University of Reading
2019-20 access and participation plan

Introduction

The University of Reading (UoR) is a research-intensive university with a world-class reputation for teaching, research and enterprise. We are a global institution with students from around 150 countries enrolled on our programmes, and an increasing number of international teaching partnerships as well as branch campuses in Malaysia, China and South Africa. Our broad portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes covers the arts, humanities, business, sciences and social sciences. We regularly update and improve our programmes as new ideas emerge, and industry and student needs change. Our ongoing investment in staff and teaching and learning facilities of the highest quality ensures that our students are challenged to achieve their full potential while at University, and are well prepared for the wider world when they leave. Our aim is to provide opportunities to those who are equipped to benefit irrespective of background or personal circumstance.

The UoR is committed to the access participation agenda and recognises that although our student population has diversified over the past five years in terms of ethnicity and disability our current student population disproportionately represents the more advantaged parts of society. Our track record for retaining students once enrolled is however strong (93%[1] in 2016/17), attainment gaps are narrowing and 91% of our 2016 graduates were in employment or study within six months of graduating[2]. Of those who enter full time work, 83% found employment in professional or managerial roles.[3]

This plan reviews our access and participation performance over the period 2012/13 to 2016/17 (the most recent available validated dataset), sets out our access and participation ambitions and objectives, the measures we will take to improve and maintain access and participation and the specific targets for improvement.

A Strategic Whole-Institution Approach

The University aims to align its access and participation strategy, covering access, student success and progression, with the University's overall strategy. The Widening Participation Strategy and Access Agreement Committee (WPSAAC) reports to the University Executive Board, operates strategically to ensure access is aligned to other institutional goals, and informs University policy at the highest level.

In recognition of the importance of both a whole-institution approach and a whole student lifecycle approach, WPSAAC is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and has a membership including Director of Global Recruitment and Admissions, Deans for Teaching and Learning, Director of Student Services and representation from Reading University Students' Union (RUSU). This structure ensures the alignment of our access and participation strategy with our institutional strategies (and vice versa) and, a consistent voice embedding access and participation in both the strategic and operational workings of the University within the academic and professional

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[1] 93% of all Home funded UG entrants completed the year (HESA data supply)
[2] Percentage of 2015/6 leavers who responded to DLHE obtaining first degrees from full-time courses who were employed, studying or both.
[3] Percentage of 2015/6 leavers who responded to DLHE and are working full time

services division of the University. The Dean of Diversity and Inclusion role also works closely with the members of WPSAAC and marks a further commitment to enhancing equality and diversity across the whole institution.

1. Assessment of current performance

1.1 Access Performance

Over the last five years the UoR has grown significantly. In particular Home/EU domiciled undergraduate students have increased by 44% and we are pleased that there has been a corresponding increase in the numbers of entrants from the under-represented groups shown in table 1.

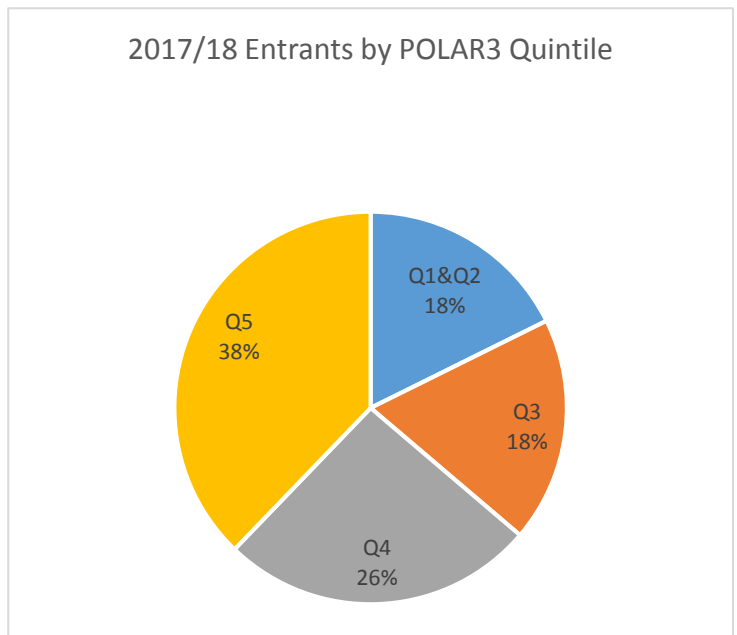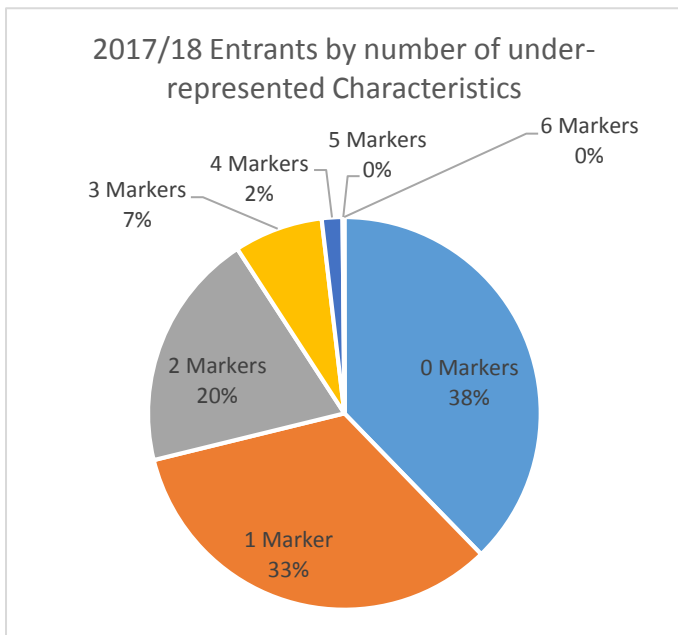Table 1: Increases in number of students recruited since 2012/13

Target Group[4]	State School	BAME	LPNs (POLAR3 Q1)	Disability declared	Mature
% increase since in number 2012/13	46%	83%	39%	92%	66%

In 2017/18 sixty-two percent of (home/EU-domiciled) entrants belonged to one or more groups that are under-represented in higher education nationally[5]. This proportion has seen a four percentage point increase over the last five years, mainly caused by increases in the proportion of disabled and black, Asian and minority ethnic entrants.

Almost one fifth of UoR 2017/18 entrants were from low participation neighbourhoods (Q1 & Q2), but almost 40% were from the most advantaged neighbourhoods.

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[4] The increase in entrants from household incomes of less then £25k was only 13%, however this is not shown in this table as inflationary increases during this period complicates the judgements around whether the increase is comparable.
[5] Target groups used in this analysis were: Disabled; DSA; NS-SEC 4-7; BAME; income <25k; POLAR Q1 or Q2. The calculation did not include Foundation Degree students which we would expect to increase this figure further. Neither did it include state school entrants as we already know that more than four fifths of our entrants fall into this group.

2017/18 Entrants by number of under-represented Characteristics

- 0 Markers 38%
- 1 Marker 33%
- 2 Markers 20%
- 3 Markers 7%
- 4 Markers 2%
- 5 Markers 0%
- 6 Markers 0%

2017/18 Entrants by POLAR3 Quintile

- Q1&Q2 18%
- Q3 18%
- Q4 26%
- Q5 38%

Tables 2-4 show the proportion of entrants for each under-represented group over a five year period up to 2016/17 (the most recent validated dataset available). It is evident that there are some areas where positive progress has been made, but that there are also some where we have, for the first time in this five year period, not achieved our own targets and in fact progress that had been made has reversed.

Although there is inevitable year-to-year fluctuation, since 2012/13 the proportion of entrants who identify as BAME (table 2) and those who have declared a disability have increased by three and four percentage points. The proportion from state schools and low participation neighbourhoods had also increased up until 2015/16, however fell markedly in the 2016/17 entrant cohort. The proportion admitted from and low household income (HHI) families peaked at 26% in the 2014/15 entry but has since fallen. This decline coincides with a period of rapid growth in the size of our intake.

The proportion of entrants who are mature has also declined, however this data does not include entrants to our Foundation Degrees where there is a high proportion of mature students.

Table 2: Proportion of young, full-time, first degree entrants identifying as BAME, disabled, mature and care leaver

Year	Ethnicity - BAME			Disability declared			Mature students*			Care Leavers[6]		
	Actual %	AA Target	HESA bench mark	Actual %	AA Target	HESA bench mark	Actual %	AA Target	HESA bench mark	Actual	AA Target	HESA bench mark
2016/17	19.4	19.5	N/A	15.4	8.5	N/A	6.9	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A
2015/16	17.6	19.0	N/A	14.4	8.3	N/A	7.2	11.8	N/A	8	13	N/A
2014/15	19.4	15.0	N/A	13.7	8.2	N/A	7.6	11.3	N/A	11	10	N/A

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[6] This data is collected through students' own declarations at enrolment, however, we have found that this is not always reliable (many students do not understand the term) and therefore from 2016/17 we have been manually confirming each individual's care leaver status to ensure accurate data.

2013/14	19.0	14.9	N/A	12.2	8.1	N/A	8.0	10.9	N/A	1	7	N/A
2012/13	16.4	14.7	N/A	11.5	8.0	N/A	6.0	10.9	N/A	-	-	N/A

*The population presented does not include students on our four Foundation Degree programmes whom are largely mature students.

Table 3: Proportion of young, full-time, first degree entrants admitted from state schools, Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs), low-income backgrounds

Year	State School*			LPNs (POLAR3 Q1)*			Household income <£25K		
	Actual %	AA Target	HESA bench mark[†]	Actual %	AA Target	HESA bench mark[†]	Actual %	AA Target	HESA bench mark
2016/17	84.3	87.0	86.3	6.1	7.0	8.4	21.3	26.0	N/A
2015/16	87.4	86.5	86.1	7.1	6.5	8.6	23.0	25.5	N/A
2014/15	85.7	83.8	86.6	6.9	5.5	8.6	26.1	20.0	N/A
2013/14	86.1	82.6	86.1	6.5	5.3	8.0	25.0	19.6	N/A
2012/13	84.9	82.6	85.2	6.8	5.3	7.8	23.0	19.6	N/A

*Data taken from HESA Performance Indicators [†] Location adjusted benchmarks

Table 4: Proportion of all full time first degree undergraduates receiving DSA (HESA Performance Indicators table T7)

Year	Actual (%)	*Access Agreement target (%)	HESA benchmark (%)
2016/17	6.3	-	5.9
2015/16	6.4	6.4	6.0
2014/15	6.4	6.3	6.1
2013/14	7.3	6.2	6.0
2012/13	7.0	6.1	5.6

*The proportion of students receiving DSA ceased to be a target for UoR after 2015/16

Intersections of characteristics

Intersections between gender, ethnicity and HHI have been analysed to identify more accurately gaps where examining single characteristics might mask patterns. The main findings were that:

- Despite the overall gender balance being weighted towards female students (57%:43%) gender is equally balanced amongst entrants from low-income households and those that identify as disabled and BAME.
- The increase in BAME entrants (table 1) has been equal across male and female students.
- The proportion of BAME entrants who are from low-income households is almost double the proportion of white entrants. In 2016/17 over 30% of BAME entrants (male and female) were from low-income households.
- A higher proportion of BAME entrants than white entrants are from state schools.
- The reduction in the proportion of entrants with low HHI (see table 2) is seen across male and female entrants and across BAME and white entrants. However the level of reduction is significantly greater for BAME entrants (i.e. around 13 percentage points) as distinct from around four for white entrants.

The analysis of intersections suggests that white people from disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented in our student population.

Overall, despite the fact that UoR has admitted more students from under-represented groups than ever before (see table 1), we recognise that in our recent expansion of student numbers we have not maintained or increased the proportion of new students from a number of underrepresented groups as set out in our targets. We are anxious to change this and have described below (in section 3) a programme of work that will address this.

1.2 Success Performance

The UoR is committed not only to providing access to HE for our target under-represented groups but to ensuring that they are appropriately and effectively supported to complete their studies successfully.

Our retention record is consistently strong with 92.6% of all 2015/16 entrants continuing from year one to year two of their studies, with no more than a four percentage point variation for any under- represented group[7] except for Mature students[8]. This strong retention rate is all the more remarkable given the significant growth in overall student numbers and our high proportion of students from under-represented groups who are known to be more likely to withdraw from HE[9]. A study funded jointly by HEFCE and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation attributed the high retention rate to our university-wide commitment to personal tutoring and to the provision of contextualised study support through our University Study Advisors[10]. The support provided through our Student Wellbeing Service (Disability Office, Counselling Service and mental health advisers) also plays a significant role in supporting students to stay on course and as a result has a

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[7] Under-represented groups monitored: disabled; BAME; mature; income <25k; POLAR Q1 or Q2; school type

[8] In 2015/16 only 82% of mature entrants progressed to year 2 of study, however these percentage values are determined from very small numbers. In total 13 mature students did not progress.

[9] Differences in Student Outcomes: The effect of student characteristics. HEFCE report (March 2018)

[10] Comparing and evaluating the impacts on student retention of different approaches to supporting students through study advice and personal development. https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/what-works-student-retention/Reading_Oxford_Brookes_What_Works_Final_Report

strong sector-wide reputation, particularly for supporting students with mental health conditions.

Annual monitoring of the distribution of degree outcomes and post-graduation destinations for students from under-represented groups confirms that UoR patterns generally align with those from the HEFCE report on 'Differences in Student Outcomes'[11] published in March 2018, which shows that there are pervasive sector-wide differences in academic attainment and progression when students are grouped by, for example, socio-economic status, age, gender, ethnicity, disability and school type. Our own analysis over recent years also confirms that disparities are greatest for male students from these under-represented groups. The widest attainment gap amongst UoR students is between BAME and white students, but there is also an evident gap for students from low-income households and for those who have declared a disability. These are the three groups of students for whom we have set success targets, all of which were exceeded in 2016/17. The percentage of students from low-income backgrounds achieving a first or upper second class degree outcome increasing by 9 percentage points on 2012/13 figures; the percentage of disabled students achieving a first or upper second class degree outcome increasing by almost 10 percentage points; and the percentage of BAME students achieving a first or upper second class degree outcome in 2016/17 increasing by over 13 percentage points in the same time period. Furthermore the proportion of Black, Asian and Chinese students who attained a first or upper second class degree outcome in 2016/17 increased by 13, 14.5 and 22 percentage points (respectively). The attainment gaps have also narrowed for many groups over this period (table 5), but remain significant for a number of ethnic groups. We want to narrow these gaps further.

The 2015/16 and 2016/17 data suggests that there may be an emerging attainment gap between mature and young students' degree attainment. Although the comparatively small numbers involved does mean that the data is prone to annual fluctuation, this is an area that warrants further investigation.

Table 5: Percentage of students from under-represented groups achieving a First or Upper Second class degree (UoR data source)

Under-represented group	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Ethnicity - BAME	59.2%	62.7%	73.2%	72.3%	72.4%
Attainment gap	*14.5*	*11.0*	*9.3*	*9.9*	*9.2*
Black	57.14%	50.94%	75.86%	68.52%	70.00%
Attainment gap	*16.6*	*22.8*	*6.6*	*13.7*	*11.6*
Asian – Chinese	57.89%	64.71%	75.00%	72.22%	80.00%
Attainment gap	*15.8*	*9.0*	*7.5*	*10.0*	*1.6*
Asian – Excl Chinese	57.52%	67.11%	71.97%	71.28%	72.02%
Attainment gap	*16.2*	*6.6*	*10.5*	*10.9*	*9.6*
Mixed	-	-	81.82%	74.65%	75.00%
Attainment gap			*0.7*	*7.5*	*6.6*

[11] Differences in Student Outcomes: The effect of student characteristics. HEFCE report (March 2018)

Other Ethnicity	68.54%	69.14%	77.78%	70.59%	65.63%
Attainment gap	*5.2*	*4.6*	*4.7*	*11.6*	*16.0*
Household income <£25K	69.8%	71.6%	79.9%	80.5%	78.9%
Attainment gap	*3.9*	*2.1*	*2.6*	*1.7*	*2.7*
POLAR 3 Q1&Q2	75.0%	78.7%	82.5%	82.3%	82%
Attainment gap	*-1.3*	*-5.0*	*0.0*	*-0.1*	*-0.4*
Disability declared	68.9%	72.9%	78.4%	80.6%	78.6%
Attainment gap	*4.8*	*0.8*	*4.1*	*1.6*	*3.0*
Mature students	74.8%	73.4%	79.3%	72.9%	72.5%
Attainment gap	*-1.1*	*0.3*	*3.2*	*9.3*	*9.1*
Care leavers*	Numbers too small to be meaningful				
University total	73.7%	73.7%	82.5%	82.2%	81.6%

*Numbers of care leavers are too small to provide meaningful data

Intersections of characteristics

Intersections between gender, ethnicity and HHI have been analysed to identify more accurately gaps where examining single characteristics might mask patterns. The main findings were that gender and ethnicity were significant when combined with other characteristics.

- Although there is no significant difference in the retention rates for BAME and white students. There is a persistent lower rate of retention for male BAME students, for BAME students who have declared a disability and for BAME students from low-income households.
- In 2016/17 there was a 9 point difference between the proportion of BAME students achieving a first class or upper second degree outcome reduced from 14 points in 2012/13. However, this difference was much greater for male BAME students (18.5 points).
- There is a persistent pattern of a lower proportion of male students from low-income households achieving first and upper second class degrees, which is not as evident for female students.

Overall, although we are making strong progress in enhancing the degree outcomes of under-represented groups further progress is needed and we have set out below (in section 3) a programme of work that will address this.

1.3 Progression Performance

The differentials between success in securing employment or further study opportunities are not as marked but are nevertheless present primarily for students from low-income backgrounds and for disabled students. In setting our targets we therefore recognize that support for both academic attainment and progression into employment and/or study are important. Tables 6a and 6b shows that positive progress has been made in relation to our two target groups for progression (i.e. disabled students and those from low-income household). However, in the case of students who have declared a disability there was a downturn in the most recent (2015/16) DHLE outcomes for both employment rates and professional/managerial employment. We are conscious of the significant fluctuations in the progression outcomes for mature students, however small numbers are likely to be main cause of this[12]. In contrast to the national pattern, the professional/managerial employment rates for UoR BAME graduates are consistently higher than the University average. This holds true even when the BAME classification is further disaggregated.[13]

Table 6a and 6b: Employment status of student progression under-represented groups* (DLHE source)

Employment/study rate	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Ethnicity - BAME	91.9%	90.7%	92.2%	92.0%
Progression gap	1.2	4.2	3.7	-0.6
Household income <£25K	87.9%	92.0%	91.9%	92.3%
Progression gap	5.2	2.9	4.0	-0.9
POLAR 3 Q1&Q2	85.8%	91.2%	90.2%	90.0%
Progression gap	7.3	3.7	5.7	1.4
Disability declared	88.1%	93.3%	93.3%	87.5%
Progression gap	5.0	1.6	2.6	3.9
Mature students	87.7%	94.2%	86.7%	98.0%
Progression gap	5.4	0.7	9.2	-6.6
Care leavers	Numbers too small to be meaningful			
University total	93.1%	94.9%	95.9%	91.4%

Professional/Managerial level employment **	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Ethnicity - BAME	81.0%	79.1%	84.9%	84.5%
Progression gap	-5.0	-5.6	-7.6	-1.1
Household income <£25K	71.0%	72.3%	79.3%	85.3%

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[12] The mature student DLHE response population amounted to only 60 graduates in the 2014/15 return whereas in 2013/14 and 2015/16 the population was around 200

[13] This is the overarching pattern, although the numbers can be very small so the yearly figures can fluctuate dramatically from one year to the next. In the 2015/16 DLHE survey 79% of Black, 87% of Asian and 82% of mixed ethnicity graduates were in professional/managerial roles compared to 83% of white graduates.

Progression gap	5.0	1.2	-2.0	-1.9
POLAR 3 Q1&Q2	75.6%	74.8%	79.5%	85.3%
Progression gap	*0.4*	*-1.3*	*-2.2*	*-1.9*
Disability declared	82.4%	76.6%	81.0%	78.1%
Progression gap	*-6.4*	*-3.1*	*-3.7*	*5.3*
Mature students	87.8%	94.2%	75.8%	94.0%
Progression gap	*-11.8*	*-20.7*	*1.5*	*-10.6*
Care leavers	Numbers too small to be meaningful			
University total	76.0%	73.5%	77.3%	83.40%

*Proportion of home funded, UK domiciled students who responded to the DLHE survey.

**Proportion of those in full time work only

Intersections of characteristics

Intersections between gender, ethnicity and HHI have been analysed to identify more accurately gaps where examining single characteristics might mask patterns. Although caution needs to be applied due to small numbers in some groups there are some consistent patterns relating to gender intersections. The main findings were that

- Although a slightly lower proportion of male graduates were in employment or further study than female students, there is a persistent pattern of a higher proportion of male students securing professional/managerial roles
- A higher proportion of female students with low HHI tend to be in employment than male students, i.e. higher male unemployment. This is further exacerbated for white male students from low HHI families in the last two DLHE surveys
- Although there is a higher proportion of students with a declared disability being unemployed than those without a disability, this is heavy influenced by the high proportion of male disabled students that are unemployed six months after graduation
- However, a higher proportion of male students secure professional/managerial employment and the strong correlation with gender is consistent regardless of ethnicity, disability or HHI

Overall, we are cautiously positive about the pattern of improvement shown in this data, however, it is clear that there is a need to support female students across the board to secure professional/managerial roles and male students to avoid unemployment.

2. Ambition and strategy

2.1 Strategic ambitions for Access and Participation at the University of Reading

In formulating our strategic ambitions for access and participation we have considered 1) our access and participation performance, 2) our widening participation strategy to date, 3) the institutional strategy to continue to grow the size of the undergraduate population and 4) the nature of the institution. Our average entry tariff places us at the top end of middle tariff universities, but our subject spread is more similar to many high tariff HEIs, with a significant proportion of academic subjects as distinct from applied subjects.

The UoR access and participation ambitions are to:
1. Encourage and facilitate access to HE for anyone who is able to benefit from the education provided
2. Ensure that students who begin their studies at UoR remain on course and complete their studies in line with their goals and ambitions
3. Reduce attainment gaps that correlate with ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability and gender
4. Improve the employment progression of students with disabilities and from disadvantaged backgrounds

Our specific objectives are to:
a) Significantly expand our sustained engagement outreach programmes which span key stage 2 to 5 (see below).
b) Create a deep rooted network of coherent relationships between the UoR and the local community in Whitley[14], with the dual aims of increasing educational engagement, attainment and confidence, understanding of HE, and to develop a richer understanding of the barriers to social mobility through research.
c) Further develop collaborative initiatives, including current partnerships with other HEIs and other organisations to extend our reach and reflect a broader representation of higher education provision within our outreach activity.
d) Increase the proportion of UoR entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds, through for example: ensuring UoR is an attractive choice, contextual offer making to ensure equality of opportunity, explicit pathways for those with alternative qualifications, financial support packages, and logistical or additional support for students with disabilities.
e) Identify and develop pro-active means of tackling issues of differential social and culture capital amongst the student population.
f) Enhance the inclusivity of curriculum content, teaching, learning and assessment.
g) Enhance support, guidance and development for under-represented students in their academic studies and in managing the difficult aspects of their lives outside study.
h) Make more effective use of engagement and other data to identify under-represented students who are struggling in order to implement pro-active personalised intervention.
i) Encourage and facilitate under-represented students to gain appropriate work experience and professional development.

These objectives reflect our ambition to focus on the whole student lifecycle and are reflected in the range of access and participation measures identified in section 3 of this

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[14] Whitley is an area of extremely low HE participation. It is in the bottom 1% of all wards in England in this respect

plan; in the balance of spend described in section 4; and in the specific targets identified in the Resource Plan.

Wherever possible our overall approach will be inclusive and holistic but which closely targets challenges/barriers experienced by under-represented groups. Many of our Success and Progression measures are mainstream and we treat access, recruitment and wider community outreach as complementary rather than separate activities. Integrating the strategic aims of all these activities and aligning the objectives across the institution ensures that the maximum range of activity undertaken across the University is harnessed to enhance access and participation and ensures an embedded whole-institution approach.

2.2 Under-represented Groups Targeted

Based on assessment of our performance over recent years we have identified separate target groups for the three areas of activity (recruitment and outreach, success and progression) that span the student lifecycle. They reflect a commitment to contribute to the sector wide objectives on access as well as our own institutional analysis of areas for improvement in student success and progression performance. This explicit set of target groups helps to align our activity accordingly.

Table 7: Target groups for 2019/20

	Recruitment and outreach	Student success	Student progression
Students from low-income backgrounds: (<£25k)	✓	✓	✓
Black Asian and Minority Ethnic students	✓	✓	
State school students	✓		
Students from Low Participation (in HE) Neighbourhoods	✓		
Disabled students		✓	✓

The target groups and milestones for each are set out until 2020/21 in the accompanying Resource Plan. Targets for recruitment are based on new entrants to the University. They demonstrate a commitment to continue to diversify representation at the UoR and to enhance opportunity for under-represented groups.

All three targets for student success are focused on the proportion of students achieving first class or upper second class degrees. The student progression targets are based on the DLHE survey data as the only currently available national measure of student progression after graduation. We have chosen to use both the measure of graduate employment/further study and the proportion of those in work who are in professional or managerial roles.

We recognise that it will take some time for new initiatives to have an impact on the targets for student success and progression and therefore feel it is important to demonstrate

progress through operational targets (see resource plan) that will allow us to monitor and assess the effective implementation or expansion of new measures.

2.3 Complementary work funded through other sources

Across the sector and even within HEIs we recognise the potential for overlap and duplication of outreach activity targeted at particular cohorts or schools. As such, we align our activity to complement existing programmes, and work to develop new activity building on successful models and addressing identified needs and gaps. This is reflected in outreach programmes which are timed and delivered to enhance and build on other activity where relevant – for example programmes with partners such as NCOP, Pathways to Property, and our new Healthreach initiative – delivered with funding from Health Education England and the LEP. These initiatives all benefit from shared working practices and coordination with central outreach teams, particularly with regard to content development, monitoring and evaluation; informing further interactions and better evidencing the impact. Further information about each initiative is detailed in section 3.1.

2.4 Evaluation and monitoring

The WPSAAC chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) is the body responsible for the preparation and implementation and monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan. This Committee reports to the University Board for Teaching and Learning and the University Executive Board. Amongst its other duties, this Committee evaluates measures set out in the Access and Participation Plan and assesses progress against targets and milestones. Officers from RUSU sit on the WPSAAC. A key aspect of monitoring and evaluation is having a detailed understanding of the relevant statistics which is supported through a dedicated Planning Officer with responsibility for WP data and monitoring, who has developed a standard dataset for assessing and monitoring progress against the Access Agreement targets and HESA benchmarks. This includes analysis of our performance in relation to national and regional trends using the HEIDI datasets. In addition, our Access and Recruitment Officers are responsible for ensuring that we fully use and contribute to the HEAT service.

In 2018/19 we are introducing a more systematic and University-wide approach to recording of outreach activity. This will allow more effective recording, monitoring and evaluation of our outreach activities (in particular, our intensive outreach activities) and will facilitate University-wide shared practice in tracking the results. It will also enable us to develop a picture of the interactions individual students are engaging in, and to tailor future activity with those students accordingly.

It is however recognized that, for outreach, success and progression activity, the ultimate measures of effectiveness can often only be determined several years later, although we are also identifying more immediate indicators based either on feedback, student behaviour or analysis of data.

The UoR is a founder member of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) membership service which we use to target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activity. The University is represented on HEAT's Steering Group. By working collaboratively, we can critically reflect on our approach to outreach data management which in turn helps us to continuously improve the way we monitor, evaluate and build evidence of impact. Using HEAT we are able to track student progression to any HEI, including our own institution, so that we can assess the relationship between outreach programmes, disadvantage, attainment and patterns of progression into HE as a whole.

In 2016, the HEAT data relating to the first cohort of the Reading Scholars Programme was released, confirming that 60% of these scholars progressed to higher education. The data released in 2018 showed that the progression rate was 70%.

We undertook our annual evaluation of the Reading Bursary Scheme (which accounts for the vast majority of financial support spend) using the OFFA toolkit. The outcomes indicated that the scheme is an effective means of supporting students. Controlling for a range of demographic characteristics we found there was no statically significant difference between the continuation rate of bursary recipients and non-bursary recipients. Furthermore student feedback via the survey tool evidenced a positive impact: 93% felt they participate with fellow students, 93% concentrate on their studies and not worry about finances, 90% were more satisfied with student life 88% felt less anxious and 82% could Balance their commitments (work/study/social). 95.4% rated the bursary as important or very important for their ability to financially continue with their studies and 40% of respondents said they would have been unable to cover essential study or living costs without the bursary.

We follow an annual cycle of evaluation and reporting, where activity owners are required to complete an evaluation template. They describe the access and participation objectives of the activity, the method of evaluation deployed, the findings and an indication of how the findings will impact on future plans for the activity. These submissions are reviewed and feedback provided, particularly concerning the development of more effective and focussed evaluation methodologies.

There is currently a significant diversity of approach in evaluating activities including use of immediate feedback questionnaires, our Reading Student Survey, as well as tracking different outcomes over the short term and over the medium term. In order to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our evaluation work we have begun to develop an evaluation framework that will be used to ensure a coherent institutional approach to monitoring and evaluation. This will establish greater clarity of expectations with regard to the assessment of effectiveness of on-course student success and progression support in order to better inform decision making related to future resource investment and expansion. We will also create an evaluation toolkit that will guide staff from all parts of the University in how to undertake appropriate, robust, but proportionate evaluation. The framework will be informed by Kirkpatrick's model of evaluation.

2.5 Equality and Diversity Strategy

The UoR is committed to furthering equality and diversity amongst its students and staff. There are strong links between our Access and Participation and our Diversity and Inclusion strategies and activities. The Director of Student Services oversees the implementation and monitoring of access and participation activities as well as the annual monitoring and assessment of student related equality and diversity data. This results in a close alignment of widening participation and equality and diversity priorities.

Our UoR Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for students has identified areas of improvement relating specifically to gender, ethnicity and disability in terms of representation, degree attainment and employment outcomes. These areas are directly aligned with the targets set out in this Access and Participation Plan. Progress against these targets are reported on in our annual Diversity and Inclusion Report and assessed at the University's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board which is chaired by the Vice Chancellor and comprises key stakeholders for areas that need to take and monitor action.

As part of our annual quality assurance processes academic schools are required to reflect and comment on patterns of success according to a range of demographic and protected characteristics. Data dashboards are provided centrally to enable this monitoring at local level.

When new access and participation activities are established there is a requirement to consider in advance the potential impact on students from our target under-represented groups and those with protected characteristics in order to ensure due regard to the Equality Act. The annual monitoring and evaluation process includes an expectation to review any actual impact on these groups.

2.6 Consulting and Working with Students

RUSU has been involved in the creation of all of our Access Agreements since 2012/13 and in the general formulation of strategy and policy on widening participation and access. The WPSAAC membership includes at least one of the sabbatical officers and has been involved in drafting this plan. RUSU and the UoR have a strong working relationship founded on partnership and synergy in a number of projects and initiatives. RUSU and the University work collaboratively on outreach activity, and this is being further developed in alignment with RUSU's strategic aim to create more opportunities for students to volunteer and interact positively with the local and wider community. The Community and Development sabbatical officer role highlights the importance of this work. The Diversity sabbatical officer role (introduced in 2016/17) also illustrates RUSU's commitment to enhancing diversity and inclusion across all aspects of student life.

In preparation for drafting this 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan, the community of 400 'course reps' were invited to participate in a discussion about priorities for access spend. The course reps are a diverse community of students and we anticipate that this will be become a regular forum for discussing access and participation priorities. The issues that most concerned students were levels of financial support available to students and mental health support, both of which are addressed in section 3.

3. Access, student success and progression measures

Our access, success and progression measures are outlined below in four categories and mapped to the access and participation ambitions and objectives identified in section 2.1.

	Access and Participation Objectives	Access and Participation Ambitions
1. Access activity	a) Significantly expand our sustained engagement outreach programmes which span key stage 2 to 5 (see below). b) Create a deep rooted network of coherent relationships between the UoR and the local community in Whitley[15]. The aims being, on the one hand, to raise levels of understanding of HE, aspirations, and educational engagement and attainment, and on the other hand to develop a richer understanding of the barriers to HE through action research projects. c) To further develop collaborative initiatives, including current partnerships with other HEIs and other organisations to extend our reach	1. Encourage and facilitate access to HE for anyone who can benefit from the education provided

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[15] Whitley is an area of extremely low HE participation. It is in the bottom 1% of all wards in England in this respect.

			and reflect a broader representation of higher education provision within our outreach activity.		
		d)	Increase the proportion of UoR entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds		
2.	Financial Support	1)	Increase the proportion of UoR entrants from disadvantaged backgrounds		
3.	Success activity	e)	Identify and develop pro-active means of tackling issues of differential social and culture capital amongst the student population	2.	Ensure that students who begin their studies at UoR remain on course and complete their studies in line with their goals and ambitions
		f)	Enhance the inclusivity of curriculum content, teaching, learning and assessment	3.	Reduce attainment gaps that correlate with ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability and gender
		g)	Enhance support, guidance and development for under-represented students in their academic studies and in managing the difficult aspects of their lives outside study		
		h)	Make more effective use of engagement and other data to identify under-represented students who are struggling in order to implement pro-active personalised intervention		
4.	Progression activity	i)	Encourage and facilitate under-represented students to gain appropriate work experience and professional development	4.	Improve the employment progression of students with disabilities and from disadvantaged backgrounds

3.1 Access Activity

Objective a) Significantly expand our sustained engagement outreach programmes which span key stage 2 to 5

Building on the activity delivered in recent years, we now aim to strengthen and significantly expand our work to raise the aspiration and attainment of potential students of all ages, from primary school upwards, by undertaking more sustained, long-term outreach work and increasing the provision for younger age groups broadly. By 2020/21 we aim to be engaging around 1500[16] young people every year in our existing and planned sustained engagement outreach programme[17].

Key stage/year Group	Scheme	Objectives	Activity
KS 5/ Year 12	Reading Scholars (yr 12)	Understanding of HE Raising attainment Raising aspiration and confidence	includes IAG sessions, subject masterclasses, e-mentoring, student shadowing and a summer school, with a range of other activity, offering regular and intensive contact with UoR across nine subject strands
KS 4 / Year 10	Reading Scholars (yr 10)	Understanding of HE Raising attainment Raising aspiration and confidence	includes; support for academic study, aspiration raising activities, IAG, and e-mentoring, all delivered alongside exposure to new subjects and University life generally.

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[16] This represents a roughly 500% increase in engagement

[17] A sustained engagement outreach programme is a programme where the same individuals engage with the university over a significant period of time (e.g. 12 months or more)

KS 3 & 4/ Years 7-11	Ignite programme	Understanding of HE Raising attainment Raising aspiration and confidence	Includes sustained interventions throughout the school life, aspiration raising activities, IAG interventions at key decision points exposure to new subjects and University life generally. Includes a programme of 'Find Your Future' subject themed days to demonstrate the wide range of university subjects and careers. This programme also enables progression to Scholars.
KS 3 – 5/ Years 7-13	The Brilliant Club	Understanding of HE Raising attainment Raising aspiration and confidence	Includes aspiration raising University visits with IAG sessions, 7 attainment raising tutorials with academic researcher and ongoing e-mentoring throughout
KS 2 /Year 5/6	University of Monsters (led by the RUSU)	Understanding of HE	Includes a series of visits to the University, with supporting activity undertaken in school, introducing them to University and engaging them in campus life, subject taster sessions and culminating in a Graduation ceremony. The aim is to demystify universities and to help children see themselves as future students

Objective b) Create a deep rooted network of coherent relationships between the UoR and the local community in Whitley

The UoR has a long history of engagement with the Whitley community and we aim to continue and develop this further through a range of projects. This work forms a means by which the UoR provides direct support one of the most socially deprived areas of the country that is in the lowest 20% for HE participation. Projects include:

Partnership with the Whitley Excellence Cluster of Primary and Secondary Schools and the Aspire2 charity[18]. The collaboration supports children at these schools to reach their academic potential and to aspire to university level study. It aims to address deeply entrenched attitudes towards educational aspirations in this community, by working with young people from primary school age upwards with a particular emphasis on co-curricular activities and education beyond the classroom

- A particular strand of activity focusses on outdoor learning. The University has undertaken important research that demonstrates the positive impact of outdoor educational experience. Most notably, Bilton, James and Wilson (2005) associate outdoor learning with improved academic attainment, while Fuller (2014 & 2016) associates such interventions with increased pupil confidence and attainment, renegotiating identity and raised aspirations to participate in higher education.
- Another strand involves activities designed to expose children and adults to the university, e.g. a 'University of Whitley' taster day for children and their families. An annual poetry day is also hosted on the campus for a number of schools involving children and their teachers.
- Whitley Schools participate in our Students in Schools scheme, which exposes children to University students in their own classrooms many of whom share

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[18] The Whitley Excellence Cluster (WEC) was formed in 2004 and consists of two secondary schools and five primary schools in South Reading. Originally WEC received funding directly from the Department of Education as part of the national Excellence in Cities initiative. From 2008 to 2011, funding came through the Reading Borough Council, but when this came to an end the University of Reading began to part fund the work.

similar backgrounds to the children. The scheme is supports raising attainment in challenging schools e.g.

- School reading volunteers – allow primary schools to expand the opportunities that children have to read with an adult which is fundamental for their broader attainment, particularly for children where reading is not undertaken at home.
- Specialist subject volunteers - in secondary schools our volunteers are primarily used to provide one-to-one or small group support to children who are struggling with a particular subject or topic with particular demand in Maths, Sciences and Modern Languages.
- Our international native speaker students support pupils who have arrived at local schools with little or no English. They provide intensive one-to-one support to pupils who are otherwise isolated in the classroom and are limited in how they can engage with other children, their teacher and their learning.

The recently established **"Marvellous Mums"** initiative is an innovative project to empower one of the key influencers in the lives' of young people in Whitley. Research confirms the importance of an influential adult to supporting and inspiring young people, but work in the Whitley area revealed that although mothers are key influencers and have aspiration for their children they don't always have the knowledge or the confidence to inspire and motivate their children to fulfil their potential. Research had also identified that the community wanted to drive some of the many initiatives in their area themselves so we have established a 'Marvellous Mums' group who identify for themselves what support they need in order to be able to inspire and motivate their children. The UoR then facilitates the provision they have requested. This work is currently small scale but as engagement grows it has the potential to be transformational for our outreach work in the area. Since publication of a TES article[19] on this initiative there has been substantial interest in the project from a number of other Universities.

Running alongside all of the above is a strand of **research activity** that is informing and being informed by the UoR work in the Whitley area. An example is the University's work as part of the **Whitley for Real Project** which is being co-developed by Reading Borough Council and the UoR, in partnership with the community and other stakeholders, to access the 'local voice' in South Reading. The aim is to influence activities in the area, so that local resources can be targeted more effectively, ultimately helping to reduce deprivation and widen access to higher education, employment and training. By engaging with young residents through the 'young Whitley Researchers' programme, the project aims to explore and tackle barriers to HE and 'decent' work. The project is working with schools to train 'young Whitley Researchers' who use participatory methods to reflect on their own experience but who also engage with their peers.

Objective c) To further develop collaborative initiatives to extend our reach and reflect a broader representation of higher education provision

The UoR is committed to a range of collaborative projects with other Universities Schools/Colleges and subject specific organisations.

We are currently a member of the **Study Higher National Collaborative Outreach Programme**, working with University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Bucks New

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[19] https://www.tes.com/news/mums-word-bridging-disadvantage-gap

University to increase progression to university from wards with the most significant gap between attainment and participation in Higher Education. We will continue to contribute to a sustained outreach programme with students from Year 9 to 13 across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. Close collaboration between Study Higher and the UoR ensures that schools are offered a broad range of activity, reducing overlap and allowing schools to easily access both partner and institutional activity. The partnership also undertakes a programme of activities with young people in care.

As of 2017/18, we are working in partnership with **The Brilliant Club** providing academic researchers to deliver series of attainment-raising seminars and hosting aspiration-raising campus visits, all designed to encourage and facilitate progression to higher education.

We are academic partners of two **University Technical Colleges**. Our contribution includes support for curriculum planning and pedagogies, academic support, a programme of outreach activity (IAG and subject-specific) and access to facilities. The UTCs in question are also engaged in our Year 10 Scholars programme.

We deliver the **Foundation Degree** in Children's Development and Learning through four FE Colleges. This programme recruits approximately 50 students per year the majority of whom are mature and many from low-income households.

The **Pathways to Property** initiative is a programme for Year 12 students in UK state schools and colleges who would like to find out more about a career in the property sector. Led by the Reading Real Estate Foundation (RREF) at the UoR, the initiative is supported by British Land, one of the largest property development and investment companies in the UK, the educational charity The Sutton Trust and other leading real estate firms and charitable trusts. The Pathways to Property scheme includes a residential summer School at the UoR, industry-led talks in schools throughout the year, work shadowing, and undergraduate mentoring, and is particularly important in allowing students to benefit from the access to work experience, often a barrier to students from disadvantaged backgrounds making successful applications both to study and work in this sector.

Healthreach - We have established an outreach programme working with primary schools upwards to widen participation into health-related courses and professions. A key feature is a virtual learning environment, funded jointly by Health Education England and the Thames Valley LEP. The sessions provided by this facility will form the cornerstone of the programme, and will benefit and complement existing outreach activities in areas such as pharmacy, psychology, biomedical sciences and speech and language therapy as well as health and life science careers in general. Working with our close partner NHS Trusts (including Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust and Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust) and local GP networks, the Healthreach programme will culminate in work experience and clinical placement opportunities for young people who otherwise would not have access to them.

We are involved in the **Chemistry for All programme**, funded and coordinated by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and involving multiple Higher Education Institution partners, which aims to widen access into chemistry.

Objective d) Increase the proportion of UoR entrants from disadvantaged groups

We recognise that the proportion of our entrants from disadvantaged groups has reduced and will put in place specific and additional measures to address all stages of the pre and post applicant journey in order to ensure we reverse this pattern. Specifically we will:

- Undertake attainment raising activity with targeted schools and colleges who current perform below the national average. Many students from under-represented groups have the aspiration to access Higher Education, but do not have support to develop the additional study or personal skills required to achieve their full potential or make a successful application. In 2017/18 we established a new role within the University to develop a programme of study skills and attainment raising activity embedded within our outreach provision to provide students particularly from low HE participation neighbourhoods and State Schools (with low HE progression) with the tools and development they need to access higher education.

- Pro-actively target schools and colleges with a high proportion of under-represented groups to participate in our programme of on and off-campus IAG and subject taster activity. Previously we have taken a reactive approach to delivering this activity, and although we have prioritised schools and colleges in disadvantaged areas should they request this support, we will now be pro-active in identifying target schools to engage with to ensure the students who need this most are able to benefit.

- Establish programmes of UoR specific outreach and recruitment activity to support students from under-represented groups both pre-and post-application in targeted widening participation areas beyond our current reach. Regionally based officers (initially working in South Wales and West Midlands) will, from 2018/19, work intensively to raise the profile of UoR among under-represented groups, deliver regional events and IAG programmes across the application lifecycle for target schools, colleges and individuals, facilitate engagement for these groups with events at UoR campus in person and digitally, and act as a personal advisor to applicants from under-represented groups.

- In collaboration with colleges and schools in our region, identify and proactively promote progression opportunities to UoR degrees for those undertaking alternative qualifications. We will complement this with specific IAG and attainment raising activity and enhance the profile of alternative qualifications in our promotional materials. The aim is to build visible and well understood pathways onto our degrees from colleges and schools in our region offering such qualifications, but also to ensure that individuals further away can clearly identify a progression route into UoR where it is appropriate.

- We will assess and extend our current contextual offer-making to ensure that students applying to UoR from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds can benefit from contextualised offer-making, including those students who need to study locally in order to access HE provision. Currently our contextual offer-making is restricted to students undertaking our Scholars Programme, however the aim in extending the practice is to ensure that all applicants with these identified barriers can benefit from a more holistic consideration of their application and, where eligible, be made a contextual offer. Through this explicit approach we aim to encourage many more people to see UoR as a possible choice and ensure transparent equality of opportunity during the confirmation process."

- Continue and enhance the support available for students with disabilities throughout the enquiry, application and admissions process right up to, and including, an Orientation Day just prior to enrolment. At pre-entry taster days, we provide support such as sign language interpreters, or one-to- one assistance, and our bursaries support other disability-related needs, and travel.

- Individual, tailored advice, support and consideration for applicants who are care-experienced, refugee applicants and applicants who's only HE option is UoR for life circumstance reasons.
- Provide a range of financial support packages as outlined below.

3.2 Financial Support for Students

We have consulted with and listened to students on what is most useful to them and therefore the default option for financial support is a cash bursary, though students will be able to opt for a fee waiver should they wish. Evaluation of our financial support (using the OFFA Financial Support Toolkit) provides strong evidence of a positive impact on retention and success and supports our strategy to invest access funds in this area. For students entering in 2019/10 we are increasing the eligibility threshold to £27k reflecting inflationary increases since the bursary scheme was established in 2012/13. Furthermore, we will direct a proportion of our financial support budget to discretionary funding through schemes such as the placement bursaries and the University Hardship Fund.

Eligible students entering in 2019/20 will receive financial awards under the following schemes:

- **Reading Bursary Scheme (RBS):** All eligible students[20] from households with annual incomes of less than £27k will receive a cash award of £1,100[21] in each year of undergraduate study.[22]
- **Postgraduate ITT students**: Eligible students from households with annual incomes of less than £27k will receive an award worth £500.
- **Care Leavers, Foyer students[23] and estranged students:** As part of our ongoing commitment to care-leaver students and in recognition of the specific needs of these three groups of students, we intend to supplement the standard RBS provision by offering additional financial support of £1,100 in each year of study.
- **Refugee Bursaries and fee waivers:** Eligible students registered on a range of courses (foundation courses, language courses and undergraduate courses) will receive a bursary and/or fee waiver relevant to their eligibility for funding from Student Finance. We aim to optimise the level of support available to the various categories of refugees through:
  - pre-sessional English (11 week course) scholarships (fee waiver)
  - Foundation Year[24] and Undergraduate Scholarship (fee waiver & living costs equal to the maximum maintenance loan provided by Student Finance[25]) for a refugee student not eligible for funding from Student Finance Authorities)
  - Foundation Year[26] and Undergraduate Scholarship (living costs top up, i.e. the difference between what is available from Student Finance and what the University considers as reasonable costs associated with studying at

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[20] Eligible students are UG students who are eligible for funding through the Student Finance Authorities of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the EU. Degree Apprenticeship students are not eligible for Reading Bursaries.
[21] Increased from £1000 to £1100 for 2018/19 entrants.
[22] Eligibility for these awards will be assessed at the beginning of each year.
[23] Foyer students are students who have come to the University from Foyer accommodation for homeless young people
[24] One-year Integrated Foundation Year.
[25] Confirmation of amount total amount will be available on our Fees and Funding webpage once the figures have been published by DfE.
[26] One-year integrated Foundation Year.

Reading[27]) for refugee students eligible for Student Finance maintenance loan

- **Foundation Degree Fee Waivers**: Students entering our Foundation Degree in Children's Development and Learning or progressing onto our BA Children's Development and Learning programme[28] will receive a 50% fee waiver; this waiver applies to both years of the Foundation Degree[29].
- **Placement Bursaries**: Students with HHI of less than £42k may apply to receive a bursary of up to £1,000 to support them to cover the cost of undertaking a placement as part of their degree programme.
- **University Hardship Fund**: Any student in financial hardship may apply to the University Hardship fund.
- **Part-time students:** Part-time students will be eligible for the above financial support on a pro-rata basis.
- **Year Abroad or year-in-industry/placement students:** despite not paying the full fee, students on a year abroad or a year-long placement will continue to receive the full amount of any bursary that they are otherwise eligible for.
- **Widening Participation and Access Travel bursary scheme**: Covers the costs of travelling to on-campus events (e.g. open days, taster days etc.) for those from any of our under-represented target groups.

Students commencing their studies prior to 2019/20 will be eligible for financial support as outlined in the Access Agreement relevant to their year of entry.

3.3 Success Activity

The UoR has a strong student retention record which we attribute to continued commitment to and investment in

- embedded personal and academic tutoring
- contextualised study support (one-to-one, workshops, embedded in the curriculum, embedded ASK advisors)
- our establishing peer assisted learning scheme
- close working with our Student Wellbeing Service (and our mental health advisors)
- school/departmental disability officers network and community of practice
- Peer transition mentors for all UG students, as well as academic mentors and social mentors for students with disabilities
- campus environment and first year hall accommodation
- vibrant Students' Union whose wealth of activities, clubs and societies foster a sense of belonging to the University and allows students to form alternative support networks
- advice and guidance provided by the Students' Union officers with responsibility specifically for: disabled students, mature students and BAME students
- appropriate and effective financial support packages

However, much is changing in Higher Education and the experiences of young people in society is more challenging than ever before. To maintain this high level of retention and to ensure the success of increasing numbers of students with more diverse needs (academic

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[27] Confirmation of amount total amount will be available on our Fees and Funding webpage once the figures have been published by DfE.

[28] We are particularly keen to support these students because ca. 80% are mature students, ca. 95% are female (many with families) and many are on low-incomes. When qualified they have a very strong impact on the local community.

[29] Note that recipients of these fee waivers are not eligible for other financial awards.

and welfare) significant additional measures are required. Outlined below are examples of initiatives, projects and services that have or will be implemented to improve support for under-represented students.

Objective e) Identify and develop pro-active means of tackling issues of differential social and culture capital amongst the student population

- Ongoing delivery and development of our new pre-arrival induction course (launched in 2017/18) to enhance effective transition into HE academic learning
- Continuation of peer transition mentoring
- Expansion of peer assisted learning
- Provision of specific guidance and named contacts for under-represented groups (e.g. commuter students, care leavers, refugees, student parents, transgender students etc.)

These activities are aimed particularly at supporting students from low HE participation neighbourhoods and State Schools (with low HE progression) including BAME students, where we know there to be high proportions with no family or local experience of Higher Education. In addition peer-assisted learning will support students who may learn in different ways, e.g. as a result of a specific learning disability.

Objective f) Enhance the inclusivity of curriculum content, teaching, learning and assessment

- Development of the inclusive pedagogies and curricula strand of the Curriculum Framework Project which is guiding the design and cyclical review of all UG degrees
- Implementation of a new university-wide policy on Inclusive Teaching, Learning and Assessment requiring all teaching to comply with an explicit set of expectations which ensures the a baseline level of accessibility as standard thereby reducing the requirements for reactionary reasonable adjustments
- Implementation of technology to support enhanced accessibility of learning and learning materials. Implementation of this across the board enhances inclusivity
- Continuing work to address the ethnicity attainment gap, it's causes and ways of addressing it, including submission for the Race Equality Charter Mark (summer 2018) and implementation of its action plan and a new qualitative research project on the 'lived experience' of UoR BAME students

These activities are aimed particularly at supporting students for whom there are currently attainment gaps, e.g. BAME students and disabled students.

Objective g) Enhance support, guidance and development for under-represented students in their academic studies and in managing the difficult aspects of their lives outside study

- Continued delivery of mental health training for staff to support early identification and intervention, alongside pre-emptive resilience training and development for students
- Provision of 24/7 online anonymous peer support for mental health (Big White Wall launching in Oct 2018)
- Transform the role of the personal tutor into an academic tutor focussed on academic support and development to enhance academic attainment
- Establish a team of Welfare Officers to provide professional support for students with welfare needs. The individual welfare officers will serve as named contacts and

have specific responsibilities for particular under-represented groups with support needs e.g. care leavers, refugees, student parents, student carers, transgender and non-binary students etc.

- Monitoring the impact of the changes to DSA funding on retention and success and responding with appropriate interventions
- Academic and social mentoring for students with specific disabilities. This support directly contributes to retention and success
- Investigate the apparent emerging attainment gap between mature and young students in order to identify effective means of addressing the issue

These activities are aimed particularly at supporting students with disabilities, students who suffer from mental health difficulties and students who encounter significant welfare challenges while at University. We have found that a disproportionate number of the later belong to one or more of our under-represented groups.

Objective h) Make more effective use of engagement and other data to identify under-represented students who are struggling in order to implement pro-active personalised intervention

We believe that effective use of data (on attendance, engagement, performance etc) to identify issues early and channel appropriate support is the key to ensuring that all students access the wealth of support available, stay on course and are successful in their studies. A data driven approach will allow us to target interventions to individuals in need rather than rely on targeting based on ethnicity, age or socio-economic status. We will therefore

- Continue to explore the adoption of learning analytics[30] as a tool to:
  - o enhance student engagement with their studies, through the provision of real time data on engagement and progress
  - o Enable staff to take a pro-active approach to interventions ensuring that all students are able to access appropriate and timely support relevant to their needs
- Explore the benefits of implementing an automated attendance monitoring system to enhance the success of students from under-represented groups

These activities are aimed particularly at supporting students whom we know from our data analysis are most likely to disengage from their studies and/or least likely to actively seem support, e.g. BAME students, disabled students, male students, students with mental health difficulties, students who are struggling with other elements of their lives (commuter students, mature students, student parents/carers etc.).

3.4 Progression Activity

Objective i) Encourage and facilitate under-represented students to gain appropriate work experience and professional development

We will maintain and extend our relationships with employers in order to enhance the progression of our under-represented students. The activities below expose under-

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[30] Learning Analytics is a very big and complex area and we have been carrying out detailed scoping and feasibility work for some time. We hope to begin to move towards the early phases of implementation in this period.

represented students to a wide range of career opportunities, broadens horizons and raises aspirations particularly for students from the low-income household target group.

Bringing employers on campus: Our extensive range of Careers fairs and "Meet the Employers" events provide the opportunity to engage with employers on campus. Our main career fair attracts 90 employers from a wide range of sectors. The "Meet the Employers" panel event series is scheduled directly within the curriculum, thus helping us level the career readiness playing field across all students.

Employer run-workshops: Employers are a key contributor to our careers and skills training. For 2018 we ran 35+ employer-led events including a mock assessment centre.

Reading Internship Scheme: we proactively secure exclusive paid internships with organisations across Reading, the South East and London. These aim to increase access to work experience in organisations that typically do not provide paid internship opportunities. We provide support and training for students both before and after the internship to ensure they can leverage the experience to most effect.

Thrive Career Mentoring seeks to engage external professionals to provide career mentoring to students (target of 500+ matched mentor pairs). The programme brings with it direct and indirect engagement with employers. Students from under-represented groups who participated reported improved clarity of career direction, confidence in securing graduate level employment and sector/job knowledge, among other benefits.

Supporting students who manage a disability or health condition: We work in partnership with a range of specialist organisations such as EmployAbility. EmployAbility are invited onto campus every year, to help students define their own personal strategy to disclosure of disability, and to learn about and get access to graduate recruitment processes with enhanced support for students with disabilities.

In addition to the above embedded activities we will

- Develop specific career development provision targeting the challenges experience by students with a range of disabilities (e.g. ASD)
- Development of a career coaching programme for finalists, with a focus on the barriers and challenges specifically including those experienced by students from under-represented groups (e.g. disabled students, students from low HE participation neighbourhoods, students from low-income households). It aims to raise aspirations, skills and abilities in securing graduate level employment
- Continue and expand our career development mentoring programme (THRIVE) ensuring that it reaches as many students from low-income backgrounds and disabled students as possible
- Continue to expand professional placements and internship opportunities, engaging students from low-income backgrounds and disabled students

These activities are aimed particularly at supporting students from low HE participation neighbourhoods and low-income households who are least likely to have family support networks to draw on for this sort of experience.

4 Investment

For 2019/20 we intend to maintain our level of expenditure at 27% of our fee income above the basic amount as agreed in previous Access Agreements. We estimate that this will amount to around £9M. In addition we will invest an additional £820,000 predominantly on student success activity which is not countable under access and participation guidance.

We have based our expenditure estimates on assumptions of meeting the current projected targets for student recruitment set by the University. However, actual expenditure may vary in the light of actual student numbers. Although we would aim to maintain the proportionate commitment of our fee income through any fluctuations, in the event of recruitment significantly above the projected level expenditure may not reach 27% within year.

Balance of Expenditure

Our balance of expenditure is based on the objective analysis of our access, success and progression record to date and our planned access and participation measures. In 2019/20 we intend to balance our spend as follows:

- 7.4% of the total on Access and recruitment activity
- 7.7% on student success measures
- 1.7% on student progression measures
- 10.2% on financial support: including the Reading Bursary scheme, fee waivers for Foundation degrees, and other forms of closely targeted financial support, e.g. our placement bursaries and hardship fund

These are our broad intentions; however, we are also mindful of possible changes to HE funding and further policy changes in the future which may require us to alter the balance of spend. Significant changes to student numbers may also impact on the proportions of spend.

The proportion of spend allocated to financial support has increased slightly due to an increase in the threshold for bursary eligibility and in the amount awarded. Increases are necessary to reflect inflation since the original thresholds and amounts were set.

After financial support we have allocated the largest proportion to access activity in recognition that this is the area we need to make most progress in.

The proportion of spend allocated to Access activity in 2019/20 has reduced slightly from 8.5% of higher fee income to 7.4%). We are conscious that this may appear to signal a reduction in activity in the area of access, however, this is not the case. Due to an increase in the student population we expect that 7.4% of the total 2019/20 access and participation fund will represent an actual increase of around £100,000 in expenditure over the 8.5% spent in 2017/18. It is important to emphasise that there is no intention to decrease the actual amount of spend, and we have committed to a substantial programme of access work outlined in section 3 under objectives a, b, c and d.

We know that it takes time to establish and scale access activity to the extent that we can make effective use of the additional resource generated by the increased fee income from a larger student population. We therefore need to phase in the spending of the resource over time and it is our intention to increase the proportion over subsequent years. We have

also identified that some activities previously funded are not as targeted, and therefore as effective, as we would wish and so (although the activities themselves will continue) this resource will be redeployed to fund some of the programme of work identified in the access elements of this plan.

5 Provision of information to students

The UoR will provide appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance to prospective applicants, prospective students, teachers and parents, as well as to key organisations such as the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), Higher Education Statistical Agency (HESA) for the Unistats data return and the Student Loans Company (SLC).

We will provide information on fees, loans, fee waivers, financial support, and pre-entry bursaries, along with eligibility criteria using the usual mechanisms (websites, prospectuses, mailing lists, etc.) and will also work hard to build professional relationships with teachers to ensure that they are able to readily provide local students with relevant information.

Our Access and Participation Plan will be published in an accessible form on the UoR website.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.		
Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.		
The tuition fee will remain the same for the full duration of this course if you start in the 2019/20 academic year or have accepted an offer but deferred your entry until the 2020/21 academic year.		
Full-time course type:	**Additional information:**	**Course fee:**
First degree		£9,250
First degree	UFACCBUS	£7,400
First degree	UFCDL (FD top up year)	£9,250
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT	Early Years PGCert	£7,190
Postgraduate ITT	PGCE	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT	School Direct QTS only	£7,700
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		£1,385
Erasmus and overseas study years		£1,385
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	**Additional information:**	**Course fee:**
Foundation degree	Basingstoke College of Technology (10000560)	£9,250
Foundation degree	Berkshire College of Agriculture (10000654)	£9,250
Foundation degree	Bracknell and Wokingham College (10000833)	£9,250
Foundation degree	Newbury College (10004596)	£9,250
First degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	**Additional information:**	**Course fee:**
First degree		£6,935
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

								Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					
Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)

Table 8a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle	Main target type	Target type	Description	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary
T16a_01	Access	State school	**HESA T1a** - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Performance Indicator	No	2013-14	86.1%	88.0%	88.5%	88.5%			We believe that this is the maximum ceiling that can be achieved in this region with the subject profile of the University
T16a_02	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	**HESA T1a** - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Performance Indicator	No	2013-14	6.5%	8.0%	8.5%	8.6%			
T16a_03	Access	Ethnicity	**Other statistic** - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of entrants who self-classify as BME	No	2011-12	14.5%	20.5%	21%	21.2%			
T16a_04	Access	Low income background	**Other statistic** - Low-income backgrounds (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of young, full-time, first degree entrants from a low income background (household income of £25k or less).	No	2013-14	25.0%	27.0%	27.5%	27.6%			
T16a_05	Student success	Ethnicity	**Other statistic** - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of BME students achieving either a first or upper second class degree classification	No	2013-14	62.7%	68%	69%	69.5%			
T16a_06	Student success	Low income background	**Other statistic** - Low-income backgrounds (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of students from a low income background (household income of £25k or less) achieving either a first or upper second class degree classification	No	2013-14	71.6%	75%	76%	76.5%			
T16a_07	Student success	Disabled	**Other statistic** - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of registered disabled students achieving either a first or upper second class degree classification	No	2013-14	72.9%	75%	75.5%	76%			
T16a_08	Progression	Low income background	**Other statistic** - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of students from a low income background (household income of £25k or less) progressing into graduate level employment or study six months after graduation. Baseline data is the three year average between 2011-12 and 2013-14.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	66.8%	68.5%	69%	69.5%			
T16a_09	Progression	Low income background	**Other statistic** - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Of those working full time, the percentage of students from a low income background working in professional/managerial employment six months after graduation. Baseline data is the two year average between 2012-13 and 2013-14	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	73.5%	75.5%	76%	76.5%			
T16a_10	Progression	Disabled	**Other statistic** - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Percentage of registered disabled students progressing into employment or further study six months after graduation. Baseline data is the three year average between 2011-12 and 2013-14.	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	88.5%	89.75%	90%	90.25%			
T16a_11	Access	Attainment raising	**Other statistic** - Other (please give details in the next column)	Number of schools participating in the Year 10 Scholars Scheme	No	2016-17	6	10	11	12			Year 10 Scholars is an attainment raising partnership scheme

								Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
T16b_01	Student success	Multiple	Operational targets	Percetage of entrants participating in transition mentoring programmes	No	2014-15	0	29.0%	33.0%	36%			New institution-wide scheme launching in 2015-16
T16b_02	Student success	Multiple	Operational targets	Number of students with access to Peer Assisted Learning schemes	No	2014-15	0	650	800	900			New institution-wide scheme launching in 2015-16
T16b_03	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	Operational targets	Cumulative number of staff participating in teaching and learning related diversity and inclusion training/development	No	2013-14	86	650	800	900			Cumulative total beginning in 2013-14
T16b_04	Student success	Disabled	Student support services	Number of undergraduate students with declared mental health difficulties	No	2013-14	58	98	108	118			We wish to encourage more students to declare in order to provide effective support to those students
T16b_05	Student success	Multiple	Student support services	Number of students participating in extra-curricular personal development workshops	No	2013-14	474	700	750	800			These are a pre-emptive mechanism for student support
T16b_06	Progression	Low income background	Operational targets	Number of placement bursary awards	No	2013-14	80	90	95	100			Yearly milestones amended to more realistic figures. The baseline year was the first year of operation and we were unrealistic about the growth of the scheme
T16b_07	Progression	Multiple	Operational targets	Number of students from under-represented groups taking up in-curriculum placements	No	2013-14	91	145	160	180			Full-year placements only
T16b_08	Progression	Multiple	Operational targets	Number of students from under-represented groups taking up UoR internships	No	2013-14	47	87	97	102			Including Research and Employment Internships
T16b_09	Progression	Multiple	Operational targets	Number of students from under-represented groups registering on the RED Award	No	2013-14	194	260	275	290			In-year registration on the extra-curricular employability award
T16b_10	Progression	Multiple	Operational targets	Number of students from under-represented groups participating in the UoR career mentoring programme.	No	2014-15	50	150	175	200			Where decisions need to be made between students when matching to a mentor, the student with the most development needs such as limited networks, low confidence and limited sector knowledge and limited exposure to the work place will be selected.
T16b_11	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	% of students on the Year 10 Scholars programme who demonstrate (through on-programme assessments and self-reflective questionnaires) improved ability in key competencies that lead to improved attainment (as defined by Higgins, S., Katsipataki, M., Kokotsaki, D., Coleman, R., Major, L.E., & Coe, R. (2014). The Sutton Trust-Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit. London: Education Endowment Foundation.)	No	2017-18	0	50%	55%	60%			

Table 8b - Other milestones and targets.