

**University of Suffolk**  
**Access and Participation Plan: 2020/21 to 2024/25**  
**Variations July/November 2022**

**1. ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

**Introduction**

In its third year of independence, the University of Suffolk is proud to be a community impact institution; established in one of the few counties with no



Progression to graduate-level employment or further study

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the gap between Q1 and Q5 has fluctuated (Table 1),

White students (sector)	66.2%	67.7%	70%	71.6%	74%	-
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Table 2: Data showing access, success and progression gaps for full-time Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students (noting that due to small student numbers there is insufficient data to enable full reporting for all ethnic groups, although we anticipate that we will be able to report on this in future) (\* includes intake of LSC students, with internal data showing a figure of 10.1% when LSC students are excluded)

Success : Continuation

Attainment rates of mature full-time students have consistently been higher than for young full-time students, and have been increasing over the past five years to reach 68% in 2017/18 compared to 70% for the sector. Disaggregating by age group shows that older groups are more likely to achieve a First or 2:1, particularly the 41-



## Access

We can see a gap of c10% between the proportion of IMD Q1 18 year olds at the University of Suffolk compared to the proportion of IMD Q1 18 year olds in the UK population in 2017. We will continue to eliminate this gap

### Success: Continuation

Our continuation data shows that we have had small gaps in single years relating to gender and POLAR4 Q1/2, and ethnicity and POLAR4 or IMD Q1/2, but the gaps have not been sustained.

### Success: Attainment

Our attainment data shows a gap based on ethnicity and IMD with lower attainment rates for BAME Q1 students (55%) compared to White Q1 students (63.9%), when aggregating two years of data. Aggregated data also shows a gap between BAME male attainment (44.9%) and White male attainment (71.3%). Numbers are small but we are committed to reducing these gaps.

### Progression to graduate -level employment or further study

Our analysis of progression data shows that previous gaps have closed or are no longer significant. We have had a slight increase in the gap between male POLAR4 Q1-2 and female POLAR4 Q1-2 but this has fluctuated over the past four years.

## 1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in Higher Education ( HE)

The University does not currently collect data on whether students identify as being carers; refugees or asylum seekers; belong to a military family; are estranged from their families; or are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller community. We cannot therefore provide any evidence about access, success and progression of these groups. We continue to include these groups as priorities for access activities and for access to services including counselling or financial support and we will be collecting this data at enrolment from 2019/20 for better targeting and analysis.

## 2. STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Established

x Access: IMD Quintile 1 18-year-



- x Eliminate the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 at the University by 2024/25 and eliminate the gap in our continuation rates compared to the sector by 2030/31. Our milestones are based on increased performance in later years, but with the gap closing by between 0.4% and 2% per year.
- x Reduce the gap in attainment rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at the University from 15% in 2017-18 to 8% in 2024-25

## Overview

Achieving inclusivity and equality of opportunity for all is a key strategic priority. We are strongly committed to reducing and eliminating gaps in access, success and progression for under-represented groups and this is embedded within our Key Strategic Objectives and culture, ensuring a whole provider approach to achieving our aims, objectives and targets. Our overarching strategies (as outlined in subsequent sections) for widening participation; partnerships; learning, teaching and assessment; equality, diversity and inclusion; employer and business engagement; and employability, provide a comprehensive, well-aligned framework for supporting student access, success and progression, and delivering change to address identified gaps in performance. The collaborative engagement of our Board, Senate, and our staff provides strong leadership and oversight of progress. We have a wide range of staff involved in leading and implementing change in this area, with active engagement by teams across both academic and professional services. The collective commitment and responsibility



commitment to providing meaningful employer engagement opportunities for all students. Course teams are expected to embed enterprise and entrepreneurship education across the curricula, and the University has developed a set of Graduate Attributes which personal tutors can use to help students identify personal attributes and goals. The Strategy includes the wider roll-out of an online platform (FutureMe) and associated support to enable students to engage in career planning and development and prepare to articulate their achievements to potential employers. We are also committed to ensuring that employers play a key role in the course design process.

We are committed to enhancing student and graduate employment outcomes through the development of enterprise and entrepreneurship. We are building a quadripartite approach to enterprise education involving the student, the entrepreneur, the academic and the community, which will be used to underpin strategic measures for improving progression rates within target student groups. We have a range of enterprise and entrepreneurship programmes delivered in-curricular and extra-curricular, such as the Games Hub, launched to address a skills shortage in Suffolk. Such initiatives provide an innovative and creative environment for students to learn more about business skills and what is needed when setting up a business. Our start-up hub and incubation space for staff, students and the community, the Ipswich Waterfront Innovation Centre (IWIC), collaborates with other innovation centres and hubs across the region to support and promote enterprise and entrepreneurship education within our communities, and the IWIC will play a role in facilitating our APP work in relation to progression. We have had considerable success in creating Knowledge Transfer Partnerships between our students and local employers, and aim to increase opportunities for our students as part of our Business Engagement strategy.

## Strategic measures

### Access

Our strategic measures relating to access fall into two broad categories: (i) measures to maintain our performance in areas where we are doing well in ensuring equality of opportunity in order to contribute to continuous improvement nationally; and (ii) measures to improve our performance in areas where we have identified significant gaps in access for specific under-represented groups, with a view to securing continuous improvement in line with our targets and written commitments.

### Strategic measures to maintain existing performance

The University's strong performance in widening participation is underpinned by an extensive evidence-led schools engagement programme that sees us working with a wide range of students aged 11-16. 36,567.94 Tntschools engaged

including exploring match-



three phases of learning aimed at supporting students towards autonomous learning through gradually tapering the level of guidance and contact time throughout their studies.

The Strategy is being implemented through a range of inclusive interventions across the student lifecycle designed to improve continuation, attainment and progression to graduate employment or further study for all students. These include a greater emphasis on inclusivity in terms of curriculum content and delivery; the establishment of a holistic peer and alumni mentorship programme; and provision of a comprehensive student support framework. This framework includes a refreshed approach to personal tutoring that utilises a coaching model of support; increased expectations of module tutors in facilitating engagement with learning activities; D Q G W K H L G H Q W L I L F D W L R Q R I G H G L F D W H G V W D I I Z L W K L Q H D W X W R U ¶ U R O H V W R L G H Q W L I \ V W X G H Q W V D W U L V N R I Z L W K G U D Z D O

To support progression, there is a focus within the Strategy on developing Graduate Attributes ¶ to enhance employability; enhancing V W X G H G A S T ¶ understanding and engagement in career management; providing increased opportunities for employer engagement; and promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship. The University has a long history of successful collaboration with employers in the design of curricula to enhance progression into employment, and has been commended by the QAA on its approach to employability.<sup>15</sup> For example we have recently been successful in a collaborative bid with BT which will result in the development of curriculum focussed on technical skills E D V H G Z L W K L Q S u f f o l k ¶ and development work with Suffolk County Council to construct a bespoke home for S X I I R O N ¶ V D U F K L o n t h e U n i v e r s i t y c a m p u s ¶ R I Q V provide our







satisfaction with service provision and the impact of specific targeted initiatives (for example on diversity of FXUULFXOXP FRQW HCADEM D C GIDEW X GHPDOWM office).

We are conscious that our new partnership with LSC may require bespoke strategic measures to address any trends that emerge in relation to BAME attainment. We will keep this under review as the partnership evolves and data becomes available on the degree outcomes of LSC students. We note the benefits that the partnership will bring in terms of enhancing our understanding of the needs of minority ethnic students and sharing good practice in relation to supporting success and progression.

#### Strategic measures in relation to our progression targets

Our aims and objectives outline our targets in relation to improving progression for BAME and disabled students. An OFFA briefing on BME students (2018) highlighted that regardless of entry qualifications, subject studied, degree classification and other socio-demographic characteristics, differences in employment outcomes between White and BAME graduates persist three years after graduation.<sup>20</sup> This is accentuated by BAME attainment gaps, particularly in employment contexts where an upper second class degree is a minimum expectation as part of initial screening processes. We aim to address barriers to successful graduate employment by supporting the development of self-efficacy within minority ethnic groups and providing enhanced opportunities to network with employers and gain meaningful work experience. For disabled students, our work to address barriers to progression will include a similar focus on improving VWXGHQWV in terms of developing and achieving their career ambitions, and providing opportunities for employer engagement and skills development to enhance graduate employability.

Examples of activities we will undertake to achieve our progression targets include:

- x Through the personal tutorial system, working with students from target groups on their understanding of graduate attributes and career management, using the FutureMe online platform.
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## Strategic measures in relation to our written commitments on success and progression

As part of our written commitments in relation to other groups who experience barriers to success (for example in terms of continuation, attainment and progression of care leavers and estranged students; progression of students from areas of low HE participation; and continuation of mixed ethnicity students and part-time disabled students), we are committed to offering support through specific group forums (e.g. for care leavers) and promoting activity and support for target groups as part of tailored initiatives stemming from the implementation of our new LTA Strategy. We will undertake continuous training and development to understand the specific challenges for under-represented groups, and will establish a Student Success Research activity workstream to ensure we develop targeted activities underpinned by experience and evidence of success. Improvements in the collection of data at enrolment about under-represented groups from 2019/20 will enable more targeted activity and enhanced evaluation and monitoring of success and progression.

### Financial support and investment

The University will continue to invest in measures directly related to increasing access, success and progression of under-represented groups, and meeting the targets and milestones outlined in our Targets Investment Plan. Our split of investment in Access reflects the increased costs of our post-16 and mature/community work, where activity is targeted and intensive (e.g. summer schools) compared to the lower costs of pre-16 activities, which is usually working with full cohorts.

We will continue to invest the same proportion of higher fee income as in previous APPs on financial support, reflecting the positive impact that bursaries have had on student retention (see evaluation section below). We will continue to offer the following Bursaries to students who meet the eligibility criteria from 2020/21.

- x University of Suffolk Bursary: We will maintain the Bursary amount at a maximum of £500 per student per year to support success and retention. The eligibility criteria will be based on a Student Finance England (SFE) assessment of household income (less than £25,000).
- x Bursary for Part-time Students: We will maintain the Bursary for part-time students at a maximum of £500 pro rata per year of study. Students will be eligible if they are studying at least 50% of the Full-Time Equivalent and eligibility will be based on SFE assessment of household income (less than £25,000).
- x Bursary for Students known to have a disability: We will continue to pay the first £200 payable by students in receipt of DSA.
- x Looked After Children and Estranged Student Bursary: This will be offered to students who live or have lived in local authority care or are estranged from their families. The Bursary will be £500 each year of undergraduate study.

Eligibility criteria are clearly stated on our website and students are required to apply for the Bursary, which is promoted by the Finance team, Student Services and the Student Union. Payment dates are set at February and May each year, and are therefore linked to students successfully starting their second semester and remaining on-course throughout the academic year.

- x Asylum Seekers: The University will be providing one fee-waiver for an undergraduate Asylum-Seeker each year; and will be including Asylum Seekers as an eligible group for our University of Suffolk Bursary.

### 3.2 Student consultation

Student consultation and engagement has been instrumental to the development of our APP. The University has a resource for an SU-led consultation and student feedback process. The SU and University are equally committed to a partnership approach to the development and monitoring of the APP from the outset. Student Officers took the decision for this section to be integrated within the plan, rather than as a separate student submission.

The consultation process has been in-depth with 90 students from under-represented groups taking part to offer their views on the proposed strategic measures. Underpinning strategies already commit to students as

co-creators in curricula and learning activity design and it has been a natural progression to ensure that our identified targets are informed by student consultation and approved by our elected Student Officers.

Within their Student Officer Committee, the SU elects a BAME Officer, a Students with Disabilities Officer and a Mature Students Officer each year. Students from target groups have been reached via these formal representative structures but also via other student networks, both formal and informal to avoid the issues relating to self-selecting students. These students were supported to engage by offering a range of channels including group discussions, opportunities to submit anonymous quantitative feedback, one-to-one interviews

of the work, including the costs involved. Activities requiring significant spend, such as financial support and summer schools; or requiring significant resource, such as sustained projects relating to continuation; will be evaluated more extensively than smaller activities. All activities will have clearly defined aims and objectives reflecting our targets and milestones, which will be evaluated robustly. Our evaluation self-assessment identified that we should communicate evaluation more widely across the University, and we will therefore run evaluation dissemination events through CELT, relevant research centres and academic schools. Our biannual University-wide Learning and Teaching Days will be the primary means of regular, formal dissemination (with the next scheduled event in December 2019), supplemented by dissemination through schools and research centres. Our evaluation activity will also inform the provision of knowledge exchange and professional development opportunities across the University. The aim of our evaluation strategy will be to ensure robust processes are in place to monitor our progress in meeting our aims and objectives relating to identified gaps in access, success and progression.

**Programme Design:** Our evaluation self-assessment has shown that while all access, success and progression programmes have been based on clear objectives, their design has often been based on local evaluation and practices shared across the sector, rather than on more robust academic-based evidence. We will therefore be carrying out evaluation of wider evidence as part of the development of our specific activities for 2020/21 and beyond, including drawing on published research and undertaking more robust evaluation of our internal activity. Our theory of change framework will enable us to more clearly align our activities with aims, objectives and intended outcomes, underpinned by sound understanding of factors influencing equality of opportunity drawn from this wider and more robust evidence base. Furthermore, by clearly articulating our assumptions as part of our theory of change framework, we will be able to monitor factors that may affect the success of our activities and shape how we deliver initiatives to maximise impact. We will continuously test our assumptions as part of our evaluation process.

To support the design of future programmes, rapid evidence assessments (REAs) for all proposed interventions will be undertaken to ensure that these are underpinned by evidence – building an evidence base for existing programmes and initiatives, but also to determine whether specific groups of students are being appropriately targeted through our interventions and whether those interventions are likely to achieve the intended outcomes. Our theory of change framework will underpin all evaluation activity, and impact will be assessed based on statistical outcomes (e.g. continuation rates) and indirect factors (e.g. confidence, sense of belonging, attitude change). Coherent evaluation mechanisms will be firmly embedded at the programme design stage. The results of evaluation will be used for further development of activity, strengthening areas that are shown to have an impact and stopping activity shown to have little to no impact.

**Evaluation Design:** Our previous evaluation activity has focussed on narrative approaches with empirical research used to evaluate some of our more resource-intensive activity (e.g. financial support and summer schools). For example in relation to evaluation of financial support, we have used internal data to explore the profiles of bursary recipients and compare their retention and success against the non-recipient group (using a similar methodology to that of the OfS financial support toolkit in analysing our own data), coupled with student focus groups to better understand the impact that financial support has had on student access and success. Reflecting our target groups for access, over the three year period from 2016-2018, our analysis has shown that around three-quarters of bursary recipients are mature, and an average of 22% declared having a disability (with 33% of these declaring a mental health condition, 27% declaring a specific learning difficulty and 17% a longstanding illness or health condition). 85% of recipients identified as White, but there are signs of improved diversity, with the proportion of non-White beneficiaries increasing from 10% in 2016 to 14% in 2018 (22%)- (es)- W\* n BT /F1 10.98 Tess.te, but there

intend to enhance our existing analysis of the impact of bursaries on student access and outcomes via our new business intelligence software (Qlik Sense), which will be designed to replicate the OfS toolkit, and we will continue to engage in consultation with students to obtain qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impact of our financial support measures. The outcomes of our evaluation will be used to review and, if necessary, adapt our approach to financial support.

To evaluate the success of our strategic measures, we will use pre- and post-event activity surveys, reflective discussions with participants, observation and feedback to show changes in attitudes and confidence. We will use HEAT to indicate whether the outreach participants have subsequently progressed to HE. While we cannot use HEAT to prove a causal effect on our activity, the use of tracking alongside pre- and post-event evaluation will provide us with a better indication of the success of associated initiatives. We will use academic literature relating to good practice and draw on the educational research expertise of our academics in evaluating outreach activity to help us develop our evaluation strategy for our activities.

The University has an excellent record in widening participation, but we have generally not shared our





## Annex 2: Summary of Written Commitments

Ref no	Written commitment	Examples of planned activities	Timescales	Success criteria
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Ref no	Written commitment	Examples of planned activities	Timescales	Success criteria
WC_4	<p>Working with employers to improve access for part-time students from IMD Q1 areas</p> <p>See sections 1.1 (page 2) and 2.2 (page 9)</p>	<p>Liaison with key regional employers (via partner colleges where relevant) to promote engagement of their staff from disadvantaged backgrounds in part-time study.</p>	<p>Work with employers to commence from 2020 with a view to improving HE participation rates from 2021 onwards</p>	<p>Over the period of the APP, reduction in gap between the proportion of part-time IMD Q1 and Q5 students at the University (currently 16.3% according to OfS dataset, with an aim to reduce this to 10% by the end of the plan).</p>
WC_5	<p>Eliminating the small gap in continuation for Mixed Ethnicity students compared to White students</p> <p>See sections 1.2 (page 4) and 2.2 (page 9)</p>	<p>Bespoke initiatives to support the retention of Mixed Ethnicity students, as part of our wider University work to bring continuation rates into line with sector norms (as part of our new LTA Strategy).</p>	<p>Bespoke support measures to be implemented from the commencement of the plan in 2020</p>	<p>Over the period of the APP, reduction in gap between the proportion of part-time IMD Q1 and Q5 students at the University (currently 16.3% according to OfS dataset, with an aim to reduce this to 10% by the end of the plan).</p>

Table 1a - Full-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,220
Foundation degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,220
Foundation year/Year 0	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,168
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*

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Foundation year/Year 0	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,168
CertHE/DipHE	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
Postgraduate ITT	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,870
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

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

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	Global Banking School Limited 10042500	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
First degree	LD Training Services Limited 10027803	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
First degree	St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
Foundation degree	*	*	



HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,168
CertHE/DipHE	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
Postgraduate ITT	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,669
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	Global Banking School Limited 10042500	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
First degree	St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other			

# Access and participation plan Fee information 2020-21

Provider name: University of Suffolk

Provider UKPRN: 10014001

## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*Course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2020-21. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2020-21 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

### Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

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

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	£8,220
Foundation degree	*	£8,220
Foundation year/Year 0	*	£9,250
HNC/HND	*	£6,168
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	£6,669
Accelerated degree	*	£11,100
Sandwich year	Non-UK Placement	£1,385
Sandwich year	UK Placement	£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

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

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	£6,935
Foundation degree	*	£6,935
Foundation year/Year 0	*	£6,935
HNC/HND	*	£6,168
CertHE/DipHE	*	£6,935
Postgraduate ITT	*	£6,669
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21**

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	St. Piran's School (GB) Limited 10008653	£6,935
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University of Suffolk

Provider UKPRN: 10014001

## Investment summary

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

Note about the data:

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£731,020.00	£693,535.00	£715,197.00	£735,270.00	£755,315.00
	£81,725.00	£77,534.00	£79,956.00	£82,200.00	£84,441.00
	£426,347.00	£404,485.00	£417,118.00	£428,826.00	£440,517.00
	£211,956.00	£201,088.00	£207,368.00	£213,189.00	£219,000.00
	£10,992.00	£10,428.00	£10,755.00	£11,055.00	£11,357.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£1,410,000.00	£1,338,900.00	£1,381,500.00	£1,421,150.00	£1,460,750.00
	£231,335.00	£219,500.00	£226,315.00	£232,675.00	£239,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£20,563,046.00	£19,508,455.00	£20,116,936.00	£20,682,012.00	£21,246,230.00
	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%	6.9%
	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
	11.5%	11.5%	11.5%	11.6%	11.6%



