2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by The University of Reading against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

1. Ambition and strategy

The University of Reading's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

The University of Reading (UoR) is committed to the access and participation agenda. Our track record for retaining students once enrolled is strong (93% in 2016/17), attainment gaps are narrowing and 91% of our 2016 graduates were in employment or study within six months of graduating. Of those who enter full time work, 83% found employment in professional or managerial roles. However, we recognise 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 and changing this is a key element of our planning going forward.

The 2019/2020 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

In line with the student life cycle these ambitions can be broken down into specific objectives:

Access:

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

b) Create a deep rooted network of coherent relationships between the UoR and the local community in Whitley14, 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.

Success

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 underrepresented students who are struggling in order to implement pro-active personalised intervention.

Progression

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

The University aims to align its access and participation strategy, covering access, student success and progression, with the University's overall strategy and recognises the importance of a whole student lifecycle approach. The APP governance has been strengthened and there are clear accountability lines and reporting structures to ensure that this is embedded within the strategic and operational workings of the university.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by The University of Reading of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of The University of Reading's 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in Annex B.

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	HESA Performance Indicator	2013-14	86.1%	88.0%	88.5%	Percentage	2019-20	84	No progress
T16a_02 (Access)	HESA Performance Indicator	2013-14	6.5%	8.0%	8.5%	Percentage	2019-20	7	No progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Percentage of entrants who self-classify as BME	2011-12	14.5%	20.5%	21%	Percentage	2019-20	33	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Access)	Percentage of young, full-time, first degree entrants from a low income background (household income of £25k or less).	2013-14	25.0%	27.0%	27.5%	Percentage	2019-20	19.5	No progress
T16a_05 (Student success)	Percentage of BME students achieving either a first or upper second class degree classification	2013-14	62.7%	68%	69%	Percentage	2019-20	84.5	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Student success)	Percentage of students from a low income background (household income of £25k or less) achieving either a first or upper second class degree classification	2013-14	71.6%	75%	76%	Percentage	2019-20	89.6	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Student success)	Percentage of registered disabled students achieving either a first or upper second class degree classification	2013-14	72.9%	75%	75.5%	Percentage	2019-20	91.4	Expected progress
T16a_08 (Progression)	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.	Other (please give details in Description column)	66.8%	68.5%	69%	Percentage	2017-18	74.9	Expected progress

T16a_09 (Progression)	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	Other (please give details in Description column)	73.5%	75.5%	76%	Percentage	2017-18		81	Expected progress
T16a_10 (Progression)	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.	Other (please give details in Description column)	88.5%	89.75%	90%	Percentage	2017-18		92.1	Expected progress
T16a_11 (Access)	Number of schools participating in the Year 10 Scholars Scheme	2016-17	6	10	11	Headcount	2019-20		9	No progress

Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Student success)	Percetage of entrants participating in transition mentoring programmes	2014-15	0	29.0%	33.0%	Percentage	2019-20	37.8	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Student success)	Number of students with access to Peer Assisted Learning schemes	2014-15	0	650	800	Headcount	2019-20	628	No progress
T16b_03 (Student success)	Cumulative number of staff participating in teaching and learning related diversity and inclusion training/development	2013-14	86	650	800	Headcount	2019-20	5135	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Student success)	Number of undergraduate students with declared mental health difficulties	2013-14	58	98	108	Headcount	2019-20	822	Expected progress
T16b_05 (Student success)	Number of students participating in extra-curricular personal development workshops	2013-14	474	700	750	Headcount	2019-20	1122	Expected progress
T16b_06 (Progression)	Number of placement bursary awards	2013-14	80	90	95	Headcount	2019-20	16	No progress
T16b_07 (Progression)	Number of students from under-represented groups taking up in-curriculum placements	2013-14	91	145	160	Headcount	2019-20	81	No progress
T16b_08 (Progression)	Number of students from under-represented groups taking up UoR internships	2013-14	47	87	97	Headcount	2019-20	113	Expected progress
T16b_09 (Progression)	Number of students from under-represented groups registering on the RED Award	2013-14	194	260	275	Headcount	2019-20	831	Expected progress
T16b_10 (Progression)	Number of students from under-represented groups participating in the UoR career mentoring programme.	2014-15	50	150	175	Headcount	2019-20	148	No progress

T16b_11 (Access)	% 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.)	2017-18	0	50%	55%	Percentage	2019-20	54	No progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£2,499,912.00	£2,086,000.00	-17%
Financial Support	£3,461,794.00	£3,342,000.00	-3%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected The University of Reading has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_01	Internal review as to which courses / subjects are not attracting students form this sector and review admissions processes across the student journey / targeting for activity in line with this.
T16a_02	In 19-20, new roles were established to increase our reach targeting this cohort. These roles are now fully in place and are working with students both pre and post application to support access and entry to our courses. A review of our contextualised admissions process is also planned for 2021/22 (to effect 2022 entry) to ensure the offer-making is supporting those most in need.
T16a_04	Improved access to data now enables better targeting of activity from 19-20 onwards to increase our reach with this cohort. We are also taking steps to support students from this group beyond application to remove other post-application barriers to access our courses, and we will identify subject areas or other groups where we can have most impact in this.
T16a_11	We have 10 schools engaged in the programme for 2020-21, the impact of Covid -19 has provided additional challenges for schools having the resource to participate.

T16b_02	Peer Assisted Learning will be embedded into the Awarding Gap project and schools will be encouraged to consider using PAL in their local plans to reduce awarding gaps. They will also be encouraged to use it in core modules as opposed to optional modules.
T16b_06	Whilst curricular placements continue to be significantly affected by the pandemic this academic year, we hope that as and when placements scheduled for the spring / summer start to take place in person (rather than remotely), further promotion of the bursary to target groups will increase take-up.
T16b_07	We have and will continue to provide personalised support for PPY students with a specfic focus on WP students and this includes 1-1 appointments, targeted events and tailored newsletters. we will also continue to run events for under-represented groups, such as our BAME Black History month event 'Be Brilliant, Be Visible, Be You' and Gaining Experience without experience for stduents with limited or no personal connections to employment. We have also launched Career Diversity Champions to help showcase stories form under-represented students who have secured internship and placement opportunties despite their respective challenges to help motivate their peers.
T16b_10	The team is now fully staffed and have increased the level and specificity of tailored comms to under represented students and this appears to be making a significant difference.
T16b_11	2020-21 activity is transitioned entirely online and alternative assessment methods to reflect this are built in to the programme.

5. Confirmation

The University of Reading confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
The University of Reading has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Robert Van de Noort
Position	Vice-Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

The University of Reading's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Yes - all our targeting and eligibilty for access activity is based on state school (or other under-represented) sectors.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
No

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Yes - Commitments as set out in the plan have largely been met, the only restriction being on our ability to engage in face to face activity with some newly targeted cohorts (e.g regional work and FE college focussed activity).
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
In 19-20 we implemented some pilot additional applicant enagagement for students from this target group. However, because of the discrepancy in the timeline from activity to impact on entrant cohorts, any impact of this will be seen in 2020/21 figures.

Target reference number: T16a_04
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
In part. Commitments as set out in the plan have largely been met, the only restriction being on our ability to engage in face to face activity with some newly targeted cohorts (e.g regional work within which low income areas are a priority.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
No

Target reference number: T16a_11
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
In part - although the number of schools participating reduced due to external factors relating to the schools specific circumstances the number of students on the programme increased by 9% - from 111 to 121

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We increased the numbers of students on the programme from the target schools, and through closer working, improved the selection within these schools to better target those students who would most benefit.

Target reference number: T16b_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
This amounted to 37 PAL groups running across 15 modules, in 10 academic schools which totalled 298 hours. We have maintained a similar level to initial take up but haven't seen the growth as planned.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
No

Target reference number: T16b_06
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
There was a significant decline in the number of placement bursaries awarded in 19/20 compared to 18/19 falling from 79 to just 16. This is because COVID 19 significantly interrupted placement activities taking place in the Spring and Summer term when the broad majority of placements take place. Most students claim the bursary to cover travel costs. The majority of placements in 19/20 either became remote (if mandatory) or were cancelled and alternative assessments given.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
The placement bursary is promoted heavily through schools and departments as well as centally on Essentials with all other bursaries managed by the student finance team. Placement tutors have also been encouraged to promote directly to their students. We have also promoted the bursary to our Placement year stduents through targeted newsletters.

Target reference number: T16b_07
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We saw a decline in placement years being secured by all students in 2019/20 (-10%), however of those who secured a placement, 52% came from a WP background and 11.25% rise from 18/19
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
The PPY project interventions for 19/20 placement students largely took place in 18/19 and WP focused activities included: Launch of a peer to peer support network for students without

any of their own employment connections, A student led event co-delivered with DAS for placement students with disabilities, we conducted a phone campaign targeting 1-1 appointments for all part 2 WP students. Students also received regular bulletins and newsletters with promotion of relevant events and placement year vacancies.

Target reference number: T16b_10
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
In 2019 staff shortages and turnover contributed to a lower take up with the mentoring scheme. This role and team are now fully recruited and we are seeing signficant improvement in the current year.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
n/a

Target reference number: T16b_11
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
In part, the programme of activity was impacted by Covid-19 and our ability to engage with students face to face and for schools to engage during lock-down periods.Only 2 of the 4 sessions designed to impact this particualr aspect were able to be deliered.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
The activity was transitioned online, and alternative measures to assessing attainment have been used as pre-post questionnaires have not been possible due to other pressures on schools.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

The University of Reading's commentary on any of the targets listed in .

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	This drop in state school entrants as a percentage is of signficant concern and as yet not a factor we can explain. We intend to undertake further analysis to understand the root cause(s) and take a strategic, and if necessary subject based approach to address this change in our intake
T16a_02	The activity that would have impacted this intake was based on POLAR3 targeting due to the timescales - ie working with students prior to their entrance to HE. The activity in this plan, which is now based on POLAR4 targeting will not impact our intake until at least 2022 entry when these students we are working with enter HE. Contextualised admissions were rolled out in 18-19 mid cycle - ie, only introduced after the Jan deadline so students were unaware they might receive a contextualised offer until after they had applied, but we expect to see more effect from 20-21 intake when we have the impact of a full cycle. .Internal University data (not as yet HESA matched) shows that our intake in 2018 and 2019 (and 2020) demonstrated progress towards our more recently set targets for students from POLAR 4 1 and 2 quintiles in comparison to those from quintiles 4 and 5.
T16a_03	BAME students were also a target group for our intensive activity that would have directly impacted on this intake - delivered in 17-18, but much smaller in scope.
T16a_04	
T16a_05	The university has seen a significant reduction in the awarding gaps across all target groups. Due to the unique nature of assessment practices and extenuating circumstances we need to be cautious in viewing this as signficant progress. However, the university is currently reviewing assessment practices, module choice and programme pathways at a strategic level and we are hopeful that this review and clarification will help maintain the progress we have seen in this area.
T16a_06	
T16a_07	
T16a_08	As is sector wide the Graduate Outcomes survey is now taken at 15 months out, and therefore the percentages we provide are not directly comparable to the base line data (measured against the DLHE data when it was at 6 months post graduation)
T16a_09	See above
T16a_10	See above
T16a_11	The continued engagemt of 10 schools at such a difficult time in terms of their teaching is reassuring and highlights the perceived value of the programme to schools and their students.

T16b_01	
T16b_02	
T16b_03	As part of the Teaching & Learning programme in 2019-20, we ran a number of sessions that either directly or indirectly supported staff with inclusive teaching. Some of these sessions were around supporting specific groups of students (e.g. with dyslexia, or mental health difficulties), while others were about teaching practices more broadly. The annual T&L Conference (January 2019) centred on supporting student achievement, with a particular focus on inclusive assessment and wellbeing. This is a cumulative target which shows the total number of participants (could be the same person at multiple events) since 2013/2014. The annual actual number for the 2019/2020 academic year was 947
T16b_04	Mental health difficulties now make up over a quarter of our disabled students and are the second most common disability type to be declared. Numbers of students declaring mental health difficulties have almost doubled in the two years between 17-18 and 19-20 (rising from 447 to 874 students declaring mental health difficulties, more than trebled in the four years since 15-16 (240 students declaring mental health difficulties) and risen by 960% in the 7 years since 2012-13 (91 students declaring mental health difficulties
T16b_05	In March 2020 we moved the training online and delivered the presentations as webinars using Blackboard collaborate. The take up increased as this format was more accessible, particularly during lockdown, for students self-isolating and for those who were not able to come onto campus so could join in from their home (in other parts of UK or abroad).
T16b_06	Please note students undertaking placement years for academic year 19/20 will have been recipients of the 18/19 placement bursary as the monies are awarded before the end of July 2019 (financial year end) this counted for 31 bursaries. we always receive a good number of applicants, however some fail to be awarded due to not providing required evidence of placement or HHI
T16b_07	The interventions of the PPY project were launched partially in 2017/18 but fully in 18/19 so students securing placements in 20/21 were the 'full beneficiaries' of the scheme having had support from the start of their programme. Also from this cohort, not all PPY students benefit from participation in the schools based training provided by the central team with schools opting to run their own training and personal support model (APD, Chemistry, APD and SBE).
T16b_08	
T16b_09	
T16b_10	
T16b_11	The Covid pandemic has significantly affected our ability to both measure this and to have the required input to yield improvements in attainment, with only 2 of the 4 planned pieces of activity that directly support this able to be delivered and the pre- / post questionnaire approach not possible. However - the academic posters were built around the delivery of 5 study skills sessions focussing on 'creating a research question, conducting research, synthesising information and developing an argument, referencing, and reflecting & feedback. Whilst the "feedback" aspect can't be demonstrated in the poster, of the other key study skills areas, 77% of

those that completed the poster demonstrated use of at least two of those skills in their poster, and 54% demonstrated three of the four. 92% demonstrated one.