1,000 for the placement year.

In 2015-16 we expect circa £32.5 million in additional fee income, of which we intend to spend approximately £8.3 million (26%) on outreach, student support, student success and progression measures. The level of expenditure accommodates the transition to a new bursary programme implemented from 2014-15. It is anticipated that beyond 2015-16, expenditure related to our access agreement will represent approximately 24% of the additional fee income.

Section 2
Our access and student success measures

The University of Brighton has a long standing commitment to widening participation and fair access. Evidence of this commitment is provided in the University’s Strategic Plan for 2012-15 which sets out our ambition as follows:

The University of Brighton is committed to conserving, generating, transmitting and sharing knowledge locally, globally and professionally, with a focus on its application for social purpose. We offer higher education that contributes critically to citizenship and to the public good. Our model of higher education is based on a spirit of enquiry and the active co-production of knowledge amongst staff and students, in learning, teaching and research. We want Brighton staff and students to be known for their commitment to impact, community and sustainability in their chosen field.
The Strategic Plan 2012-15 contains 10 headline objectives for the University, including one which relates specifically to student success: ‘our students will be supported to achieve academic and career success regardless of background.’

Each objective has 2 key performance indicators against which the Senior Management Team and Board of Governors will monitor progress. One of these is to meet our access agreement targets for recruitment and retention, a reflection of the commitment of the University to achieve the aims and objectives set out in our access agreement.

For 2015-16 we will continue to measure our performance against our access agreement objectives for widening access and student success primarily using the existing HESA widening participation performance indicators and benchmarks. The latest HESA performance indicators published in March 2014 are the first to consider entrants in 2012/13 and therefore relate to those students who entered higher education in the first year of the new tuition fee regime.

We will continue to focus upon our performance related to the following areas:

- Enrolments from state schools
- Enrolments from NS-SEC classes 4-7
- Enrolments from low participation neighbourhoods
- Enrolment of disabled students
- Non-continuation rates, both university-wide and for specific under-represented groups

We will also measure our performance related to increased enrolments of other specific under-represented groups of students, including care leavers and student identified through our Compact Plus programme. More details of specific targets related to these performance indicators, as well as information on targets relating to widening access to the sector more generally, can be found in section 3.

Performance to date on the range of measures is detailed below. On both absolute and benchmark measures against the key HESA performance indicators we are shown to be broadly mid-range in terms of both our number of under-represented students and our performance on non-continuation, in relation to the sector as a whole. We continue to perform particularly well in terms of widening access related to enrolments from state schools and low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) and enrolment of particular under-represented groups, such as disabled students, care leavers and Compact Plus students. Despite our successes in these areas, we consider this work to be of critical importance to widening access and will therefore continue to focus our outreach work in these areas, as well as developing outreach work in other areas, e.g. with parents of under-represented students.

Whilst the University’s retention rates are improving there is more to be done on meeting our benchmarks and therefore student success and student engagement measures form a particular focus of this access agreement.
Performance to date

Access Agreement targets:

- Young full-time undergraduate entrants from state schools and colleges - at 93.6% we are 2.3% above our location adjusted benchmark and above the sector, 0.4% above last year, and 0.1% above AA target.
- Young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS-SEC 4-7 - at 30.7% we are -3.1% below our location adjusted benchmark and -2.6% below the sector average, although 1.8% above last year and 2.7% above AA target.
- Young full-time undergraduate entrants from LPN (POLAR3) - at 11.2% we are 1.9% above our location adjusted benchmark and 0.1% above the sector, 1.3% above last year, and above our 10% AA target.
- Non-continuation of all FT First degree entrants - at 8.6% we are 1.2% above benchmark (negative) and +2.0% above the sector, but 0.9% below last year (improvement) and below our 10% non-continuation rate AA target AND internal Strategic Plan KPI annual target.
- Non-continuation of young FT First degree entrants from LPN (POLAR3) - at 5.6% we are 2.5% below our benchmark (positive) and -2.3% below the sector, -3.4% below last year, and 5.4% below our 11% AA target.
- Full-time all undergraduate students in receipt of DSA - at 7.8%, we are +0.8% above our benchmark, +1.1% above the sector, 0.8% above last year and 1.3% above AA target.
- Part-time all undergraduates in receipt of DSA - at 7.5% we are +3.4% above our benchmark, +3.1% above the sector, 2.3% above last year and 2.5% above AA target.

Trends in our performance on a number of the key HESA performance indicators are represented in the graphs below. It can be seen that we are consistently above the sector and our benchmark for entrants from state schools and colleges.
On the NS-SEC indicator our performance has in more recent years fallen just below that of the sector and our benchmark, although showed an improvement for the most recent year. However on the new POLAR 3 data, the University remains above its location adjusted benchmark and in line with the sector.

![Young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS-SEC 4,5,6&7](chart1)

![Young full-time undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (*New POLAR3*)](chart2)
We have performed well against the performance indicator relating widening participation of disabled students, continuing to be above benchmark and sector.

Our performance on non-continuation continues to improve, and the decline in our non-continuation rate can be seen in the charts below. Despite these improvements more needs to be done to bring our performance in line with our benchmarks and the sector for our full-time first degree entrants.
Section 2a
Outreach

For 2015-16 the focus of our outreach work will continue to build on the successes of previous years. As detailed in the previous section, we have been broadly successful as a university in meeting our own widening access targets in a number of areas. We also consider our mission to be widening access to higher education generally, as well as to the University of Brighton and in this respect we have also been successful. Evidence from the HEAT database (more details of which can be found in section 4) shows that, of the students that the University of Brighton worked with as part of its outreach initiatives, 35% of the POLAR3 quintile 1 students and 42% of the POLAR3 Q2 students have so far accepted places through the UCAS system, higher than the national averages for those groups. We propose to build on this foundation by equipping learners from under-represented groups with the information, knowledge and skills to go to the right HE institution for them.

The broad approach is as follows, with details of the work in specific areas, and with particular target groups in more detail below:

- Our approach will continue to emphasise the importance of evidence, evaluation and outcomes. Robust monitoring and evaluation will be used to prioritise programmes and activities that have the greatest impact and our Outreach Evaluation Framework will underpin and inform all outreach work.

- Our Compact and Compact Plus programmes will consolidate our work with our identified schools and colleges and WP cohorts in order to continue to build sustained and targeted outreach.

- We will continue to work to embed widening access and outreach throughout the fabric of the university

- We will build on our successes in collaboration, both externally and internally, fostering a whole lifecycle approach to widening access and outreach.

Supporting schools and colleges in widening access to HE

The University of Brighton has long-established strong links with schools and colleges with low progression rates, with high numbers of students within under-represented groups and within areas with high indices of deprivation. Through the University of Brighton Compact, our education liaison service, we work with over 50 primary and secondary schools, virtual schools, FE colleges and pupil referral units in Sussex and the wider south east region. The Compact is built around a relationship with the institution, and includes access to information, advice and guidance for pupils, teachers and advisers; guaranteed offers and inbound visits to the University. Compact Plus is our widening participation programme and is a direct relationship with individual students and their parents or carers within identified WP cohorts. The Plus Programme includes more intensive, targeted projects such as Summer Schools, mentoring, student shadowing and personal statement surgeries.

We will continue to work closely with all of the FE colleges in Sussex in 2015-16, all of which have high numbers of students from under-represented groups. Our relationships with our local partner FE colleges are particularly important to us. As the volumes of indirectly-funded higher education
provision in most FE colleges reduce, one of our strategic priorities is to continue to work closely with them to develop a flexible planning structure for further and higher education across the region. This aim is detailed in the university’s Strategic Plan 2012-15. We will continue to sponsor the FE Sussex Spring Awards where we present the ‘Widening Participation Award’.

We recognise that many FE colleges have suffered reductions in resources, particularly in losing externally-funded Aimhigher staff, which has resulted in difficulties for college staff in coordinating the array of offers of support and outreach activities from different HEIs. In order to provide financial support directly to our partner schools and colleges who participate in or develop outreach activities, we have established the University of Brighton Compact Fund to help with associated costs which schools may incur (e.g. travel costs, staff cover), which we hope to continue to provide in 2015-16. We recognise that schools and colleges have an important part to play in raising the aspirations and attainment of learners in their communities and we will encourage local schools and colleges to bid for money from the Compact Fund to develop their own outreach initiatives for identified under-represented groups in local schools and the community. The fund will enable our partner schools and colleges to capitalise upon their own knowledge, experience and strengths. In 2015-16 we will explore with FE colleagues the possibility of providing funding for University of Brighton outreach staff embedded within FE colleges.

Another way in which we aim to support our partner schools and colleges is through the provision of CPD opportunities for schools in the Compact (already offered in Hastings via the Vertical Education Partnership). Our School of Education, which has been rated as outstanding by OFSTED, plans to enhance the knowledge and skills of teaching staff and therefore improve the learning experience of their pupils. We have consulted extensively with partner schools and believe that the expertise of our academic staff in Education can contribute to the improvement of attainment at the source of learning.

Working with particular identified groups

Mature learners

Although we are traditionally successful at widening access for mature learners, with around 30% of our undergraduates being 21 or over on entry, we recognise that this group often needs additional support in making applications to higher education and we will continue to offer Access IAG conferences for Access students in the Autumn term through our partner FE colleges. We now provide more detailed information for Access students on entry requirements and typical offers in our prospectus and online as well as other general advice on higher education for mature learners. Access students are eligible for the Compact Plus programme and have the opportunity to participate in many of the associated activities. We will continue to offer specific activities for Access students such as personal statement surgeries, mock interviews, clearing advice and guidance.

Care leavers

The University of Brighton recognises that some groups within schools require more support and has a long established track record of work with looked after children and care leavers. We recognise
that care leavers are a particularly under-represented group, and in keeping with our mission to widen participation to higher education broadly, we will continue to run a Spring School specifically aimed at looked after young people in East Sussex. We have established a cross-institution Care Leavers’ Group, which has representation from members of staff who have a key role to play across the student lifecycle and we aim to develop and grow the work of this group in 2015-16. The group includes the WP team, the bursaries team, Student Services, alumni, Accommodation Services, Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGTs), Equality and Diversity staff. The Group will also have student representatives who have experienced the care system.

We are proud that our Buttle UK Quality Mark in HE for our commitment to supporting care experienced learners was renewed in 2013, and have a specific target in our access agreement to increase participation of care leavers. To this end we have established partnerships with the Virtual Schools in Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and East Sussex to support looked after children. We would like to increase our work to support organisations which offer educational support for looked after children and to continue our success in increasing the numbers of care leavers enrolled at the University of Brighton. We were the lead sponsor for the EPIC (Exceptional People in Care) Awards for West Sussex in 2014, and aim to continue to support our local Virtual Schools into 2015/16.

Engaging parents and carers

We have responded to guidance from OFFA which recommends that widening participation interventions start early and take a holistic approach which supports pupils along their entire journey through education and into their early careers. The holistic nature of this work cannot be done in isolation without the involvement of their parents and carers.

The university has appointed a member of staff with a specific remit to work with parents and carers and developed a strategy which will encompass engagement at all stages of their children’s involvement with the university, and in particular dovetailing with our long-established work with primary schools. It is important that parental support is gained and fostered from the very beginning of the process to ensure their engagement with and understanding of the aims of widening participation and the higher education system more generally. Early intervention which involves parents and carers can help address concerns regarding the potential cost of university as well as promote the concept of inter-generational learning.

The University of Brighton will therefore be considering parental engagement in four strands as follows:

- **To engage parents as much as possible in activities with their children.** For primary school students, parents will be invited to celebrations at the end of mentoring projects and inbound activities. Secondary school parents will be kept in touch about interventions and activities through the Compact Plus programme and invited to key events and activities in which their children have taken part. Parents of identified students in sixth form and further education colleges will be offered advice and guidance to prepare their children for making applications to university. There will be several activities planned each year to which entire families will be invited.
• **To provide study support sessions.** These will be aimed at parents of identified students in Key Stage 4 in Maths, English and Modern Foreign Languages.

• **To develop a network of parent ambassadors.** These will be parents/carers of current students at the University of Brighton from a widening participation background who will be able to talk to other parents and provide advice and guidance about supporting their children at university.

• **To provide opportunities for learning** (e.g. credit-bearing short study modules) for parents and carers who may be interested in becoming part-time students as a result of their children’s engagement with the university.

### A sustained programme of outreach

We fully believe in the benefits of a sustained programme of activities rather than one-off interventions to maximise the value and impact of outreach activity. We are therefore committed to working to support under-represented groups from Year 6 through to mature students studying Access courses. Compact Plus is the widening access outreach scheme aimed specifically at the WP cohorts and their parents within the schools and colleges who are partners in the University of Brighton Compact. The University is able to track all interventions with identified individuals across the schools years within our target groups through the Higher Education Access Tracker database (HEAT), originally a database of Aimhigher South East, which includes data from the pre-existing Aimhigher cohort as well as new participants in the University of Brighton Compact Plus programme. HEAT also allows us to identify the number of participants from our outreach programmes progressing on to any UK HEI.

Our outreach work with primary schools is long established, but will continue to evolve and grow in 2015-16 as we recognise the importance of early intervention with young people from under-represented groups. We have invited six primary schools in areas of significant deprivation to join the University of Brighton Compact and to access the whole range of support offered. We will offer bespoke support for the children in cohorts from these schools to assist with the transition from primary to secondary school, which we will track and monitor through the HEAT database. We will continue to use primary materials aimed at raising the aspirations of younger children in closely targeted local schools via the ‘Professor C Gull’ programme. The University aims to expand its primary mentoring programme for younger children whom we identify as gaining the greatest benefit from sustained, intensive support. We also plan to contribute to the development of primary work nationally through the University’s membership of the NEON working group.

### Regional networks

The University of Brighton has made explicit commitments within its Strategic Plan 2012-15 to continuing to expand HE provision at our campus in Hastings, and in the Crawley/Gatwick Diamond Region, both areas of significant deprivation. The University is the lead sponsor for two academies in Hastings: the St Leonards’ Academy and Hastings Academy, which are both in areas of high deprivation and a lead partner in the Hastings Vertical Education Partnership. As well as being
involved in governance of the academies, the university provides two members of the WP outreach team, based at the university’s Hastings campus, who prioritise the needs of the schools and colleges in the region. In December 2012 the university opened the University Centre in Central Sussex College, Crawley which aims to provide more higher education opportunities in central Sussex, to encourage more people in the Crawley area into higher education, provide them with easier access to obtaining new qualifications and skills, and to assist with their career progression. We have ambitious plans for the expansion of our outreach work, including more intensive work in areas of low participation in Kent and London. A newly appointed member of staff based at our Hastings campus, has responsibility for developing new relationships with, and identifying WP cohorts within, schools and colleges in areas in Kent which are in areas with the lowest participation in higher education.

As a good partner, we recognise there is much to be gained from sharing best practice with colleagues across the sector, and are active members of the Southern Widening Participation Practitioners Network, the HEAT national steering and operational groups and NEON and its associated working groups.

Collaboration and sharing best practice

The University of Brighton believes firmly in being a good partner, both regionally and nationally, and seeks out creative and innovative collaborations. We work closely and share best practice with our partner FE colleges on outreach and are exploring ways of developing shared outreach initiatives (as detailed above). We have provided consultation on the development of Access Agreements to our partner colleges to share the benefit of our experience. We continue to see college delivery of higher education as an important strand in promoting access and diversity.

Because we believe that learners should go to the University which is right for them, our outreach programme in 2015 includes activities delivered alongside other HEIs to provide participants with the opportunity to gather as much information as possible to inform their choices. Building on the successful collaborative outreach work we have already undertaken with UCL, in 2015-16 we will undertake shared activities with primary school children in London and Sussex.

We are investigating the possibility of a shared cohort of young people in primary schools, interventions with whom can be tracked by both the University of Brighton and UCL using the HEAT database. This will allow both universities to deliver sustained and targeted activities to an identified cohort, combining the strong outreach offers of each institution. The University of Brighton and UCL will also offer joined information, advice and guidance sessions in London, Kent and the Gatwick Diamond area.

The BrightMed programme

The University shares a collaborative outreach project with the University of Sussex, based in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS). BrightMed recruits Year 8 pupils each year from state schools across Sussex and who have no family background in higher education, and continues on to Year 13. To date, 743 students have been recruited to the programme with 197 currently taking part. A majority of students who have applied to study medicine and have met academic criteria have had at least one interview and many have received offers. The project aims to contribute towards increased diversity in the medical profession and was profiled as a case study in the Milburn
report ‘Fair Access to Professional Careers: A progress report’ (May 2012) as a significant example of the progress that some medical schools have made to increase the number of medical students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

STEM Sussex
The University hosts STEM Sussex, which delivers Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths outreach to schools and colleges across the South East. We will continue to work closely in partnership to increase the amount of targeted widening access STEM activities.

School of Arts, Design and Media
This academic area (also the site of the campus WP Hub, detailed below) is intending to develop partnership working as a key component of its subject-specific widening participation activity, particularly where outreach work is being undertaken by cultural organisations such as museums and arts-focused community groups. Existing WP partners include PhotoWORKS, the Royal Pavilion and Museums, and the learning disabled Rocket Artists group. Building on this model, we are applying for Arts Council England funding which if won will give greater capacity in 2015-16 to coordinate stronger partnership models with arts organisations. This will help to pool resources to further benefit target audiences, match up academic and industry expertise to further raise the quality of WP activities, and ensure that schools and colleges received a more coordinated regional offer from universities and cultural organisations.

Embedding widening access into the fabric of the university.

We believe that the success of widening participation outreach depends on it becoming fully embedded into the culture and fabric of the University. We have developed a number of initiatives to help us achieve this.

1. Widening Participation Outreach Operation Group (WPOOG)

We have responded to analysis of our student intake and in 2015-16 intend to intensify subject specific outreach activity aimed at subject areas or delivered by academic departments which have fewer students from non-traditional backgrounds. We established the Widening Participation Outreach Operation Group as a vehicle for academic staff across the University to coordinate and gain financial support for the development and delivery of subject-specific outreach initiatives. Each of the University’s academic Schools is represented. The activity generated by the Group is led by both university-wide and local widening access priorities. In 2013/14 the University made £300,000 available to support outreach activity generated through the Group which produced a portfolio of over 50 projects, including student participation modules, summer schools and master classes and it is intended that there will be a similar amount to support successful projects in 2015/16.

2. Campus WP Hubs

To better support the student lifecycle from outreach to graduation, we have established the first WP Hub on our Arts campus. The Hub draws together staff from the WP team and Marketing, WPOOG representatives, academic leads (‘WP champions’ with a remit for both widening access and improving retention), student support and guidance tutors (SSGTs), and
the Students’ Union to design, coordinate and evaluate outreach and retention activities, and identify and address issues that current students from under-represented groups face. We will review and evaluate the success of this model with a view to replicate a successful model on other campuses in 2015-16.

3. Student Participation

Providing all students with the opportunity to engage with external agencies as part of their curriculum is one aim of the University’s Strategic Plan, and the University’s Centre for Learning and Teaching has set up an engagement group to help to facilitate this across the university. Having received feedback on the positive benefits of employing our students to work on outreach activities, it is particularly important that more opportunities are made available. Working with the careers service we will ensure students are able to record the skills they have gained on the studentfolio and utilise the graduate toolkit and careers services on-line materials.

We intend to increase the number of primary and secondary mentoring opportunities available to our students in 2015-16, engaging with learners from widening participation backgrounds. We will continue to develop mentoring as part of our outreach activities based on evidence from evaluation in previous years. We have observed the benefits to University student mentors, such as increased confidence and giving them experience of working in schools.

The Faculty of Arts currently offers a number of accredited optional modules to their students which place them in local schools, aiming to increase pupils’ aspirations and attainment. This has a number of benefits to both the pupils and our students and it is our intention to develop more of these modules across all academic departments in 2015-16.

We aim to prioritise the recruitment of mentors and widening access student ambassadors from under-represented groups, both to increase the benefits to the target groups for these activities and to offer paid employment to support the retention of current students from non-traditional backgrounds. We have employed a Student Participation Coordinator to take this work forward. We will also respond to the recommendation from the university’s Equality and Diversity team to ensure that all Student Ambassadors employed by the university are trained in equality and diversity good practice. Ambassador/mentor opportunities will be advertised utilising the careers service ‘job shop’ ensuring all students can access the opportunities with the aim of recruiting a representative group of ambassadors/mentors.

By using the expertise of colleagues from across the University, and by involving current students, we hope to further advance the widening access and student success agenda at the University of Brighton.
Section 2b
Student success and progression

Our performance as measured by the HESA annual non-continuation performance indicators had in recent years shown an upward trend and crept above our benchmark. As a result of this, and our own internal data analysis, numerous activities and an improved coordinated approach to student retention and success were initiated at the University. The most recently available data, on 2011/12 entrants, highlights another improvement in our performance on this indicator, which although remaining just above benchmark, represents a reversal of the previous upward trend in non-continuation. Our future plans are for a range of initiatives and significant investment which will assist us to continue this line of improvement and to regain our position below benchmark. This additional investment will enable the University of Brighton to develop new measures and expand current work across the following strands:

- Launching a revised University Student Charter in September 2014 at the annual Student Retention and Success event
- Student support and guidance tutors and enhanced personal tutoring
- Academic Success programme: including peer assisted study sessions (PASS); individual maths support; online study skills support (ASK)
- Learning support officers for students with disabilities
- Enhanced career planning, employability and internship support with dedicated mentoring and coaching for non-traditional students
- Work to support students post-graduation with their progression into careers via Student Services and the Alumni office
- Working with the Students’ Union to support retention and success.

Our outreach work will be aligned with subsequent support for student success and progression so that, for instance, work done to guide students pre-entry will aim to give them a solid base on which to build on arrival at university. The University intends to continue to allocate substantial investment to additional retention measures. Our aim is not only to recruit students from a wide range of backgrounds – building on our already good record in this area – but to do everything we can to ensure they have a successful university experience and that we support them into graduate employment or postgraduate study. Following from the evaluation of the ‘campus WP Hub’ model, our aim in 2015-16 is to promote joined-up working of the key staff across the student lifecycle associated with improving student success and progression and developing this model to include careers and employability.

Student Retention and Success Framework

In 2010 a cross-institutional working group, the Student Retention Improvement Team (SRIT) was established to coordinate activity, focus attention on the issues, and make recommendations directed at improving student retention and success across the University. Membership of the Group includes a member of the SMT with responsibility for the student experience, colleagues from
the key relevant central professional support services, academic course leaders and the Students’ Union.

The Group has developed a Student Retention and Success Framework (SRSF), which focuses on a number of core features of the student lifecycle - from pre-entry, the academic experience, to professional development and employability and including dissemination of effective practice - around the known student retention and success issues, and sets out some core requirements and recommended interventions, together with links to relevant resources and examples of good practice.

An annual staff development event focusing on the SRSF has been held since 2011-12 to assist with the wide dissemination and further implementation of the Framework across the University. The event is open to all staff and involves keynote speakers from leading national researchers in the field and workshop sessions to encourage the evaluation and sharing of effective student retention and success interventions.

Another key element of the Framework is Refreshers’ Week, which has been developed and monitored through SRIT and the Student Experience Committee and was delivered to first year students for the third time in the Autumn term 2014. The programme is an extension of the induction activities offered in Welcome Week, reminding and signposting all students to academic and support services and provided during the period of the ‘six week wobble’ when many students have been identified as questioning their choices as the reality of higher education hits home. Our intention is to continue to develop this event in 2015, to encourage more students to participate and to involve more academic schools.

Student retention and success measures

Our programme of support for student retention and success will focus on targeted support for students from under-represented groups, in the context of an overall approach to retention and student success that is embedded in work across all our academic schools and campuses. We will take a targeted approach to the elements of expenditure on embedded measures to identify the proportions that go in particular to support our target groups for the purpose of this access agreement. Key elements of our approach to retention and student success in 2015-16 are highlighted below:

**Student Support and Guidance**

The What Works? research highlighted the value of the role of student advisers in improving retention rates, and we are committed to continuing to provide student support across all our academic areas via student support and guidance tutors (SSGTs). The role of SSGT Coordinator will continue to work with academic schools to implement new or extend resource for this critical function, targeted at areas of the University where retention is weakest and where there are higher proportions of students in need of more support. A new project to evaluate the impact of this role, recently introduced in one particular school, is currently underway and will examine relevant data and outcomes of focus groups with staff and
students. The findings will help inform our future development strategy for this particular type of student support.

Support for mature students
We aim to develop further support for mature students following institutional data that shows that mature students have a higher rate of non-continuation compared with younger students (under 21). Several SSGTs have provided activities specifically aimed at first year undergraduate mature students with the aim of helping them to build peer support networks and increase their knowledge of the support that the SSGTs and Student Services can provide. Student Services are currently looking at developing more of these kinds of targeted events - to mature students but also other student groups who may face specific challenges at university (for example, student parents and student carers).

Student Academic Success
We intend to continue to develop our Student Academic Success Programme (SASP) led by our Centre for Learning and Teaching. This includes a number of initiatives and student-facing activities to support transition into and through every stage of a student’s studies, e.g.

- **ASK (Academic Study Kit)**, an online resource including an area specifically for new students outlining information on what to expect upon arrival at university and practical suggestions on how to prepare for their course.
- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) scheme. The scheme provides study skills support for first year students from second and third year student mentors, and is of particular benefit to students from under-represented groups who may exhibit more complex support needs. Our evaluation of the scheme shows it to be effective in enhancing first year student motivation, engagement, attainment and employability. In addition the PASS mentors develop a range of leadership, communication and facilitation skills, developing into high-calibre employable graduates.

Working with the Students’ Union
The University will continue to work closely with our Students’ Union to support retention and success. Through funds provided to take forward the SU-led elements of the SRSF and the employment of a Student Retention and Engagement Assistant, the Students’ Union have initiated a range of projects to support widening access and to support student success at all stages of the student lifecycle.

Specific focus is being made by the Union at school and course level to promote the development of student communities of practice, strengthening friendship groups and developing the sense of belonging through academic societies. Since the SRSF funds were made available societies have grown by 158% (to April 2014). The Students’ Union will continue to identify gaps in society provision and develop a culture of leadership sustainability in existing societies to assure wider, strengthened and lasting communities on campus. In partnership with the Union the University will develop a community of student leaders representative of the wider student population. In 2015/16 the university’s aim is
that academic societies will contribute to University outreach work in the local community supporting the Compact Plus outreach programme.

A partnership between the Centre for Learning & Teaching and the Students’ Union has established the Agency Project, a student led pedagogic research project to involve students in the redesign of the curriculum. The university will continue to work in partnership with the Union in the promotion of, and support in accessing, financial support to ensure that the greatest number of the most disadvantaged students understand the support that is available to them. The university’s partnership with our Students’ Union is one that enables responsiveness to student identified needs and student defined solutions.

**Progression and Employability**

The University welcomes the increased emphasis in recent OFFA guidance on progression through and beyond a course into further study or employment, and we will be putting more emphasis into employability both within the curriculum and as part of our extra-curricular offer. We will continue to embed employability skills in the curriculum through the career planning agreement with course leaders and review these plans annually. Our graduate toolkit will continue to offer a range of materials to support students in building their employability profile; students are able to present this electronically through studentfolio which they can use beyond graduation.

This work will be supported by our alumni office and graduates will be invited to workshops to support them in gaining employment. The alumni office will also encourage recent graduates to seek advice and guidance from the careers team in the months after graduation. The university will continue to work with sponsors and employers offering a number of funded internships to our graduates.

The Momentum programme offers mentoring from an employer to support our students’ progression and future employment goals, and the aim is to increase the numbers of students and employers participating on this programme in 2015-16. The university’s enterprise project will continue to provide seminars with local entrepreneurs, and provide one-to-one business start- up advice to students. There is also an enterprise fund which enables students to apply for funds to support the setting up of a business.

Overall, the university is increasingly using student peer support through mentoring, buddying and student ambassadors. We aim to ensure that the employability skills mentors, buddies and ambassadors develop are captured and reflected upon in studentfolio.

The university’s PGT Strategy Implementation Group is discussing progression to PG study for under-represented groups and is currently exploring possible funding opportunities for 2015-16 which will provide financial support to students from under-represented progressing to postgraduate study.
HEA What Works? Student Retention and Success Programme

The University of Brighton is one of 13 institutions involved in the Higher Education Academy’s Student Retention and Success change programme, led by Professor Liz Thomas.

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/change/SRS_12-13/SRS_info

This three year project aims to improve student engagement, belonging, retention and success during the first year through to completion. The project team at Brighton involves colleagues from a number of different Schools across the institution, the Centre for Learning and Teaching, the Senior Management Team and the Students’ Union. Three discipline teams in our Schools of, Applied Social Science, Computing, Engineering and Mathematics, and Business have each developed interventions in the areas of induction or active learning which were implemented for new entrants in 2013/14. Overall the project has a strong quantitative and qualitative evaluation plan attached which is currently underway as the end of the first year of the project approaches. The outcomes of the student surveys, course non-continuation and progression data, and the findings from the student focus groups will be gathered and reviewed and recommendations for the next phase of the project and other potential roll-out opportunities for 2015-16 will be explored.

What Works? interventions:

Digital Media
An issue was identified with a mismatch between student’s expectations regarding the course and its content. As such the intervention developed and piloted in 2013/14 started pre-entry and continued until week 6 of semester 1. On acceptance of an offer of a place, students were invited to complete three tasks through which they met staff and each other, and prepared for a Welcome Week activity. This collaborative activity in turn launched a 6-week programme of active learning on a key course module. Through this extended approach to induction it is hoped to engage students before they arrive at University, maintaining their interest and motivation until the danger point of the ‘six-week wobble’ has past.

Business Management
High quality, student-centred learning and teaching are key to improving student retention and success. This intervention focuses on active learning in a developing academic skills module in the course. The previous reflective report assessment in the module has been replaced with an online interactive reflective record of achievement, entitled “My UniCourse”. Students are placed in seminar groups, of which their personal tutor is also a member, given a space on studentfolio, and encouraged to record a number of milestones with a final short report and Personal Development Plan.

Applied Social Science
A number of elements of a revised and extended induction programme over one year have been piloted in this discipline delivered at our campus in Hastings, which typically attracts more non-traditional students. The extended induction programme includes a pre-university course, student transition mentors and the introduction of a blended learning platform. The pre-entry course takes place over 6 days and introduces the students to various elements of academic life, the available student support services, including the campus SSGT, and taster lectures. The new entrants are also
linked up with transition mentors, current second year students who are trained to provide transition support to the new students throughout their first year. A blended learning platform which includes specific academic, pastoral and mentor areas is also used to support the students on this course.

Section 2c
Financial support for students

Based on our own institutional evidence relating to the impact of bursaries on recruitment and retention (see section 4) the university intends to continue to offer financial support which includes bursaries as well as a hardship / student support fund. Although uncertainties around funding prevent us from giving details of our financial support at this stage, the emphasis of University of Brighton bursary package for 2015-16 will be to provide the greatest benefit to a large number of students from households with low income whilst continuing to provide targeted support to other students e.g. care leavers or those identified through the University of Brighton Compact Plus outreach programme. Our intention is to continue to operate a flexible payment approach based on student choice of cash, discounted university services and/or tuition fee waivers. We intend to provide financial support for our students who are facing particular financial hardship throughout their programme of study through assessment of need. Our intention at this point is also to continue our NSP commitments for the 2014-15 cohort.

Students at the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) comprise equal numbers of students allocated to each of the universities of Brighton and Sussex. It is expected that the bursary package for all BSMS students will be based on the financial support schemes of the University of Sussex.

The University has noted that DSA funding is being eroded and we may need to revisit our financial support package for students in 2015-16 in order to be able to continue to offer similar levels of financial support for disabled students. Whilst it is difficult to know at this point exactly what the implications of the changes will be, it appears that IT support and non-medical helper support previously funded through DSA may need to be funded through OFFA funds. We may also need to provide OFFA funding to provide interim support for disabled students, screening for dyslexia and other services for disabled students which were previously funded through the Access to Learning Fund.
Section 3

Targets and milestones

Detailed targets and milestones are set out at the end of this Access Agreement. Following the guidance set out by OFFA which notes the current uncertainties around sector funding, we have not significantly changed our targets for 2015-16 nor extended the targets in this Agreement to cover additional years.

As shown in section 2 the University of Brighton has a strong track record in performance on a number of the HESA widening participation performance indicators and the targets and milestones set out in this Access Agreement aim either to build upon our good performance (e.g. entrants from state schools and students in receipt of DSA), improve absolute performance (e.g. LPN) or to improve performance in both absolute and relative terms (e.g. NS-SEC and non-continuation). The university traditionally achieves good outcomes for students with disabilities in terms of recruitment and admissions, retention and progression. We have also achieved good outcomes for mature student admissions, progression and satisfaction, although as noted in section 2b, mature student retention provides an area for further targeted intervention.

The University firmly believes that a wide range of different widening participation indicators needs to be used in order to accurately assess the complex nature of the issues in ensuring access and success for under-represented groups. In order to monitor our progress consistently on an annual basis and to be able to benchmark our performance against other institutions in the sector we rely primarily upon the HESA widening participation performance indicators for our broad institution-wide targets. We would welcome the development in the sector of additional robust and standardised measures as part of OFFA and HEFCE’s work on developing the National Strategy for Access and Student Success, or the fundamental review of the PIs carried out by the UK Performance Indicators Steering Group (UKPISG).

The ten targets we have chosen include those for state schools, NS-SEC classes 4-7, low participation neighbourhoods, non-continuation and disabled students. The remainder relate to increased enrolments of other specific under-represented groups of students, including care leavers and Compact Plus students. Three targets have been set with regard to achieving improvements in non-continuation rates to support the focus of our outreach efforts related to low participation neighbourhoods and social class. Two are based on the HESA performance indicators (full-time first degree entrants and young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods), the other is based on internal data, which analyses non-continuation rates by NS-SEC and aims to reduce the difference in non-continuation rates between NS-SEC groups 1-3 and 4-7.

Progress against targets will be monitored through the university’s outreach evaluation strategy (detailed in section 4 below). Our targets are under constant review and are considered regularly at the University level by both our Recruitment and Admissions Committee (RAC) and our Student Retention Improvement Team (SRIT) and also at the academic level through Academic Boards and Management Groups.
Targeting resources where they will have the most impact

Utilising the guidance from HEFCE (‘targeting disadvantaged learners’ and ‘toolkits for practitioners: targeting’) and the data provided through the HEAT database we have implemented an appropriate...
targeting policy. Our outreach resources are targeted towards schools based on a number of indices of multiple deprivations:

- free school meals
- sum of percentage living in NS Sec 4-7
- sum of percentage living in Polar Quintile 1
- sum of percentage living in IMD high deprivation areas.

Schools are ranked for each category, and an aggregate score is given to each institution which then gives it a place of priority for outreach resources.

More intensive outreach activities, such as Summer Schools or mentoring schemes, are targeted towards individual participants who meet two or more of the entry criteria for the University’s Compact Plus programme:

- looked after by a local authority, or have left care
- in receipt of free school meals
- living in POLAR3 quintile one or two
- having a disability
- living in a household where the main wage earner is in NS-SEC 4-8 (for which we use the National Office of Statistics matrix)
- from a family with no previous experience of Higher Education.

Targeting resources towards outreach activities which are the most effective

Evidence from the HEAT database about the success of previously run projects based on project evaluation by participants is used to inform our planned programme for 2015-16. This evidence has led us to expand our portfolio of activities in two key areas: Summer Schools and mentoring for both primary and secondary students, both of which have been shown to influence positive changes in attitudes towards HE of participants.

We have found Summer Schools to be particularly effective, both for raising awareness and aspirations around subjects, but also in raising applications. As an example, of the students participating in the Sports Science Summer School, 50% applied for a place at the University of Brighton. We have now increased the number of Summer Schools which we run.

We have continued to develop our mentoring programme based on positive evidence from evaluation. Overall, participants demonstrated a positive attitudinal shift when asked core questions before and after the project. Following the project there was an increase in the numbers of students who indicated increased aspiration to go to University, who felt they would ‘fit in’ at University and who said they had all the information needed to make a decision about applying to HE. We have also observed benefits to University student mentors, such as increased confidence and developing their employability skills.

We are also adding to the number of intensive, repeat intervention activities based on the feedback we have received in previous years. All of these activities will now sit with the Compact Plus evaluative framework allowing us to build up a comprehensive picture of the success of our outreach programme.
**Section 4**

**Monitoring and evaluation**

The University of Brighton understands the importance of having a clear and robust evidence base for our access activities, so that we are able to demonstrate how our expenditure represents value for money and also achieves the desired results.

Responsibility for monitoring, evaluation and delivery of our access strategy lies with two University Committees; the Recruitment and Admissions Committee (RAC) for activities related to student recruitment, outreach and admissions and the Student Retention and Improvement Team (SRIT) for student success initiatives. RAC, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, oversees the development of the Access Agreement which is undertaken by the Access Agreement Working Group (AAWG). AAWG's membership includes representation from central Registry departments such as the WP and bursaries teams, Finance, Student Services, Marketing and Communications and the Strategic Planning Office and consults regularly with the Students' Union. This ensures better monitoring of activity across the whole student lifecycle. Membership of RAC and SRIT includes representation from the Students’ Union.

**Financial support monitoring and evaluation**

The University has carried out analysis of our revised financial support package and range of bursaries, including those under the NSP, paid to new entrants in the academic year 2012/13 - the first year of the new tuition fee regime. Our findings showed that those students who were in receipt of bursaries had a lower withdrawal rate compared to the overall population of new home entrants who did not continue into their second year. In addition findings from our survey of applicants *Factors affecting the decision to study at the University of Brighton 2013-14* showed that the availability of a bursary was a quite significant or very significant factor in making their decision of which offer to accept for around half of all firm acceptors and decliners. Of those who declined our offer and stated they were ‘quite unconfident’ of getting a University of Brighton bursary, 72% anticipated receiving a bursary from their firm choice university.

*The Winn Report – the financial situation of students at the University of Brighton 2012-13*, published by the University of Brighton Social Science Policy and Research Centre (Sept 2013) provides information on the attitudes and experience of our second year undergraduate students. The survey enables us to better understand our students’ financial situation and the impact of different funding streams, including University bursaries. Key findings from the 2013 survey show that some students felt that they were not provided with sufficient financial information before starting their University courses, that many were uncertain about where to seek financial information after they left University, and many students noted the demands of combining paid employment with full-time study, and the possible detrimental effects that this could have. The survey to be run in 2014 will be the first to capture the views and experiences of those students who entered higher education under the new £9,000 fee regime and we will be able to compare these outcomes to previous cohorts of students who entered under different conditions.
The University of Brighton has participated in the research project being carried out by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics into the effectiveness of bursaries and their impact on progression, achievement and success of students in under-represented groups under the old financial arrangements. This project expects to report its findings at the beginning of the 2014-15 academic year. Outcomes from the LSE research, our own surveys of current students and applicants and the data analysis will help us to fully understand the impact different types of funding have on different groups of students and will enable us to address any areas of concern through future targeted support in 2015-16.

**Widening Participation outreach monitoring and evaluation**

The University recognises a responsibility to demonstrate the effectiveness of our outreach programme, firstly to ensure individual projects meet their aims and objectives and secondly that they are targeted at those who need most support. We intend to continually review and improve outreach activity and gain feedback from participants to inform future developments. The University of Brighton has developed an Outreach Evaluation Framework, which has been in use for the last year, and this, along with the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) database, will continue to be the tools used to monitor and evaluate our outreach work.

The University of Brighton collaborates with 20 other HEIs by subscribing to the HEAT database, which is scheduled to be rolled out nationally. This collaborative research and evaluation enables us to share expertise and also ensures the effective resourcing of an evidence based WP evaluation framework. HEAT provides the University with tools and reports to support the full widening participation cycle, from targeting and planning through to monitoring and evaluation. In brief the service provides its subscribers with

- Schools and colleges data to assist with targeting and planning at an institutional level
- Deprivation postcode data to enable targeting at an individual student level (and enable monitoring of targeting)
- Web enabled database to record and report WP information on students and activities
- Analysis of relevant data sets such as school/college attainment, UCAS institutions and geographic data
- A tool for monitoring and comparison with other datasets, such as UCAS data.

The HEAT service will continue with the analysis of its data against UCAS information and, as the data matures, a full picture for the subscriber universities post-Aimhigher will emerge. In addition, with sufficient funds, the HEAT service has initial plans to do a similar HESA data-matching exercise and link this to university data about retention and attainment.

Through the outreach evaluation framework participants in outreach activities complete surveys at key points during the projects, e.g. at the start of Year 9 (Year 6 for participants at primary school), transition from Year 11 to 12 and the end of all programmes. Alongside this, each activity is evaluated according to its level of intensity including core and subject specific questions, and the results attached to the record of the individual in HEAT. The more intensive activities are also
subject to reflective questionnaires sometime after the event to measure longer term effects. This allows us not only to evaluate each activity on its own merits and compare with other events, but also build up a mosaic evaluation profile for each participant enabling us to determine the level of success of our sustained programme of outreach.

Drawing on the rich academic community at the University, our evaluation strategy and the HEAT database, we aim to commission research related to our outreach practice, delivery and evaluation and the impact of our programme on applications and acceptances. It is our intention to contribute to the evolving national discussion on the successes and challenges of outreach initiatives, and build a longitudinal case for widening participation outreach work.

**Student success monitoring and evaluation**

We will continue to develop and embed monitoring and evaluation strategies in all our planned student success activities and aim to develop an institution-wide framework approach similar to that used for our outreach activities. Our evaluation strategies for 2015-16 will include amongst others:

- mechanisms to further our understanding of the impact of student support and guidance tutor (SSGT) roles on our students’ success and progression, building on the findings of the impact assessment being carried out in our School of Art, Design and Media
- continuing to measure and understand the effect of participation in the PASS scheme on student’s achievement and progression rates
- building on the findings of the current evaluation of the interventions developed as part of the HEA What Works? programme, with a view to rolling out aspects of identified good practice to other areas of the institution with similar issues.

The results from Brighton will also feed into the national research programme which aims to increase the sector’s knowledge and understanding of effective practice to improve student retention and success. Depending on the levels of support available, this area of work could be further strengthened via the development of a student success monitoring and evaluation coordinator role, to work across the institution ensuring the various strands of monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment are pulled together and outcomes linked together to inform the future development of the University’s Student Retention and Success Framework.

**Section 5**

**Equality and Diversity**

The University of Brighton is committed to advancing equality of opportunity between students who share a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and those who do not. The university also recognises that equality and widening access are interlinked: for example, people who have a protected characteristic are more likely to come from a lower socio-economic group or a low
participation neighbourhood (for example, disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds). Consequently, the university takes a joint approach to equality and widening access. This can be seen from Aim 6 of the university’s Strategic Plan: “Our students will be supported to achieve academic and career success regardless of background”. This aim brings together our commitment to widening access to the institution and our commitment to creating an inclusive environment which fosters and develops the talent of all students.

The university employs a Student Development Officer (Student Experience and Equalities) to oversee the development of equality and diversity strategies, policies and activities as they relate to the student experience. Based in Student Services, the role involves taking a holistic approach to equality and diversity issues affecting students and working with various stakeholders across the university (including the Widening Participation Team) to address these issues. The university recognises the importance of taking a whole student lifecycle approach, ensuring that equality issues are considered at every stage from recruitment and admissions, all the way through to graduation and destination after leaving higher education. Student Services contribute to outreach activities to ensure that prospective students are aware of what support is available to them during their studies.

The university is currently working towards its Equality Objectives 2012-16 (published on our equality website: http://www.brighton.ac.uk/equality/policies-schemes.php). They set out the key activities that are planned up until 2016 to help us achieve our overarching aim of embedding equality and diversity within every aspect of the day-to-day activities, decisions and functions of the university. The university’s progress in achieving the objectives related to student equalities is reported annually through our Student Equalities Report: http://www.brighton.ac.uk/equality/facts-figures.php. This provides a quantitative analysis of university processes and the student experience in relation to the protected characteristics collected by the institution (Age, Disability, Gender and Race). The report is reviewed by the university’s Academic Standards Committee and is circulated widely internally.

**Contextual admissions**
Objective Four of our Equalities Objectives (‘We will use local and national research to develop our equalities good practice’) includes the following action: ‘Considering how we might use contextual data within our admissions processes, by establishing a working group to review research in this area, leading to a pilot project in September 2013.’ Whilst the University has always given consideration to the individual circumstances of applicants, particularly if they come from a looked-after background, we are also looking at ways to develop a more systematic university-wide approach and are cognisant of emerging sector good practice including the helpful contributions made by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) team. There are two elements to our current work. Firstly, we are seeking to integrate the HEAT database with our admissions database to allow us to more easily identify participants in our outreach programme at the point of application. We are also considering whether to identify participants who have undertaken outreach activity in other HEIs. Secondly, we have developed bespoke functionality within our new online Admissions Portal (which went live in September 2013) which includes flags for widening participation applicants to more easily alert admissions tutors of their background. We have recently appointed an admissions officer who will focus on the use of contextual factors within our admissions processes and to advise academic admissions tutors.
Support for disabled students
The Disability and Dyslexia Service have recently put in place a range of measures to improve the support available for disabled students. They have particularly focused on increasing uptake of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) as our retention and achievement data in the past has shown a clear correlation between the receipt of this support and overall disabled student success. As mentioned earlier, the University has noted that DSA funding is being eroded and that we may need to revisit our financial support package for students in 2015-16 in order to be able to continue to offer similar levels of financial support for disabled students. This will be a priority area of work for the Disability and Dyslexia Service in 2015-16. Another priority area is improving the Variation of Assessment Methods (VOAM) process, following internal recommendations on how the system can be made more effective. Finally, the Inclusive Practice Manager will continue to work closely with course convenors from various academic schools to ensure that their course curriculum is inclusive of students with disabilities.

Support for other identified groups
An area of concern for the university is the under-achievement and under-employment of male and BME students/graduates and a certain degree of occupational segregation between subjects. The Careers Services’ Momentum Mentoring Scheme has recently been fine-tuned to target male and BME students, as well as students with disabilities. We are also targeting our Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS) programme within particular schools and faculties where differences are more demonstrable. We joined the Athena SWAN Charter in order to promote female staff within science disciplines, who may then serve as useful role models for our students. In 2013, we were awarded an institutional Bronze Award by Athena SWAN, allowing individual schools within the university to now apply for their own departmental Athena SWAN awards.

Other examples of current good practice which will continue to be developed in 2015-16 include:

- University of Brighton is one of six institutions chosen to participate in the Higher Education Academy’s pilot Assessing Inclusivity Scheme designed to support institutions to better embed equality into their institutional strategies and practices to improve retention and success. This scheme will complement the work we are already undertaking for the What Works? Student Retention and Success programme. The Assessing Inclusivity project will be completed by the end of the 2013-14 academic year. However, the outcomes of the project will inform our future work in the area of student retention and success.

- In partnership with American Express, the Careers Service run a mentoring scheme specifically for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) students. Each student is paired with a mentor from the Pride Network at American Express for six months. During this time, students and their mentors meet regularly to exchange ideas and information, allowing the student to develop new skills and enhance their career prospects.

- The university recently became a Stonewall Diversity Champion and participated in their Workplace Equality Index for the first time in 2013. Whilst this scheme focuses on staff equality, it also sends out a positive message to students that the university is committed to promoting a culture of LGB inclusion and equality.

- The Student Development Officer (Student Experience and Equalities) is currently working with a Community Psychology MA student (as part of a placement for their module on social research practice) to carry out research into trans students’ experience of the university. The
research will identify examples of good practice at the university as well as areas for improvement.

- The Student Development Officer is currently supporting one of the Student Support and Guidance Tutors to develop research into the experiences of student parents within their school. The Student Support and Guidance Tutor has applied for an internal Learning and Teaching Scholarship to fund the research. If the funding application is successful, the research will commence during the 2014-15 academic year. The results of the research will inform our plans for outreach and support to student parents in 2015-16.

**Summary of Equality Impact Assessment findings**

As part of its production, the university has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment of this Access Agreement. The findings of the Impact Assessment screening demonstrate that there are no anticipated adverse impacts on people sharing protected characteristics. The assessment was able to identify several ways in which it is hoped that the new Access Agreement will positively impact upon the experiences of protected groups to enhance equality.

**Section 6**

**Provision of information to prospective students**

The University of Brighton is committed to publishing clear, accessible and timely information for existing and prospective students on the fees that we intend to charge and the financial support we will offer. We do this both through our own information channels and through the provision of timely and accurate information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company to enable them to populate their course databases in time to inform applications and update applicant-facing web services. We produce increasingly detailed fees, funding and cost of living information within a series of print publications for prospective students and applicants, including our undergraduate prospectus and offer guide. Our print publications flag actions to be taken at specific times of year and what support is provided by the University’s specialist money advice staff.

The website provides the most comprehensive source of up-to-date information about funding and fees presented by year of entry and by student type, enabling students to see what fees and financial support package applies to them. Tuition fee information is provided within ‘course’ and ‘money’ sections of the website where advice on where to seek financial help and advice is also prominently flagged. Information on financial support package will clearly state the eligibility criteria and the levels of financial support offered in each year of study. In addition, email communications to prospective students, applicants and current students at regular intervals provide links to key financial advice and information at critical points during the decision making process. Targeted emails provide information on bursaries, scholarship and student support funds to applicants or current students whose profile suggests they are most likely to be eligible for, and/or benefit from additional financial support. Targeted web content is provided for groups of students including mature students, care leavers and student parents with advice on funding and financial support where this is applicable. We will continue to use social media channels to relay key messages from Student Finance England and the Student Loan Company and post video on issues including student
finance and budget management. Examples can be found on our website:

In addition to published information for existing and prospective students we also provide face-to-face advice and guidance in a number of ways:

- Advice and guidance at school and college parents evening and other careers and HE progression events
- Finance presentations and one-to-one advice at our Open Days and post-offer events
- Support and guidance for existing students provided by Student Services, the Registry fees and bursaries teams, and our Student Support and Guidance Tutors.

We understand the importance of providing peer-to-peer advice and publish information from current students on how they have used their bursary funding. We also commission current students to write content and advice about student finance and money management for publication on line and in social media. The clarity and accessibility of the information we provide is evaluated through qualitative research of our print and digital materials using student panels and via monitoring of discussions on our social media. This evaluation informs the development of our communications. Continuing consultation with the Students’ Union will help to ensure that our information to existing and prospective students is clear and easy to understand.

**Section 7**

**Consulting with students**

The University of Brighton understands the importance of consulting with students on the design of our access agreement and also directly involving students in the implementation and monitoring of its access measures.

Students are represented on the major University committees, including its Board of Governors, through Brighton Students’ Union sabbatical officers, and therefore naturally participate in the consideration of our widening participation policies and practices as they develop. Within our previous Access Agreement arrangements, this ongoing dialogue has resulted in the University directly funding Student Union activity to support the retention of under-represented groups and we expect these activities to continue and flourish in 2015. The University is also working with the Student Union on a general model for monitoring and evaluating this type of activity to ensure consistency in both areas.

To consult on the 2015 Access Agreement specifically, we also arranged a number of meetings with the Students’ Union in the lead up to the submission on 1st May 2014. As the three areas of outreach, retention and bursary activity develop across our yearly Access Agreements, we expect this dialogue to continue, in particular in understanding the long-term impact of our joint initiatives.
The Students’ Union will be submitting a statement to OFFA relating to the university’s Access Agreement 2015-16 separately, following discussion of the agreement at Union Council. The Students’ Union is very keen to create quality conversations and allow student input in producing this statement, so that students can understand the full implications of the 2015-16 agreement. However the short timescale available for the production of the current access agreement has not allowed these conversations to take place prior to the submission deadline.
## Table 7: Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

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<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Is this a collaborative target?</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>HESA T1b - State School (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)</td>
<td>Maintain position above LA benchmark and sector</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
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<td>HESA T2b - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)</td>
<td>Improve position and move closer to LA benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
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<td>HESA T3b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)</td>
<td>Sustain position above LA benchmark and improve</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (All, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Improve position and regain position below benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year &amp; in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)</td>
<td>Improve position and regain position below benchmark</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other statistic - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Narrow the non-continuation gap between NS-SEC groups 4-7 and 1-3 for full-time first degree home entrants.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, all undergraduate entrants)</td>
<td>HESA Table T7: Participation of students in receipt of DSA - full-time undergraduates: maintain position and above benchmark.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (part-time, all undergraduate entrants)</td>
<td>HESA Table T7: Participation of students in receipt of DSA - part-time undergraduates: maintain position and above benchmark.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other statistic - Care-leavers (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Sustain and increase enrolments of care leavers</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 7b: Other milestones and targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Is this a collaborative target?</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)</td>
<td>SUMMER SCHOOLS: Non residential summer school - aims to help with transition from Y11 to Y12. Non residential subject specific more skills focused. Looked after children separation raising. Key transitional set based non residential LAC non res/sports non res ADDITION: Media non res</td>
<td>No 2010-2011</td>
<td>50/45/20/45/2 0</td>
<td>2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19</td>
<td>The summer school programme will be tightly tied to the curriculum based activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>PRIMARY WORK: visits to schools and visits to university. Key - number of schools/number of pupils</td>
<td>No 2010-2011</td>
<td>14 schools 510 participants 32 schools 990 participants 20 schools 990 pupils 20 schools 990 participants</td>
<td>2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19</td>
<td>Pupils understand the language and concept of HE, are aware of the range of university courses and associated careers. Pupils have visited a university campus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>STUDENT PARTICIPATION: Accredited modules for UoB students in which they work with WP groups over a sustained period of time to improve attainment, confidence and knowledge in a subject. Aspiration raising mentoring in smaller numbers. Primary mentoring for Compact Plus Schools</td>
<td>No 2010-2011</td>
<td>32 schools/100 students / 550 pupils 20 schools/100 students / 550 pupils 32 schools/100 participants 20 schools/100 participants</td>
<td>2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19</td>
<td>A number of accredited modules which will combine aspects of mentoring and tutoring will cover a range of age groups, but will be primarily focused on Yrs 10 and above. This now includes primary and secondary mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>SECONDARY WORK: includes work in schools, visits to the university, curriculum linked work</td>
<td>No 2010-2011</td>
<td>11 schools, 650 participants 24 schools,2750 participants 24 schools/3700 participants 24 schools/3000 participants</td>
<td>2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19</td>
<td>Key stage 3 work will focus on support through transition and will link with primary programme. Pupil’s knowledge and understanding of university should increase and they should be able to apply to GCSE subject choices. Key stage 4 work will be linked with subject specific activity and aim to increase understanding of particular subject routes and support attainment in these areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>POST-16 WORK: Includes work in post-16 schools and colleges, visits to the University, curriculum linked work</td>
<td>No 2010-2011</td>
<td>11 colleges/ 1200 16-19 participants/ 1100 Access participants 11 colleges/ 1200 Access participants/ 100 Access 11 colleges/ 1550 16-19 participants/ 1000 Access 11 colleges / 1550 16-19 participants/ 1000 Access 11 colleges / 500 16-19 participants/ 550 Access</td>
<td>2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19</td>
<td>The university already works with all bar one local college and with large number of students. The focus through the Accord Plus programme will therefore be on increasing the intensity of the work and in particular on supporting students to make appropriate course choices, to produce high quality personal statements, provide interview practice and to support students make the transition to university. We will monitor the retention of students who have participated in this programme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>COMPACT PLUS PARTICIPANTS: targeted work through Compact plus programme</td>
<td>No 2012-13</td>
<td>200 participants 2400 participants 2850 participants 3000 participants 3200 participants</td>
<td>2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19</td>
<td>All students in the Compact Plus programme.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>COLLABORATION &amp; SECTOR: To increase the percentage of Compact Plus students residing in POLAR Q1 &amp; Q2 postcodes within two years of leaving level 3 education</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>33% / 38%</td>
<td>36% / 41%</td>
<td>37% / 42%</td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>COLLABORATION &amp; SECTOR: To undertake a collaborative primary initiative with UCL in low progression areas, increasing aspirations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No such activity taking place</td>
<td>3 schools / 85% of participants to consider HE</td>
<td>6 schools / 85% of participants to consider HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>COLLABORATION &amp; SECTOR: To undertake a collaborative initiative to offer a package of IAG talks to post-16 schools and colleges in London, Kent and Sussex with UCL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>No such activity taking place</td>
<td>4 schools / 100 students</td>
<td>5 schools / 125 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>COLLABORATION &amp; SECTOR: To coordinate visits for Compact Plus cohorts to other HEIs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>4 HEIs</td>
<td>4 HEIs</td>
<td>5 HEIs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Optional commentary on milestones. This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional ‘supporting information’ as a separate Word/pdf document.

Due to changes in strategic direction, all targets have been re-categorised to better reflect our main areas of work. These are Primary, Secondary, Post-16, Summer Schools, Student Participation, Compact Plus and Collaborative & Sector. In line with our strategic objectives two targets have become obsolete and have been amalgamated into other targets. Specifically, Target 3: primary mentoring has been amalgamated with student modules to make a new Student Participation target. The number of schools and pupils has been carried over. Additionally Target 7: pre-16 Compact Plus participants has been amalgamated with post-16 participants to reflect the fact that the programme has become more intertwined, making the distinction redundant. Again, the numbers have been carried over to the new target.