

# University of Brighton

## 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan

### A. Executive Summary

The University of Brighton is committed to ensuring that under-represented groups are supported across the whole student lifecycle and to provide equal opportunities to all students. To that effect this Access and Participation Plan (APP) outlines how the University intends to support students from under-represented groups from the 2019-20 academic year. This includes our plans for financial support, outreach, student success and progression activities as well as the targets we have set ourselves around particular areas of focus.

In doing so, the University of Brighton will offer:

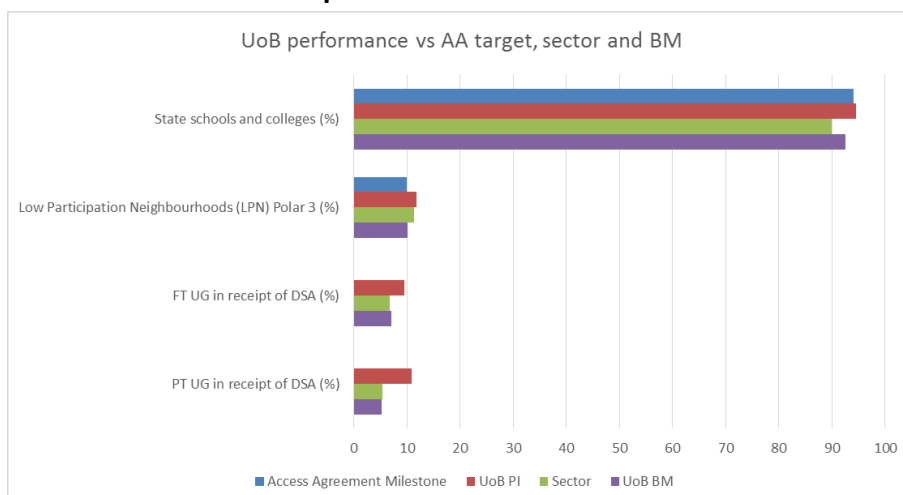
- A whole institutional approach to widening participation (WP)
- Clear and transparent governance for our strategy and activities
- Continued WP activities that will maintain our successful position against existing targets whilst exploring and adding initiatives to support further specifically targeted groups
- A data driven approach with clear evaluation frameworks alongside agility to respond to any emerging areas of potential concern.

### B. Assessment of current performance

The University of Brighton regularly monitors and reports on a wide variety of performance measures related to under-represented groups. These data sets cover the whole student lifecycle and come from a number of both external and internal sources including: UCAS, HESA, TEF, HEIDI + and internal data sources including our highly developed academic standards health process. This annual quality, standards and enhancement support process now includes a differential outcomes analysis to identify any 'gaps' in performance between student groups, undertaken at both an institutional and school level.

The following sections include an overview of the assessment of the University's performance on a number of these indicators across each stage of the student lifecycle.

#### 1. Access and Outreach performance



The chart above highlights our most recent performance on four HESA WP Performance Indicators (PIs) related to enrolments compared to our 2017-18 Access Agreement milestones, sector averages, and benchmarks. The University continues to perform well on all these measures, being above both the sector average and our benchmark for each of the indicators for the first time for entrants in this year. There were improvements on each of these measures from the previous year.

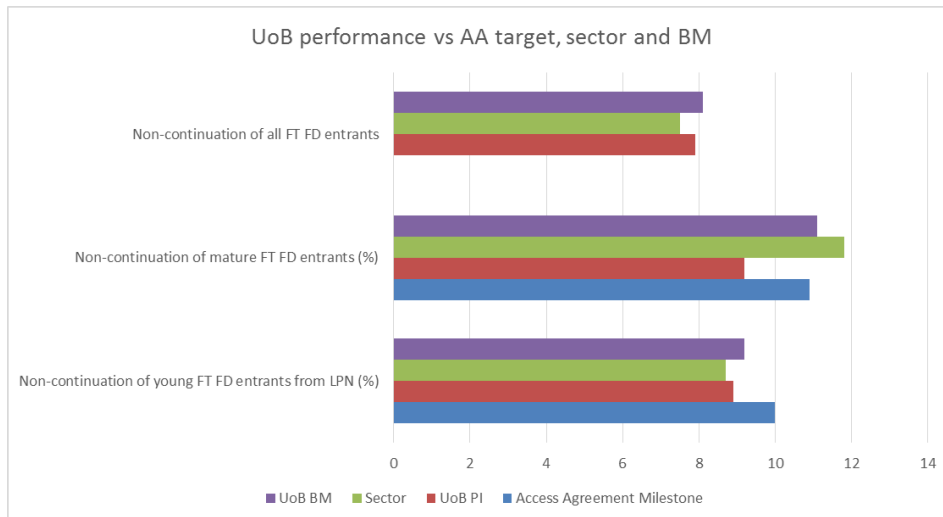
In terms of position in the sector on the key HESA WP PIs, the University of Brighton ranks mid-table for the percentage of entrants from state schools and colleges, 64<sup>th</sup> of 133 English HEIs. In terms of percentage of full-time first degree entrants from a low participation neighbourhood (LPN), the University is in the top third of the table of English HEIs. The University ranks even higher in terms of percentage of full-time students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), being 26<sup>th</sup> of 133 HEIs. As well as considering the HESA PIs, data published by UCAS, and new measures outlined in the end of cycle reports are also reviewed. The most recent data on placed applicants and differences in offer rates shows performance roughly in line with sector and similar institution trends. When this data is broken down using the Multiple Equality Measure the university had a lower ratio from group 5 to group 1 than both the sector and other medium tariff providers for both applicants and placed applicants, this has been the case in each year of the analysis. Similarly, our enrolments from under-represented groups are in line with, or exceed, the sector. However there was a slight decline in the number of black students enrolling between 2014 and 2016, however our internal analysis shows an increase in enrolments from this group for the most recent year of entry.

Alongside the published indicators outlined above we also monitor student groups that are not included as HESA Performance Indicators. In particular we monitor students with experience of care as we provide a specific bursary to support these students. The number of students entering the university with experience of the care system is small, but has increased in the most recent year. Currently we only capture students who are eligible for our bursary provision and as such do not capture those who fall outside of that criteria and those who choose not to declare. Due to these small numbers monitoring the retention and success of these students has not been previously undertaken, but we work to continue to improve this data collection so that a more robust evaluation of the support for these students can take place across the student lifecycle.

In addition to the utilisation of national statistics, the University is a significant contributor to, and user of, the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT), to assist with monitoring the impact of our outreach interventions. The most recent HEAT HESA track data indicated a positive relationship between attending a University of Brighton outreach activity and progression to Higher Education. The average participation rate of students under 19 (YPR) from the University of Brighton's tracked cohort from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 is 35%, compared with national statistics where the likelihood of young people entering HE from this group is less than 25%. As well as the reports provided by HEAT, we also explore the underlying data to better understand the profile of the students we work with and their progression to Higher Education. Analysis revealed that the more interventions students participated in, the higher the progression to HE rates were. The HEAT data indicate that our current access work in particular successfully supports the following groups of students: those from a LPN, female students, and those with declared disabilities. However in 2016/17 only 19% of the students we worked with were White Male students from a Low Participation Neighbourhood, with 33% of the students we worked with being White Females from a Low Participation Neighbourhood. As well as being a group of students that have not been as engaged as other student groups, White Male students from LPN that have previously engaged in activities (and were

ready to progress to HE) had a significantly lower progression to HE rate than those from other neighbourhoods, or their female counterparts.

## 2. Student Success – retention performance



The chart above highlights our performance on three HESA PIs relating to the non-continuation rates of students; two of which are included as APP targets. We are below benchmark (positive) on all three of the measures, and below our two related Access Agreement milestones. For the most recent year of data, the University’s non-continuation rate improved for all our full-time first degree entrants and for our mature entrants. Our non-continuation rate for those from a LPN however declined this year, although remains below our benchmark.

We have also reviewed our Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Year 2 metrics and in particular those which are ‘split’ and provide more granular outcomes for different student groups. With regard to non-continuation, the University had no negative flags for any of our full-time WP student groups. The University’s outcomes on this measure to a strong degree reflect the sector-wide trends, in that, mature entrants have higher non-continuation rates than young, as do males over females, and those from a LPN versus high participation areas. Our internal differential outcomes analyses also highlight differences in continuation outcomes for these groups of students and as such, given a relatively high proportion of our entrants are mature and that our entrants from LPNs are one of our priority groups we have recorded our intention to improve outcomes for these groups as targets in our current and previous Access Agreements.

## 3. Student Success – attainment performance

There is a current lack of detailed sector-wide and benchmarked data on student attainment. As such, our internal differential outcomes analysis has included this as an area of focus, in reviewing the number of students achieving a ‘good degree’ (1st, 2:1 or integrated masters award) by various student demographics. The University’s outcomes reflect those of the known sector trends and the largest difference in outcomes was found to be between UK White students versus UK Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students. This gap is further highlighted in the difference between UK Black and UK White students, which is more significant than the BME attainment gap as a whole, and has increased for the last three years. As such, we are including these differences as areas of particular focus to address.

#### **4. Student Progression – employment or further study performance**

The University closely monitors its performance in relation to the progression of students into employment or further study. The percentage of Brighton graduates in work or further study as measured by the DLHE survey, has continued to increase for the sixth year. The figure of 94.4% is the highest ever achieved by the University and has moved it above the sector average, although 0.4% below benchmark. Analysis of the related TEF metric revealed that our previous and current priority WP group, which has formed one of our Access Agreement targets (to improve the % of those in receipt of DSA into employment/further study) has supported our outcomes in this area, as no negative flag was in place. However our internal differential outcomes analysis for progression revealed some differences between students with a disability versus those without. As such we will continue to focus attention on this group to deliver further improvements. As such we will continue to focus attention on this group to deliver further improvements. Although there is no significant difference in the amount of BME students in work or further study, compared to White students, there have been differences between the outcomes of White and Black students. In the most recent year Black students were less likely to be in work or further study, and significantly less likely to be in professional/managerial employment. However this was not the case in the previous year when Black students were more likely to be in work or further study, and only slightly less likely to be in professional/managerial employment.

We will maintain our monitoring of performance on this measure by the different student groups to determine if different areas require a new focus. We will also extend this review to the level of employment or further study over the coming year to assess whether further action is required on this measure of progression.

### **C. Ambition and strategy**

#### **1. An institutional approach to widening participation**

Our strategic approach is embedded at all levels of the institution, engaging across all academic and administrative support areas and overseen by our senior management. This is reinforced with a clear, transparent academic and administrative governance structure woven through our committee and executive group structures. This entire endeavour is very much in partnership with our Students' Union who represent the student voice on all committees, groups and sub-groups designed to develop strategy, implement initiatives and monitor and analyse progress.

Following the launch of the University's Strategy 2016-2021 "Practical Wisdom", a complementary Education and Student Experience Strategy has been developed that particularly focuses on:

- Raising educational expectations and opportunities
- Providing an inclusive, coherent and progressive framework for learning, where students are welcomed and supported in their transition into and through higher education and clearly understand the different stages of their development.
- Ensuring every student has the opportunity to participate in employability-enhancing activities such as work experience, placements, live briefs, research, volunteering and public exhibitions and demonstrations
- Supporting the retention, participation, development and well-being of all our students as members of a wider inclusive University community, where opportunities for peer, academic and professional support and engagement are actively provided within a clear and evident pastoral care pathway

In line with the expectations of Access and Participation Plan work, there is also a general commitment in the Strategy for providing a data-informed environment where we can evaluate our successes and respond effectively to initiatives and opportunities.

The implementation of this strategy is overseen by our Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC), a committee of our Academic Board. In its terms of reference, it is specifically required “to oversee and monitor student retention, progression and learning gain, particularly for underrepresented groups, and review and advise on the effectiveness of action plans and initiatives”. ESEC is chaired by our Pro-vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience who is also a member of the University Executive Board.

To effectively carry out this task, the ESEC has two reporting groups. Firstly, the Widening Participation Action Team (WiPAT) is an academic led group responsible for all educational matters related to maintaining an institutional focus on access, retention, success and progression of WP students. Importantly, the constitution of the group includes key stakeholders from all 12 of our academic schools (normally the Deputy Head for Teaching and Learning) alongside officers representing Student Services, Strategic Planning, Academic Services, Marketing & Communications, and the Students’ Union. WiPAT provides opportunities for sharing good practice between academic schools and supports them to deliver focused interventions and activity designed to address WP groups with differential outcomes in continuation rates and attainment. Like many HEIs, the University is a large multi-disciplinary environment and WiPAT maintains oversight and ensures strategic alignment of the initiatives. WiPAT is chaired by our Director for Education (Widening Participation).

Secondly, the Access and Participation Plan Group (APPG) is an executive group that complements and supports the work of WiPAT by overseeing the annual coordination of the Access and Participation Plan and all related budget matters. Importantly, the group also coordinates all monitoring and analysis of initiatives to support the understanding and development of activities. To facilitate an in depth analysis and discussion on specific elements of access and participation, the APPG has two further key sub-groups. The Evaluation subgroup monitors, evaluates and reports on all activity while the Bursary subgroup explores the impact of all financial provision within the APP. APPG is chaired by the Director of Academic Services who has oversight of all university academic quality, standards and enhancement support.

To draw together the Access and Participation Plan work with our wider institutional equality and diversity strategy and initiatives (including work towards charter accreditation), representatives from our Equality and Diversity department sit on both WiPAT and APPG.

## **2. Our approach to Access and Outreach**

As identified in the assessment section, evidence indicates that our current access work in particular successfully supports students from a LPN, female students and those with disabilities. However, we recognise that there are areas for development and improvement, in particular an ambition to increase the number of young males from LPNs and students from BME backgrounds participating in our outreach activities. Generally, we remain committed to a targeted and sustained approach to WP, working with young people from primary school through secondary school and FE. To ensure this we will continue to work closely with our partner schools and colleges, including the University of Brighton Academies Trust, The University Technical College, Virtual Schools and Pupil Referral Units.

As well as using our ongoing evaluation to drive activity we have already started to respond to findings from a recent significant stakeholder report (including local pupils and their school management). This has informed our decision to take a targeted whole school approach to pre-16 activity, moving on from a pupil cohort approach of the past. For post-16 activity, a pupil cohort approach will continue as evidence suggests this is more effective. All our 'WP schools' are targeted within our local area based on: FSM, POLAR, IDACI and EST indicators. In 2019-20 we will respond further to the report by:

- Rebranding our key Compact and Compact Plus programme with local schools and FE colleges
- Ensuring that our activity is pinned to and supports the school curriculum
- Providing better feedback to our partner schools and colleges with regard to activities their students engage with and the outcomes

Costs incurred in staff time and supply cover have been identified as a barrier to school/FE college engagement in outreach activity both in our own and other stakeholder research. Our basic strategy is that activities will remain free to participants and we will continue to provide transport and supply cover costs wherever possible. Where it is shown to be productive, we will also continue to provide direct funding for coordination roles for our outreach programme in our local FE colleges.

To further develop our understanding of the needs of our partner schools we are exploring the creation of a link role in our School of Education. This role will provide pedagogy and curriculum advice to the outreach support team, and be a key link with colleagues in the University's academies to work to develop and embed an outreach programme in each of the schools.

At post-16 specifically, we will continue to work with targeted schools with sixth forms and all local sixth form and FE colleges directing additional activity and resource towards targeted young people identified via a number of eligibility criteria to determine particular disadvantage or under-representation. Although these schools have predominantly white British populations, using FSM indicators alongside LPN ensures that students from all low socio economic and LPN backgrounds are also reached. We will continue to develop our engagement with parents and carers as we recognise that they are key influencers for their children. We will also continue to evaluate our activities to ensure that we are offering effective interventions and will pilot work in areas where we recognise that there are improvements to be made.

Therefore, for 2019-20 we will continue with existing outreach activities but with a greater focus on the following:

- Young males from LPNs
- BME students
- 'Looked after' children, care leavers and students estranged from their families.
- Young carers
- Access to HE students and mature students.

### **3. Our approach to raising attainment via school sponsorship**

Alongside our general outreach work, the University regards school sponsorship as a cornerstone of our strategy to raise attainment, improve progression and increase participation to higher education for pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. The University is the sponsor of the University of Brighton Academies Trust (UoBAT), a network of 15 infant, primary and secondary academies in Sussex,

comprising 7,500 pupils and 1,200 staff. With the University's support, the academies all support each other, and their pupils, to excel.

#### *Raising attainment: Success criteria*

Whilst each academy's targets reflect its individual context, there are some common principles:

- Targets are challenging and all are set to be above the Department for Education's floor standards:
  - For primary academies, 65% of Key Stage 2 pupils meet the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined and/or the academy's average progress scores in each of reading, writing and mathematics is above the floor target
  - For secondary academies, the Progress 8 score is above -0.5
- In secondary academies, there are no gaps in the progress 8 measures for each academy between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally
- In primary academies, there are no gaps in the average progress score between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally

#### *Monitoring and evaluation*

The Board of Trustees of the University's multi academy trust has overall responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of strategies to raise attainment in the academies and is chaired by the University's Deputy Vice Chancellor. The Trust's Board of Trustees receives School Improvement reports at each meeting, setting out key achievements and risks for each academy in the Trust and in turn provides reports to the University's Board of Governors. Detailed scrutiny of individual academy outcomes is undertaken by the Trust's Education and Standards Committee, which draws on a range of information, including regular data analyses and professional partner reports. The Trust's Strategic Improvement Group (SIG), chaired by the Director of School Improvement, is responsible for the strategic direction and quality assurance of school improvement work.

There is a trajectory of improvement in pupil progress and outcomes. For Secondary academies in 2016/17, each was above the government's floor measure and:

- The Attainment 8 score for The Hastings Academy was 36.04. The academy's provisional Progress 8 score was -0.30.
- The Attainment 8 score for The St Leonards Academy was 41.54, the academy's provisional Progress 8 score was 0.00.
- The Attainment 8 score for The Burgess Hill Academy was 48, which is above national averages. The academy's provisional Progress 8 score was -0.08.

For Key Stage 2 in 2016/17, progress and achievement outcomes for primary academies were that all academies were above the government's floor measure, and there is a general rising trend of attainment and progress. An increasing number of academies were close to, at or above national averages in individual subjects. For Key Stage 1, in the phonics screening check, the majority of academies either improved or maintained the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard at the end of Year 1. There was also a rising trend of improvement in the percentage of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by the end of key stage 1.

The proportion of pupils who reached a Good level of Development (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage was in line with or above the national average in all but one academy; EYFS is a particular strength in the Trust. On recruitment to our academies, almost all of the primary and secondary academies across the trust are now oversubscribed with high applications rates, with positive community perceptions of

the Trust and the University. Finally, there have been excellent Ofsted inspection outcomes during the last year, each of which has recognised the positive impact of the University and the Trust.

#### **4. Our approach to Student Success**

The summary review of our performance outlined above highlights a number of areas of particular success for the University, achieved over recent years through both targeted and embedded student-focused activities. These activities will be maintained. An example of our whole student lifecycle approach is our support for students in receipt of DSA or with a declared disability. Our reputation for supporting this under-represented group and the wide range of support we offer, continues to ensure that participation of students with a disability at the University remains high and above both the sector average and our benchmark. Our Disability Support Team and Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGTs) amongst others, provide an excellent service to support students to succeed. This outcome is evidenced in the non-continuation rates for our students with a disability which are 1.4% points below those of the students without a disability. Our support continues as students progress on to employment or further study, and our outcomes on this measure are also evidence of success. To ensure the focus of attention is maintained on our whole lifecycle approach to students with a disability, we have for the last three years included four of our Access Agreement targets on this group, and are proud to be able to have reported that our annual milestones have been met or exceeded for each of those years. In our recent TEF application, there were no negative flags on any of our metrics for this group of students. We will continue to support this group of students in the ways that have proved successful.

As well as continuing with our already effective student success initiatives we will also be reviewing our performance and developing new initiatives. This work will primarily be directed by WiPAT. The foundation of WiPAT's work is maintaining and developing our successful 'Student Retention and Success Framework', recently refreshed and to be re-launched in September 2018. This initiative ensures that work supporting all students including those from under-represented groups is harmonised for maximum impact. It clearly sets out our expectations across all schools and departments as to how to ensure all aspects of the student journey are supported by good practice in relation to retention and success, but particularly for the most vulnerable groups. This re-launch will be accompanied by a university conference, with a clear WP strand, to communicate to the wider institution. WiPAT also recently led on the institution's consideration of the 'Whole Institution Approach to WP' toolkit, and will work with other groups to ensure that the feedback from this process will feed into future developments.

Our strategy will continue to be driven by the differential outcomes analysis which is a key element of our university wide academic health process. It has enabled us to identify specific student groups institutionally and within specific subject areas and also to reflect on the impact of activities and initiatives. For example we have taken measures to ensure that support for disabled students is embedded in the curriculum and also focused activity in some schools on BME student's progression to employment. These successes are used to inform further work in schools and to address other differential outcomes.

As already noted differential outcomes analysis indicates that, like much of the sector, there is a particular attainment gap for our BME students, and in particular black students. We have an on-going focus on narrowing the attainment gap for these groups of students and are working within and across all our academic schools on a range of targeted initiatives including mentoring programmes, confidence building, diversifying reading lists and initiatives to foster a sense of belonging. One such example is the BME mentoring programme which has run successfully in one of our academic schools with an identified



BME attainment gap. Additionally, we have introduced procedural changes, such as the introduction of anonymous marking (wherever possible). Also, the enhancement of training and development of staff has been improved by the introduction of a new 'unconscious bias' online training package and the provision of face to face unconscious bias and race awareness workshops. These workshops will generate specific action plans for schools to target specific issues around black attainment success and progression. These action plans will be supported by WiPAT, which will follow the sector trend in establishing a multi strand approach to tackling the BME/black attainment gap. This strand of targeted work also feeds into the complementary work of our Race Equality Charter (REC) Mark group. As our application for the REC progresses we will be conducted a detailed self-assessment and determining a number of actions to address the issues, this will include the BME attainment gap and the black attainment gap. This work will provide institutional initiatives, including the ones outlined above, as well as smaller initiatives targeted at schools/courses which have the identified the largest black/BME attainment gaps.

Non-continuation of mature students and the intersectionality of the mature students with commuter students are also a current focus and actions are being explored and taken, via WiPAT, to further support this group of students.

The importance of student transition to HE as a key factor in continuation has led to the development of the institutional wide transition module, Hit the Ground Running (HTGR). The module has been designed with the needs of WP students in mind but is available for all students joining the University. The module has multiple objectives to support transition to HE and retention. These include; pre-entry peer mentoring from student ambassadors, peer to peer contact and contact with teaching staff which all take place via online platforms, and an introduction to the discipline, the VLE and teaching and learning styles. The module also seeks to explain the language of HE, removes some of the mystery and barriers associated with HE and manages student's expectations of level 4 study. This academic module is part of a suite of activity coordinated by the University's Welcome Steering Group designed to tie together the myriad of induction and transition arrangements and communications for the benefit of students. In a recent 1<sup>st</sup> year student survey, 88.2% of undergraduates felt satisfied with their course induction and 85.4% stated they felt 'settled into life at university'. The University will continue to strive to improve all Welcome activities for 2019/20 and onwards.

#### *Curriculum design and inclusive practice in teaching and learning*

During 2016-17 and 2017-18, the University undertook a comprehensive review of its entire undergraduate provision, requiring courses to align to a newly established Curriculum Design Framework from 2018-19. The Framework was developed in response to a number of factors including; staff and student feedback about the curriculum, and the University Strategy which promotes equality, diversity and inclusivity. Primary benefits from the project for all students are: recalibration of assessment loads to ensure consistency across disciplines, the introduction of assessment optionality at least once per level of study to support students to work to their individual strengths, clearer signalling of employability skills and career planning, and a critical reconsideration of module content from a decolonialist perspective. External academics have been involved in reviewing each subject area and, in particular, have commended the University's approach to inclusive practice in the curriculum through strategies such as assessment optionality which aims to empower students to direct their own learning, in keeping with the University's overall approach to widening access and participation. The University has taken a strategic approach to developing an infrastructure that supports inclusive practice. 'Inclusivity' is one of the four core values of the current University Strategy and inclusive practice is included in the guidance for course

validation and a key strand of the University-wide Curriculum Design Review. To support academics in making their curriculum more inclusive the University has provided CPD to more than 500 academic staff across the institution on Inclusive Practice and developed an online Inclusive Practice toolkit. There are further plans to enhance and develop this toolkit to draw in additional aspects of inclusivity beyond disability, drawing from findings from the inclusive practice and assessment theme from our annual academic health process.

## **5. Our approach to Student Progression**

The University provides employability support to all students at the University. This is ensured through the Career Planning Agreement (CPA) which is in place for all undergraduate courses and is annually reviewed by the course leader and the Careers Service.

While the CPA enables a comprehensive coverage of employability across four campuses, the Careers Service uses destination data to highlight student profiles and courses that require extra support to progress successfully in the employment market. Such support has developed into mainstream provision and is increasingly delivered in collaboration with other partners including employers and other University services. This provision is regularly monitored for its impact, and the target groups reviewed to ensure the most disadvantaged are receiving specialist support. In the last four years this has been principally extra support for BME students who under perform in many subject areas in terms of getting employment, and getting employment at Professional Managerial levels. By monitoring our data we have observed other student groups, such as those with a disability, requiring support in some subject areas, and we will be increasing our service provision for this group in 2019/20. We will use our internal analysis to ensure that our mentoring initiatives are targeted at groups with the largest gaps in employability outcomes going forwards.

The significant university wide Curriculum Design Review has employability as one of the key elements that course teams have to consider in their review of the curriculum, specifically considered as part of the students' journey and where they develop attributes and skills for employment. 50% of the courses at Brighton have PSRB accreditation or recognition, and students on these courses have relevant employability activity, such as mandatory placements embedded in their courses. We are particularly proud of our Momentum mentoring programme available to students from WP backgrounds to support them developing employability skills and boost confidence. Students are matched with a volunteer professional mentor. Momentum is targeted at BME, disabled, care leavers and male students receiving a University bursary. This work will continue in 2019/20 and beyond.

## **6. Student Financial Support**

The main premise of our student financial support package is to offer two types of support. Firstly, bursaries with set eligibility criteria that are awarded 'automatically' to those who meet them. Secondly, our Student Support Fund is specifically designed to support all other students who may also be in need (or to further support bursary holders) and requires a means tested application from each student.

The Bursary Sub-group, reporting to APPG, is responsible for monitoring impact of the University's student financial support package and making recommendations on the University's strategic approach. The group's approach is designed to consider the bursary offer and supporting evidence, ensuring that the greatest numbers of the disadvantaged students receive financial support in all years of study and making sure that students from particularly vulnerable groups, including care-leavers and estranged students are targeted with support. The group uses a range of evidence to inform its decisions, including

student surveys, and recommends additional data sources when required. For the Student Support Fund, payments will retain a maximum limit linked to our bursary offer. Our aim is that the fund provides a flexible approach to assisting those students in short term financial crisis, supporting students in their final years and those who need to make rental deposits and therefore assisting their transition from one year of study to the next. We have recently introduced a Graduate Support Fund to support those students in most financial need to attend their University graduation ceremony with a package which includes academic gowns, official photographs and guest tickets.

For 2019/20, there will continue to be an emphasis on student support and advice related to money management and budgeting through various media to proactively assist students in their day-to-day management of living expenses. We have also recently signed the Stand Alone Pledge, the student advice team is the contact for the Stand Alone organisation and will continue to develop links to support estranged prospective and current students.

## **7. Targets and Milestones**

The University, to reflect the areas that our assessment of performance and outcomes has revealed, has set itself a number of targets outlined in Table 8 of the resource plan. As advised by OFFA/OfS, our targets cover the full student lifecycle and highlight specific support for a number of different under-represented student groups. All targets have been considered and reviewed by the Access and Participation Plan Group.

The University is committed to tackling our BME attainment gap, with a particular focus on Black students, and will continue to monitor progress towards the reduction of this gap with the intention of including an institutional target in future Access and Participation Plans.

The University will also conduct a full review of its targets relating to outreach activity, with a view to introducing new targets specifically aligned to outcomes and evaluation as opposed to numbers in future years.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

As outlined in our assessment of performance, the University regularly considers a variety of data sources which not only help to support and identify its areas of strategic direction, but also form a key element of our monitoring and evaluation processes. The University monitors all data sources to track any changes in performance to ensure that resource is directed towards appropriate areas, and any impact made by interventions. The University will continue to closely monitor these sources whilst also exploring them in more detail including multiple student characteristics, further exploring the intersectionality of student characteristics will form an integral part of the institutions approach to monitoring and evaluation. The Access and Participation Plan Evaluation Sub-Group (ESG), reporting to the APPG, is responsible for this task and makes recommendations on the University's strategic approach to activities and milestones to support underrepresented students.

The University recognises the importance of ensuring that all activities are evidence-based, monitored and evaluated. To help support these processes we have developed a key institutional tool, our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF), to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the institution. The MEF is overseen by the ESG, which reports outcomes to the main APPG. The framework covers the whole student lifecycle and includes the full range of the institution's WP interventions. Within this framework we have an institutional Monitoring and Evaluation strategy which outlines our

aims and objectives, identifies key stakeholders, considers the dissemination of outcomes, and highlights the projects or initiatives that will be included in the MEF. It provides an annual timeline of the monitoring and evaluation processes, as well as guidance and support for projects to help ensure consistent and robust evaluation. To support implementation of the framework there is an annual reporting process to review the monitoring and evaluation of each of the projects. These provide key information on; aims and objectives, data analysis, outcome measures, and assessments as to how the project has impacted on our institutional WP targets (as laid out in previous Access Agreements). Our Project Officer/Analyst (Access) works across the projects to provide the necessary support, advice and associated data analysis. This year, mid-year review meetings have been included to discuss the current evaluation taking place, support for the remainder of the academic year and plans for future developments. Over the coming year we intend to further extend and improve the MEF via a number of additional activities.

#### *Additional outreach monitoring and evaluation*

The monitoring and evaluation of outreach activity sits within the institutional framework, however, given the multiple different strands, an associated Outreach Monitoring and Evaluation Framework has also been created. The framework outlines the level of evaluation for different activities depending on their intensity. It is overseen by a further subgroup, the Outreach Evaluation Group, which reports into the ESG. A thematic approach to outreach evaluation is taken each year. For 2017-18 this has been centred on primary outreach, but in future years we may focus our evaluation around different areas such as Summer Schools or Taster days.

The University of Brighton Outreach team uses a key tool as their primary monitoring and evaluation tool to collect, track and analyse student data; the national Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). The University will continue to extend its use of the existing and any future HEAT functionality. The HEAT longitudinal tracking system matches records on individual outreach participants to administrative datasets spanning Key Stage 2 data through to postgraduate study and employment. Tracking reports from HEAT help the University to better understand the relationship between our outreach provision and the attainment and progression of disadvantaged young people. We are able to track student progression to any HEI so that we can assess the extent to which we are contributing to the increased participation rates of disadvantaged young people as a whole.

Being part of the HEAT service also enables the University to engage with collective WP sector research. By using aggregated data from all members, HEAT is now able to explore new multi-dimensional ways of defining under-representation, disadvantage and differential outcomes and the effect that outreach can have on different groups of participants. Using HEAT we can take an evidence-based approach to planning outreach delivery so that we can continue to invest in activities that optimise progression with disadvantaged cohorts.

#### *Financial support monitoring and evaluation*

Via the Bursary Subgroup, the University conducted a complete review of its financial support offer during 2016-17. This resulted in significant changes to our planned bursary provision from 2018-19. The University welcomes the new and additional support provided by OFFA in terms of resources and toolkits to help evaluate our financial support offer which reflect, to a large extent, elements that the University had already incorporated into our evaluative activities. We will be making use of the additional quantitative components and embedding them in our annual framework from 2018/19. The University did however this year utilise the survey questions offered in the OFFA financial support evaluation toolkit

and incorporated these into our student experience, Brighton Student Survey (BSS) 2018 for all level 5 students. For 2019-20 we intend to use the full OFFA financial support evaluation toolkit, including both the quantitative and qualitative elements, to consider in full a review of our revised financial support offer. We would continue to conduct this process on an annual basis going forward.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

The University of Brighton is committed to developing and nurturing a diverse community, supporting inclusion in the University and through the impact of our activities at a local, national and international level. We champion and nurture inclusivity, diversity and equality to the highest levels, recognising the value it has to the future of our staff, students, partners and community. The University's Strategy 2016-2021 lists 'Inclusivity' as one of its four core values. This value both expresses our University ethos in relation to equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) and recognises the crucial role that EDI plays in enabling the University to achieve its overarching strategic aims and objectives.

The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2017-2021, and specifically our Equality Objectives, sets out our commitment and objectives for further enhancing our approach and practice in relation to EDI. The University recognises the importance of aligning access and participation plans with the institution's equality and diversity work. The EDI Strategic Plan and Objectives were developed in consultation with staff working in widening participation, Academic Services, and Student Services, and include objectives relating to widening access and student success and progression. The university currently holds a Bronze Athena Swan award, is a Disability Confident Level 2 employer and is a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme. In addition to these existing charters the university will also be applying for the Race Equality Charter Mark in 2019.

Equality and Diversity staff are also involved in the development of the University's Access and Participation Plans via membership of the APPG and its sub-groups. This helps to ensure that these two areas of work are closely aligned, and that our Equality Objectives inform the development of this and future plans. Also as part of the production of this plan, the university has undertaken an Equality Impact Review. The findings of the review demonstrate that there are no anticipated adverse impacts on protected groups. The review was able to identify several ways in which it is hoped that the new APP will positively impact upon the experiences of several protected groups and therefore advance equality at the institution.

## **10. Partnership with our Students Union**

As with all our Access Agreements to date, we have worked with our Students' Union (SU) on this Access and Participation Plan. As our work in the areas of outreach, student success, progression and student financial support develop we expect this dialogue to continue, in particular in understanding the long-term impact of our joint initiatives. The University understands the importance of consulting with students on the design of our Access and Participation Plans and also directly involving students in the implementation and monitoring of its access and success 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 all university business including our widening participation policies and practices as they develop. Specifically related to our access and participation work, the Union are also members of the APPG and most of its sub-groups, and WiPAT. The University and the Students' Union are very much partners in

this endeavour and the University directly funds SU activity to support the retention and success of under-represented groups.

The Students' Union will continue to focus on building a sense of belonging and ease of access to opportunities and services. They will continue to address disparities in students' tendencies to engage with, lead and define the academic and co-curricular University offer through a redesign of the course representative system to encourage a broader demographic of student participation, particularly from BME students. The University will also 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 students understand the financial support that is available to them. The University's partnership with our SU is one that we are proud of and one that enables responsiveness to student-identified needs and the provision of student-defined solutions.

Evidence from the Students' Union has shown that increasing staff support for students and student projects is of greater benefit than simply providing financial resource for student projects alone. The SU support team will continue to work in collaboration with the SSGTs as evidence shows that students with complex and multiple needs, BME students and those with ongoing mental health or learning support needs are disproportionately represented in their casework. Also, the SU will continue to develop the ways in which it supports and develops student societies, liberation groups and communities. A full membership review is being undertaken to ask different groups of students how the Union can provide even stronger support. Societies are being reworked to make them more accessible and inclusive.

Informed by the success of previous programmes we have learned that the Students' Union is very successful in supporting student-led projects at a campus level. Campus opportunity funds managed through five Campus Action Teams, will provide financial support and staff assistance for the development of new student communities and initiatives at a campus level. These are often one-off events such as film festivals, degree show catalogues, documentaries, family days, identity-based research projects, curriculum engagement projects and community art fairs. Recipients of project funding and support are required to demonstrate benefit and legacy for one or more target student groups.

Finally, the SU has over 1500 active leaders through the society and course representative system. They are improving the recruitment, and proactively encouraging underrepresented students to get involved, and providing appropriate support.

## **11. Collaboration**

We recognise the importance of internal collaboration, across all areas and departments, in working toward a whole institutional approach to WP in supporting students throughout the student lifecycle. The Student Lifecycle Network, draws together expertise in working with WP students across the lifecycle, shares good practice and where appropriate advises formal groups such as APPG, WiPAT and the Equality and Diversity Committee of identified issues and the development of activities and approach.

We also recognise there is much to be gained from sharing best practice with colleagues across the sector and we will continue to develop our collaborative partnerships and work with other institutions to deliver initiatives to support under-represented groups. The University is an active member of a number of sector wide groups/initiatives aiming to support students across the student lifecycle, this includes HEAT (steering and research group), NEON, Widening Participation in Art network (led by the Courtauld

Institute), HEFCE funded Changing Mindsets project, and the HEA Retention Network and Community of Practice.

The University of Brighton is the lead institution for the Sussex Learning Network Collaborative Outreach Project (SLN:COP) and University of Brighton colleagues are delivering a number of NCOP funded outreach initiatives, including the Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP) which is leading on community engagement. Also, our Student Services are delivering a BME mentoring project across East Sussex.

The University's shared medical school, the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), has recently been awarded 50 new undergraduate places from 2019-20 to further support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The medical school will extend the reach of its widening participation programme, BrightMed, which helps talented students from local state schools, who may not have considered medicine a possibility, to apply to and prepare for medical school.

## **D. Access, student success and progression measures**

### **1. Access and Outreach**

As referred to in the ambition and strategy section we will continue to deliver activities which we regard as contributing to our current successes in widening participation as well as modifying or adding additional initiatives as our understanding develops. All will be underpinned with monitoring and evaluation. The University of Brighton Outreach programme offers a range of activities and is divided into two main areas, each targeted at a specific group of school pupils/students:

1. Pre-16 engagement (years 6-11) with targeted WP schools (whole school approach)
2. Post-16 engagement (years 12-13) with targeted WP groups (enhanced support for individual targeted WP students and those studying Access to HE courses)

Activity strands are numerous and will include IAG activity, subject specific academic excellence programmes, subject summer schools, parent and carer seminars and 'embedding resilience' workshops.

We recognise the important role that parents and carers play in the progression of young people and as key influencers in their decision making. In particular, we will be looking at ways of increasing engagement with parents of students from BME backgrounds within the community. The progress and educational outcomes of young white males from lower socio-economic backgrounds are also of particular concern nationally. Outreach initiatives such as our Formula 24 Saturday Club have proved successful in engaging this particular group. We will continue to review current research and best practice to inform new outreach initiatives to build upon this. In order to better engage potential mature learners (who we are not able to reach through traditional school/college relationships), we are planning a conference/event aimed at those 20+ and promoted through a media campaign.

Further new or enhanced activities will include BME outreach mentoring, summer schools aimed specifically at mature students, a 'Looked after' children and carer conference and working with BSMS on a range of activities for primary schools. One particular issue that has been identified by our local schools and colleges is their difficulty in recruiting computing teachers and their lack of available computing facilities. We will also bridge this gap by providing both pre and post-16 computing clubs to develop students' skills and give them access to University computing facilities.

## 2. Student Success

Coordinated by WiPAT, our support work will continue to be guided by the internal subject specific differential outcomes reports to target particular student groups and disciplines with identified areas of concern. WiPAT has already initiated a number of strands of activity including a revised Personal Academic Tutoring Policy, instigated work to support commuter students and co-ordinated the HTGR module linked to general induction/transition work. WiPAT will continue to develop these initiatives and all these will sit within a refreshed and relaunched Student Retention and Success Framework.

### *Developing learning analytics*

The University is also committed to a new university wide objective. This will be the development of an institutional learning analytics platform, informed by emerging sector research. The aim will be to identify 'at risk' students for intervention, enhance academic performance, be an enabler for adaptive learning or support quality assurance and curriculum enhancement. In doing so, by offering truly evidenced prioritisation of spending, it also allows the focusing of resources for maximum impact. In response, it has been identified as a goal in our new Education and Student Experience Strategic Plan. We believe this emerging technology could be particularly relevant to supporting students from underrepresented groups and maximise the impact of any resources applied.

The development will begin with a Learning Analytics Dashboard to support Personal Academic Tutors. Following a pilot in our Business School (and part of a national JISC project), the use of learning analytics to support student retention and success is being expanded to all academic schools through the use of staff and student facing dashboards. Attendance monitoring is a key element of learning analytics and the establishment of this through the use of electronic devices is a key part of the Teaching and Learning Resources refurbishment plan. All teaching spaces will be equipped with monitoring devices by the end of 2021. As we develop our understanding and application of learning analytics, alongside the UK HE sector, we are also developing our capability for predictive analytics to enable the early identification of 'at risk' students.

### *Support for disabled students*

There has been a steady increase in the number of disabled students at the University, with more pronounced increases of students with mental health difficulties and autistic spectrum (AS) conditions. We expect this to continue. The University considers the needs of disabled students across the student lifecycle, to identify students in advance of enrolment and support them with DSA assessments, financial support and any other difficulties that the students may encounter.

From 2019 entry the University will continue to offer a dyslexia screening service and provide means-tested financial support for students requiring educational psychology reports and other associated assessments. We will also run a free two day (and overnight) induction programme for students. The University will also run targeted transition events for new students on the autistic spectrum, and be proactive in contacting these students at the application stage so that their support needs can be met.

The University has established the 'A-Team', a peer-led Social Support Group for students with AS conditions, following feedback from students that they sometimes felt socially isolated and that this had a negative impact on their academic engagement and confidence. There have been a number of events and student feedback has been extremely positive.



Retention and achievement data continues to show a clear correlation between the receipt of learning support and overall success of disabled students. We will continue to assist students in accessing DSA to access specialist learning support and specialist mentoring for disabled students with a positive diagnosis of SpLD and/or medical evidence. The University Disability Service will ensure students have Learning Support Plans (LSP) to provide information to academic tutors in how to make the appropriate adjustments for disabled students. The University will also provide regular, open-access, disability-awareness training for staff.

#### *Support for mature students*

Through the work of WiPAT and the Student Lifecycle Network we will continue to develop support for mature students. Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGTs) in each academic school undertake specific engagement activities targeted at undergraduate mature students. Feedback from mature students indicates they have differing needs from younger undergraduates and focus groups and feedback from activities continues to monitor and address these needs.

#### *On course student support and guidance*

We are committed to continue to provide student support across all our academic areas via the SSGT support network with the aim to increase engagement and improve retention. Feedback received from students demonstrates the positive effect the role has with 83.5% of survey respondents agreeing that the support enabled them to continue as a student and 91% agreeing that they would recommend the SSGT service to others. Overall 20% of our student population have accessed SSGT support, and the top three issues have been course concerns, psychological and emotional issues and health and disability. As well as improved methods of collecting data we have introduced a guidance manager role to take referrals for the more complex student issues.

#### *Academic skills resources (ASK)*

The University's Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) continually works on developments to University-wide online academic skills advice through the ASK website [www.brighton.ac.uk/ask](http://www.brighton.ac.uk/ask). In response to student feedback and in partnership with a group of ASK student ambassadors, in 2019-20 we will monitor the success of the dedicated micro-sites for each academic school, each of these offer subject-specific academic skills that both staff and students can use in their learning and teaching. Generic areas that we will focus on developing are the bespoke skills advice for students transitioning from undergraduate to postgraduate study to support widening participation targets in this area.

#### *Peer-led learning (PASS)*

The University of Brighton offers the formal peer learning scheme 'PASS' across 48 course pathways. There are currently 130 trained student 'leaders' who facilitate study sessions typically for first-year students, offering PASS to over 1000 students should they elect to attend. For 2019-20 our Centre for Learning and Teaching plans a targeted expansion programme of the PASS scheme to more UG courses across the University. Also the CLT will disseminate findings of research into PASS Leader destinations and employability through publication and national conference presentations.

### **3. Student Progression**

The University's activities aimed at supporting progression and employability are offered across the full student lifecycle with more progression provision scheduled earlier in the course than before. For 2019-20, the Careers Service will also be working closely with Personal Tutors (a role recently refreshed by WiPAT) to better identify underrepresented students who need more or bespoke careers support.

### *General provision including work experience*

The Career Planning Agreement (CPA) enables a framework of employability skills, agreed with local employers, to be included within courses, and delivered through modules, placements, employer participation etc. Within professional courses, provision is monitored by PSRBs and requires students to complete work placements within a curriculum that is largely based on technical education. Courses that are applied and vocational but not subject to PSRBs give students the option of doing one year placements, and offer employability through the curriculum in collaboration with the Careers Service and invited employers. More academic courses rely on the Careers Service through the CPA to provide a 4-6 week placement scheme available to all students, and further specialist Careers Service provision such as enterprise skills workshops.

Outside of the curriculum the Careers Service enables employers to engage with students through numerous careers fairs and employer talks, and upload job vacancies which can be viewed by all relevant students. This also includes entrepreneurs who help students through the Careers Service enterprise service with business start-up advice, and voluntary agencies. Students and graduates can arrange to see a Career Development Adviser for as many confidential interviews as required and each year around 1500 appointments are made. The University is one of a few who offer 'guidance for life'. Each year around 300 graduates receive 1:1 guidance from the Careers Service and are offered coaching.

Generally, Careers Service time is directed at courses with lower destination scores but also for underrepresented student groups (with less success in the employment market) the following services will be continued and further developed:

### *Momentum*

This programme enables students to be mentored by an employer or University professional. This mentoring takes place throughout an academic year and the scheme continues to expand. The scheme is aimed at underrepresented groups but particularly on supporting students from BME backgrounds and students with disabilities. Every year Momentum undertakes a formal impact analysis which indicates that participation in the scheme increased personal development, confidence and career planning skills.

### *University Employability Fund*

Aimed at second year students in receipt of a bursary, the fund covers costs associated with employability development e.g. living costs while on an unpaid placement or portfolio materials.

### *Support for disabled students*

Support will continue as described above including the Careers Service providing bespoke training for the numerous Learning Support Mentors who work regularly with disabled students in order to successfully signpost their students to the Careers Service or career development resources on the website.

### *Support for disadvantaged students on placement*

For the last three years we have been able to use Santander sponsored funding to support students who qualified for a bursary to undertake an unpaid placement. These students come mainly from our Fashion, Art and Media courses where unfortunately an unpaid placement is often the only opportunity available to progress into these sectors. In the first year about 10 students were supported but that has risen now to 30 students per year. From a feedback survey of these students several said that they would not have undertaken the placement without the financial support.

#### **4. Financial Support**

In 2019-20, the University will not be making any significant changes to the financial support programme introduced for 2018-19 entry. This new simplified bursary approach will be in its second year and will continue to provide financial support to eligible students in all years of study. The complementary Student Support Fund will also be maintained at the increased levels established in 2018-19.

Our financial support bursary package will continue to support students on all courses designated as eligible for the full standard package of support from Student Finance, including nursing and allied health courses subject to recent changes to the funding arrangements (undergraduate and postgraduate pre-registration courses). In 2019-20 we will also include non-salaried students studying eligible PGCE courses. Our financial scheme for 2019-20 is as follows:

##### *University of Brighton Bursary*

Eligible students will receive a cash bursary of £500 for each year of study. Students on part time courses studying between 30 and 90 credits during the year who meet the criteria will receive a pro rata cash bursary for each year of study. Eligible students are:

- not already in receipt of a care leavers' or estranged students' bursary,
- normally resident in England or a non-UK EU country
- with a residual household income of up to £25,000
- Assessed as eligible to receive full standard student support package of tuition fee and maintenance loans from Student Finance England

##### *Care Leavers and Estranged Students Bursary*

The award is a cash bursary of £1000 available in every year of study. Students on part time courses as above. Eligible students are:

- normally resident in England
- with a residual household income of up to £25,000
- Assessed as eligible to receive full standard student support package of tuition fee and maintenance loans from Student Finance England
- Students aged 25 and under who fit the eligibility criteria for the care leavers' study grant or Foyer Bursary or
- Students who are under 25 and permanently out of contact with their parents.

##### *Student Support Fund*

The Student Support Fund continues to support those students most in need (and is an 'apply to' scheme), offers a flexible approach to assisting those in short term financial crisis, and will retain a maximum limit linked to our bursary offer. In addition we will continue to identify and support target groups, for example students with high additional course costs such as final year degree shows.

#### **E. Investment**

The University predicts that it will spend £9.4 million of income on its Access and Participation Plan in 2019-20. This is based on its projection of relevant student numbers and the current level of fees. This represents approximately 24% of higher fee income. This remains consistent with projections submitted within the University's approved 2018-19 Access Agreement.

The £9.4 million investment is forecast to be allocated as follows:

	£'m	% of APP Spend	% of Higher Fees
Access	1.9	20%	5%
Success	4.5	48%	12%
Progression	0.5	5%	1%
Financial Support	2.5	27%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24%</b>

This allocation reflects the review of Access Agreement spend undertaken in preparation for the 2018-19 submission, which included consultation and agreement with OFFA. This review focussed on the University's access and participation priorities ensuring that these were resourced appropriately to meet the institutions objectives.

As part of the 2019-20 submission, these priorities and investment levels have been subject to further review to ensure that they remain relevant to the needs of the institution and its students (as now expressed in the relevant sections of this Plan). The projections beyond 2019-20 relate to the impact of the change in the University's bursary scheme (introduced in 2018-19). This change (as agreed with OFFA) has facilitated an acceleration in the investment made to develop activities and infrastructure that will support our student success strategies. This is envisaged to be spent over 2018-19 and 2019-20.

We will continue to actively review the distribution and effectiveness of funds across these areas, particularly in light of any new evidence on impact. It is acknowledged that some of these funds now support long term projects and, therefore, any redistribution would be based on clear evidence and may involve incremental/transitional funding changes over time.

## F. Provision of information to students

The University of Brighton will continue to work within the guidance set out by HEFCE last year on the 'Provision of Information to Students'. In particular, in order to ensure that it publishes 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.

The University of Brighton website provides our 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 the University's financial support package clearly states the eligibility criteria and the levels of financial support offered in each year of study. Targeted web content is provided for under-represented and non-traditional groups including students from low income families, students with disabilities and student parents with advice on funding and financial support where this is applicable. We have also identified the need to highlight to

prospective students that we rely on information on household income being shared with us in order to assess bursary eligibility and, for the benefit of our students, we will continue to develop these communications.

We send regular email communications to prospective students, applicants and current students providing links to key financial advice and information at critical points during the decision-making process. Emails provide information on bursaries, scholarship and student support funds to applicants and current students.

Current Access Agreements are published in full in appropriate areas of the website for both prospective and current students alongside a wide range of other relevant advice including finance, disability and learning support. Narrative text explaining what the Access Agreement is and what it means for students is provided as contextual information. Links to the web content specifically about the Access Agreement are provided back from relevant web content, for example the bursaries and Education Liaison sections, and from other channels used to communicate with students including the applicant portal, student central and direct email.