UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

ACCESS AGREEMENT

2017-18

April 2016
(Amended July 2016 to reflect adjustment in maximum fee levels to £9250)

1 INTRODUCTION

The University of East Anglia (UEA) is committed to widening participation to high-quality higher education (HE). We aim to enable motivated and able students from under-represented groups, particularly from the East Anglian region but also from elsewhere, to gain the advantages of HE irrespective of background.

For 2017/18 we will have one franchised further education college partner: Easton and Otley College. They deliver fee regulated HE courses, funded indirectly by HEFCE, validated by UEA. Student numbers, fees, income and expenditure in relation to Easton and Otley College are outlined in the Resource Plan and referenced in section 2 of this Agreement.

The University also jointly validates University Campus Suffolk (UCS) HE provision in partnership with the University of Essex. The UCS Access Agreement is appended.

Our Access Agreement is comprised of two parts, this document and a separate Resource Plan.

2 FEES, STUDENT NUMBERS AND FEE INCOME

Institution	Level	Fee	Students
University of East Anglia	Undergraduate (2017/18 entrants)	£9250	2944
	Undergraduate (pre 2017/18 entrants)	£9000	5952
	Postgraduate ITT	£9250	290
Easton and Otley College	Foundation degree	£7500	208
	First degree	£8500	84

Table 1: Maximum fee levels and total number of new system full time students in 2017/18

For 2017/18 entrants, UEA intends to increase its maximum fees levels from £9000 to £9250. For existing new system full time students, fees will remain at £9000.

Part time entrants for 2017/18 will not be charged more than £6935 in an academic year. A more detailed breakdown relating to tuition fees and student numbers by provider, course type, fee level, part time provision, a year in industry/abroad etc. is available in Tables 1-3 of the Resource Plan.

Income and expenditure estimates are based on current student cohort characteristics and planned numbers. They are therefore liable to change. Key assumptions relating to income and expenditure are explored further in section 3.3.1. Within the appropriate maximum fee cap we intend to apply annual increases in line with the amount set by the Government each year.

3 ACCESS, STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESSION MEASURES

3.1 Assessment of performance

In developing this Access Agreement we have undertaken a broad assessment of our performance utilising both HESA key performance indicators (KPI) and internal data for all stages. When reviewing our performance and identifying gaps we consider the following key characteristics/groups across the student lifecycle:

- POLAR3 quintiles
- Ethnicity

- Gender
- Age
- Disability

We also consider indicators of household income where data is available as well as utilising other measures as appropriate.

We have RAG-rated each measure, taking into account performance against the sector, benchmarks, gaps between groups and trends over time:

- Red: particular concern and priority focus, further analysis and identification of causal links required for action and additional activity.
- Amber: some concern - should monitored and/or more in-depth analysis required to understand patterns. Additional activity may be required.
- Green: current performance good, should still be monitored and supported by activity to maintain.

Table 2 summarises our RAG-rated performance by key measures[1]. These are considered by lifecycle stage in more detail within the following sections.

Characteristic/stage of lifecycle	Access (Entrants)	Success (Non-continuation)	Success (Good honours)	Progression (Graduate destinations)
Low participation neighbourhood (LPN)	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber
Age (mature)	Green	Red	Amber	Green
Disability	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green
Ethnicity (BME)	Green	Green	Red	Green
Young white LPN males	Amber	Green	Amber	Amber
Gender (male primary PGCE)	Green	n/a	n/a	n/a
Household income	Amber	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 2: RAG rated WP performance by key student characteristics.

Note that for disability and ethnicity analysis is currently top level only. We will be disaggregating data further into subgroups to improve our understanding of performance and any gaps.

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[1] A more detailed performance summary has been submitted to OFFA alongside this agreement.
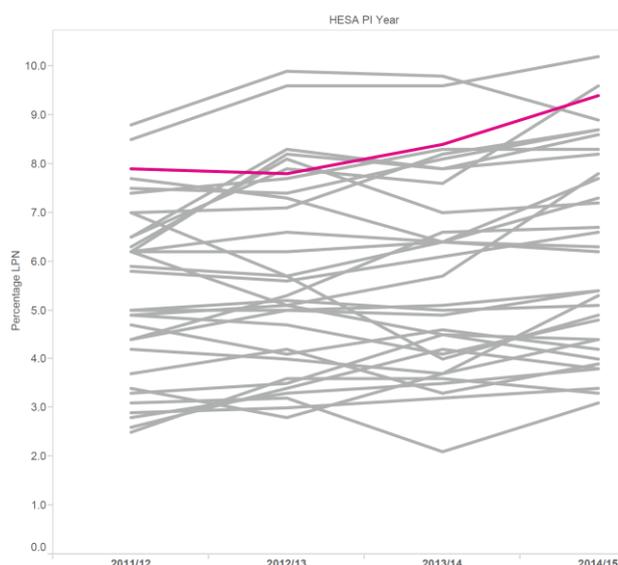
3.1.1 Access

Figure 1: Percentage of LPN students for higher tariff institutions. UEA highlighted in pink. Source: HESA

We note the importance of higher tariff institution's access performance in relation to meeting social mobility goals. In this context UEA delivers a strong performance, consistently within the upper quartile of higher tariff institutions when ranked by proportion of LPN students, as illustrated in Figure 1. Higher tariff represents a challenge for us to maintain our performance in relation to access. Our outreach programme contributes to our inclusive student cohort through delivery of high quality and innovative activities in the region.

In terms of HESA KPI's, Table 3 shows that in absolute terms, we perform above the England average for students from state schools and mature students with no previous experience of HE and from LPN. For young LPN students however, we are below average, and thus have an amber rating, despite our strong performance within our tariff group. For all the indicators in Table 3 we are performing above our location adjusted benchmarks.

Performance Indicator	UEA	Benchmark	England
State School	90.4%	84.6%*	89.6%
Low participation neighbourhood (LPN)	9.4%	8.8%*	11.4%
Mature students with no previous HE & from LPN	16.4%	13.1%*	12.8%

*Table 3: 2014/15 access performance indicators. *Location adjusted benchmark. Source: HESA*

Other amber rated groups include those with a disability and low household income. For former, despite a positive trend we are slightly below target. For the latter there is an overall negative trend in entrants.

3.1.2 Success and progression

For student success we measure our performance against the HESA KPI's relating to the non continuation of LPN students and mature students with no previous experience of HE. For these measures we perform better than both the England average and our benchmark. However with our strategic focus on performance gaps, we also compare performance between other groups, as illustrated in Table 4. This highlights in particular that mature students with no previous experience of HE are twice as likely to drop out as our overall cohort. This finding is reflected in the red rating given to this aspect in Table 2.

Non continuation rate	UEA	Benchmark	England
All entrants	5.2%	5.5%	7.2%
Low participation neighbourhood (LPN)	4.4%	5.7%	8.2%
Other neighbourhood	4.1%	3.9%	5.7%
Mature previous HE	7.4%	9.4%	10.7%
Mature no previous HE	11.6%	11.8%	12.5%

Table 4: 2013/14 non-continuation performance indicators for 2012/3 entrants. Source: HESA

Disabled students non continuation is amber rated due to a negative performance trend. Although there is a minimal difference with students who have not declared a disability, 2014/15 was the first year that the non-continuation rates for disabled students was higher than for non-disabled students.

To understand student success, we also consider award classification, including good honours, when reviewing performance. Overall, LPN students, mature students and young white LPN students are less likely to achieve a 2.1 or good honours (GH) but more likely to achieve other classifications. For these groups the GH trend is positive. BME students gain the lowest proportion of GH, with a stable trend, hence the red rating. Students with a disability perform better than BME students but the overall GH trend is negative.

Progression is currently assessed in terms of graduate destinations. With an amber rating, both LPN students generally and young white LPN males specifically perform less well than the UEA average, although with stable and positive trends respectively.

3.2 Our strategic approach to widening participation

UEA's 2016-2020 Widening Participation Strategy[2] details our overarching strategic approach. Our key principles that guide the strategy reflect the following:

- Importance of academic standards
- Social diversity enriches learning
- Cross institutional collaboration
- Evidence-based approach
- Academic and pastoral support
- Working in partnership

The strategy recognises and addresses the importance of the whole student lifecycle: access, success and progression. It places an emphasis on identifying gaps in performance between different groups and prioritising interventions with the greatest impact through robust monitoring and evaluation.

3.2.1 Regional context

Our approach to access in particular is shaped in part by the region in which we are located. In terms of undergraduate entrants we are one of the larger HE providers in the East of England region, and by far the largest in our immediate locality (Norfolk and Suffolk). Approximately 50% of our home students come from the East of England region.

The region ranks third highest, after London and the South East, for its young participation rate[3]. However, there are pockets of low participation across much of the East particularly in Norfolk, eastern Cambridgeshire, west Suffolk and Essex. The Social Mobility Index[4] also identifies that well over half of local authority areas in the bottom 10 per cent are found in the East Midlands and the East of England, including Norwich itself ranking second from bottom.

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2 https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/corporate-social-responsibility/widening-participation
3 HEFCE 2014. Further Information on POLAR3: An Analysis of Geography, Disadvantage and Entrants to Higher Education
4 Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. 2016. The Social Mobility Index

Norfolk is predominately classified as rural county, although approximately half the population live in a more urban environment. Both Norfolk's urban and rural areas are performing below national and regional averages for student attainment, HE progression, social mobility, and deprivation. The more populated areas of Kings Lynn, Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Thetford all have areas which have been classified as being among the 10% most deprived in England. Unsurprisingly, these areas also have participation cold spots as well as parts of coastal and rural Norfolk and Suffolk. Disadvantaged children and young people living in rural areas face even greater barriers to reaching university than their urban counterparts[5]. Barriers affecting attainment, aspirations, and progression in these communities (including those locally) include: geographical location, poor public transport, and neighbourhood characteristics[6].

Given this context we have a focus on supporting students from the East Anglian region. In particular, we recognise that although much of our outreach activity must be targeted, there is also a need to work more broadly across our local area to support aspirations, attainment and thus access.

3.2.2 Target groups

We continue to refine our understanding of disadvantaged groups and those under-represented within HE and specifically UEA. To inform our targeting we draw on both national research and our own data analysis of students from the key groups referenced in section 3.1. These characteristics are reflected in our targets and milestones and our core target groups. These groups are sometimes referred to collectively as students from a widening participation (WP) background and are listed below:

- Low participation neighbourhood (POLAR quintile 1)
- Low household income (pupil premium or full support threshold)
- Mature students with no previous HE experience
- Disabled students
- Looked-after children and care leavers
- Specific black and minority ethnic groups
- Young white males from LPN or low household income.

For students with a disability or from specific ethnic groups, we recognise that we need to improve our understanding of performance to identify which subgroups to target for which stages of the student lifecycle.

Looked-after children and care leavers are a core target group, and we are committed to ensuring they are encouraged and supported throughout the student lifecycle. Through our Outreach inclusion strand we also offer support other disadvantaged groups such as young carers. We need to understand more about this group, as well as all students with caring responsibilities across the student lifecycle. A key issue is identifying these students within our data. We deliver a small amount of outreach activity for gypsy and traveller communities.

3.2.3 Resourcing our approach

Our WP Strategy highlights our intention to appoint an Academic Director for Widening Participation. This role will provide leadership to ensure implementation of our WP Strategy and the development and effective implementation of related policy and procedures. They will work closely with academic and professional services staff across the student lifecycle to monitor and seek improvements in University performance in this area. To support this appointment and delivery of WP objectives, we will also look to ensure adequate capacity of professional administrative staff. In particular additional resource will ensure an emphasis on

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[5] Robertson 2015. Rural aspiration: access to Higher Education in rural, coastal and dispersed communities.
[6] Spielhofer et. al. 2011. Young People's Aspirations in Rural Areas.

student success, utilising our internal data and external research to make recommendations and implement best practice.

3.3 Expenditure

Following the assessment of our performance (section 3.1) the University remains committed to spending approximately 25% of additional undergraduate fee income and 10% of postgraduate ITT income on access, success, progression and financial support. We will maintain our expenditure on Access (outreach) at 7% of additional income, and deliver our financial support commitments. The balance will be allocated to student success and progression. The overall distribution of expenditure is outlined in Table 5.

	2014/15	2017/18
Access	26%	27%
Success	2%	15%
Progression	2%	6%
Financial support	70%	52%

Table 5: Actual (2014-15) and planned (2017/18) Access Agreement expenditure as a proportion of overall commitment.

As outlined in UEA's WP Strategy, we are developing WP strategic plans for each element of the student lifecycle. These will have a clear outcome focus to ensure we are able to demonstrate impact. Our focus is on smarter, evidence-based spend. We therefore fully expect to adjust the balance of expenditure between success and progression for 2017-18 as we gain an even greater understanding of the performance of specific groups and priorities become clearer.

Our plans have been designed to allow flexibility, to enable us to respond to both external policy and funding changes as well as evidence of gaps in performance internally.

Although we were involved in the HEFCE funded postgraduate support scheme, we do not deliver any activity specifically intended to widen participation for post graduate study.

3.3.1 Assumptions and uncertainty

Given the decision to reduce Student Opportunity (SO) funding by up to half by 2019-20, we have assumed a sector average reduction in our own calculations. This reduction has been smoothed from anticipated 2016-17 levels resulting in a 50% reduction by 2019-20. Our SO funding has historically been focussed on supporting success and progression activity. Our additional fee income will be utilised to ensure key activity is not negatively impacted by the drop in funding.

Approximately 500 additional UEA students per annum will be impacted by the NHS funding changes. These students are based within our School of Health Sciences (HSC). According to our internal data, HSC has higher than average proportions of students from low participation neighbourhoods and mature students as well as other under-represented groups. There is therefore the potential for the changes in bursary support for HSC students to have a disproportionate impact on participation. We have assumed that student numbers will be maintained but that 50% of HSC students will be eligible for financial support.

The impact of the shift from grants to loans for students from low household income backgrounds is yet to be seen. We therefore intend to maintain our bursary offer at current rates for 2017/18 entrants. However, we will undertake a wholescale review of our financial support package for 2018/19 onwards once there is greater clarity in relation to the impact of recent policy changes. Further detail on 2017/18 financial support is in section 3.7.1

3.4 Access

UEA's performance in terms of access is good. Our strategy is to focus on activity that is proven to be effective whilst continuing to innovate.

To fulfil our aim of increasing progression to both UEA and higher education more generally our dedicated outreach team deliver a breadth of activity, working from key stage 2 through to mature students and with influencers such as parents and teachers. All our activities are supported by one of the largest Student Ambassador Schemes within the sector, and delivered by a dedicated team of academic and professional administrative staff.

Our activity is structured around a progression framework of content and outcomes, based on the following model[7]:

$$\underset{(I\ want\ to)}{aspiration} + \underset{(I\ know\ how\ to)}{awareness} + \underset{(I\ am\ able)}{attainment} = \underset{(I\ will)}{progression}$$

3.4.1 Activity review

UEA has a substantive outreach programme which has grown and developed from our delivery of the first HEFCE funded Summer Schools in 2000. We have invested significant resource both in maintaining a core of proven activity whilst developing innovative projects. However, we recognise that as the breadth and volume of our activity has increased, so the cohesiveness of our offer has diminished. We therefore intend to undertake a wholescale review of our suite of activity to ensure a robust and strategic approach. Our focus needs to continue to shift from outputs to outcomes, with evaluation embedded to support this approach. The review will identify area's to strengthen and grow as well as projects that need refocusing. Elements to be considered will include:

- Broad WP work with **younger age groups**: we have a suite of activities to support key stage 2 pupils and are also involved in our local Children's University programme.
- Specific activities to raise **aspirations to higher tariff** institutions[8] before spring term of year 9: although we deliver activity to key stage 3, we recognise that we need to ensure it is early enough to support appropriate key stage 4 choices.
- Incorporating sciences, maths and modern languages to help **access to highly competitive courses**: we deliver a range of subject focussed outreach, and in particular have an extensive languages outreach programme including language ambassadors and a language teachers' network.
- Supporting **Access to the Professions**: we currently offer activities to address this area of focus specifically targeting medicine and law. We will utilise our improved data to both ensure that existing programmes link through to progression as well as identify additional careers that may need this extra focus.
- Delivering **sustained long term outreach**: this year we have piloted the Norfolk Scholars Programme in collaboration with Villiers Park Educational Trust. This sustained outreach project targets students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have high academic potential. We will mentor and support 30 students per year group who join the programme in year 10 and are supported through to year 13.
- **Target schools and neighbourhoods** where participation is low: we already take a strategic approach to levels of outreach we deliver to local schools based on their cohorts. Our schools partnership agreements are with those schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students. We will look to review this prioritisation in the context of participation data, as well as ensuring a sustained planned programme of interventions with a whole school focus.

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[7] Dent et. al., 2013. Programmes. Higher Education Outreach to Widen Participation; Toolkits for practitioners. HEFCE

[8] OFFA 2010. What more can be done to widen access to highly selective universities? 2010/03

- Take in to account our **local geography:** section 3.2.1 identified that attainment and progression needs boosting locally. In additional to targeting specific schools and groups we also need to consider the balance of whole cohort activities across our local schools to raise aspirations generally and counter peer pressure.
- Addressing **lack of advice:** information to ensure the best choices in relation to GCSE/A level and degree choices is currently embedded in our progression framework and links to the provision of information for prospective students.
- Improving **low attainment** at school: our tutoring and enrichment activity is designed to support student attainment but as a key cause of under-representation this possibly needs a greater focus. We intend to support local school performance by encouraging and supporting our staff to be involved in school governance thus contributing directly to effective school leadership and management.
- Focusing on **specific target groups**: we already have a well-developed 'Sports for Boys 'project. Given the policy focus on improving participation of less advantaged white males, we will look to build on our expertise to deliver a broader programme as well as ensuring we are more inclusive across all activities.
- Access to **teaching/ITT**: our discover teaching and men into primary programmes run in parallel to support this strand of activity. In addition, a lack of male role models at primary level may contribute to boys' educational engagement and the low participation of white males referenced above.
- **Mature student** access and retention: in addition to promoting mature student access, we will also consider the implementation of a transitions programme to support retention. We recognise that effective outreach can prepare students for higher education and thus support student success.

3.4.2 Collaboration

We will continue to work collaboratively with HE providers locally and across the wider East Region. This will ensure a shared understanding of any potential gaps in provision and further opportunities for collaborative projects. As outlined in section 3.2.1, we consider UEA has a particular responsibility to support our local area, and will be working with Norfolk providers and stakeholders to support this aim.

We aim to host and participate in an increasing number of collaborative activities such as summer schools, campus visits and careers events. For example, we intend to continue working with University Campus Suffolk offering joint activities for specific groups such as looked-after children and mature students. Our collaborative target in Table 7b of the Resource Plan reflects this. We are planning to invest in a collaborative approach to tracking potential students which will support outcome focused collaborative targets in the future.

UEA are currently an active member of the Suffolk and Norfolk Collaborative Outreach network, delivering activity to support this partnership. We intend to participate in the national collaborative outreach programme for East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) and welcome the focus on areas of low participation in our locality.

3.4.3 Other access considerations

The use of contextual information in admissions processes is still being explored. We recognise the importance of strong evidence to enable the development of a transparent and robust policy. Although progress has been slower than anticipated we are now confident that we have the data required to evidence whether this approach could enhance access to UEA. We plan to utilise academic expertise within UEA to support the analysis of this data.

We recognise that the sector wide decline in part-time students is of concern. However, part-time provision is not a significant part of UEA's offer, and is not currently a strategic priority going forward. Our focus is full time campus based provision and maintaining our student experience. We already perform well in terms of mature student access, one of the groups

part-time provision seeks to support, and they are a priority group in terms of student success moving forward.

We continue to offer foundation years, designed to be more accessible to different types of learners or students yet to fulfil their potential. These courses provide a strong platform from which students can progress into their chosen area of study giving them a variety of key study skills which will enable them to excel as an undergraduate. Through our Partnerships Office we enable alternative progression routes to higher education for students to study for a UEA award with one of our partners.

3.5 Student Success

Student success is a product of both academic achievement and personal wellbeing. In order to ensure our students receive the support they need we have undertaken a review of the services offered by our Dean of Students Office. As a result of this review a new Student Support Service will be based alongside our Learning and Teaching Service, fully integrating academic and wellbeing support.

In recognition of the importance of students' mental health, a new vision statement for mental health is being prepared. This is being undertaken in partnership with the Students' Union, and in consultation with the University Medical Service and mental health specialists in our Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, to clarify expectations around mental health services. As part of this vision, a new Head of Wellbeing will be recruited who will be a clinically qualified psychologist. Some of our Access Agreement expenditure will support the implementation of this vision. Alongside our Students' Union, UEA has also signed up to the Time to Change organisational pledge.

We will ensure that any student opportunity funding reduction that may impact on student success activities is supplemented through our Access Agreement expenditure. The changes to DSA funding will mean that some aspects of support will no longer be funded through this route. We note that the cost of reasonable adjustments is not be countable expenditure[9] but will include expenditure on support that goes beyond what would be considered 'reasonable adjustments' under the Equality Act 2010.

Research has shown that a strong sense of belonging for all students is at the heart of successful retention and success[10]. To support this we have recently completed a review of our academic student induction and transition programmes to help all students to become more engaged and effective learners. The review identified areas of good practice in existing programmes as well as areas of development. It identified potential enhancements for 2016/17 onwards and looked at examples of best practice and research as well as taking into account student feedback. A number of key principles were established including the importance of students feeling welcome to the academic community of staff and students in their school. We are confident that the implementation of the review recommendations will ensure that the needs of our diverse student body are addressed even more effectively than is currently the case.

For 2017/18 we will have a WP strategic plan for student success in place. This will incorporate our state of knowledge in relation to engagement and output data as well as clear targets and outcomes. We will utilise data to support the identification of the performance and needs of various groups. A key area for focus identified through our performance review (section 3.1.2) are mature students.

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[9] OFFA 2014. Changes to Disabled Students' Allowances – how these affect your access agreement.
[10] Thomas 2012. Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: final report from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme.

3.6 Progression

We have a strong record in terms of overall graduate destinations of students from WP cohorts, as identified in section 3.1.2.

To support progression we currently deliver a mix of inclusive activities for all students and those targeted at specific groups. Our targeted activities include an employability development fund to support students with the costs of development opportunities to enhance employability such as participating in work experience. Student from our target groups are eligible and 25 students received an award in 2014/15. Of the 25 who received assistance, 20 requested financial support to enable them to accept and undertake internships/work experience. Student feedback regarding the fund has been very positive with outcomes including; increased confidence and personal development, increased professional contacts and networks and three applicants securing paid jobs. We are also pleased that two thirds of our Science based summer internships for students primarily in their penultimate year were awarded to students from WP backgrounds. 2014/15 also witnessed the trial launch of the UEA Award. Developed in conjunction with employers and students the Award provides a framework that enables students to develop their skills and attributes through both academic and extra-curricular activities to improve their employability. 13 per cent of the students who participated on the pilot were from a WP background.

Despite our positive performance we recognise that research nationally illustrates that there are issues relating to employability for students from under-represented groups. For example, LPN and black African graduates are less likely to be in graduate level jobs 6 and 40 months after graduating[11]. Graduates from higher income households earn significantly more after graduation than other graduates, even after completing similar degrees from similar universities[12]. Given this picture, and the lag in determining positive outcomes after graduation we do not intend to be complacent and plan to target additional expenditure in this area, to maintain and build on our performance. Our careers team already includes staff who have a focus on specific areas for development such as the progression of disabled students.

A more detailed assessment of our performance identifies that graduate outcomes are not consistent across faculties and subject areas. This more detailed data will be used to identify specific subject areas that need additional focus. We also intend to develop our understanding of gaps in performance at a more granular level, considering ethnicity and disability subgroups as well as multiple indicators of disadvantage and underrepresentation. In order to support the development and targeting of appropriate activity we also need to further our understanding of patterns and trends relating to students actual employment destinations.

Our MyCareerCentral' online hub provides a wealth of internal data measuring students' engagement with our careers service and employability opportunities. Progress on linking this data with broader institutional records has been slower than anticipated and this is an area for focus moving forward to determine which groups are accessing which services. Initial data indicates that LPN students are less likely to login, and a survey of all students suggests a lack of understanding of the wealth of support on offer and also demonstrated the spectrum of need for different services. In response to this our careers team are working closely with our Student Support Service to deliver an integrated induction outlining all the ways in which we support students.

For 2017/18, and as already identified in our WP Strategy, we will have a WP strategic plan for progression in place. This will incorporate our state of knowledge in relation to

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[11] HEFCE (2015) Differences in employment outcomes: Equality and diversity characteristics.
[12] IFS (2016) How English domiciled graduate earnings vary with gender, institution attended, subject and socioeconomic background.

engagement and output data, our understanding of potential causes of performance gaps as well as clear targets and outcomes.

3.7 Financial support for students

Reviews of current research have shown that bursaries have little if any effect on access on at a national level[13,14]. It should be noted that the published research predominantly relates to the pre 2012 system of fees and student support. Similar findings have been published at a national level utilising similar data to demonstrate no significant impact on retention rates[15]. However, evidence relating to the impact of bursaries on retention is conflicting. Institutional reviews suggest that bursaries have an indirect effect on retention by supporting and enhancing the student experience, rather than having a direct influence. Our own initial top level analysis of the impact of bursaries has been inconclusive and we continue to undertake our own analysis and research in this area.

Given the proposed external changes to student support identified in 3.3.1 and the existing uncertainty and concerns relating to impact of this support on student success in particular we are not making any changes to our financial support package for 2017/18. We also acknowledge the concerns of our Students' Union that a reduction in financial support may impact adversely on students who need support the most.

3.7.1 Support for 2017/18 entrants

Our financial support for 2017/18 entrants is outlined in Table 6 below.

Recipient	Amount
Household income less than £16,000	£1800
Household income £16,001 – 20,000	£1000
Care leavers	£3000
Humanities or Sciences Foundation Year, household income less than £16,000	£1800

Table 6: Support for 2017/18 entrants.

The financial support detailed in Table 6 is provided for no more than four years of study even if a course is longer. A Foundation Year counts as one year of study towards the maximum of four years of bursary support. All recipients are able choose annually the type of support they receive: fee waiver, accommodation waiver or cash payment. We offer a Bright Sparks scholarship which recognises excellent academic and research project outcomes with a £3,000 scholarship which can be combined with a bursary for eligible recipients. We will also offer an 'Article 26' scholarship for asylum seekers worth £12,000. This will cover the cost of home fees £9000 as well as offer a £3000 bursary per year of study.

We will be undertaking a wholescale review of our bursary offer and alternative forms of support, establishing a task and finish group who will report to our WP Committee. Their aim will be to determine if expenditure on financial support could be more effectively invested in alternative activities to support access, student success and progression for 2018/19. For example, the importance of a strong sense of belonging in relation to retention and success is noted in section 3.5. Research suggests that in this context, financial support can be used

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[13] Nursaw Associates 2015. What do we know about the impact of financial support on access and student success?
[14] OFFA 2010. Have bursaries influenced choices between universities?
[15] OFFA 2014. Do bursaries have an effect on retention rates?

to nurture that belonging (i.e. by offering books and other materials rather than direct cash bursaries) [16].

We will continue to undertake our own monitoring and evaluation of the impact of financial support, detailed further in section 5. We hope to utilise the measures and survey tools for collecting and reporting data on the impact of financial support currently being developed in conjunction with OFFA[17] to ensure this is robust.

4 TARGETS AND MILESTONES

UEA's targets and milestones outlined in Tables 7a and 7b of our Resource Plan are a combination of HESA KPI's and internal measures. For HESA measures we consider that benchmarks are the most helpful milestone against which to assess performance as they reflect context. Equally we recognise the value of aspirational targets and have therefore expressed milestones in absolute terms.

Overall our targets have a clear focus on access measures, thus supporting OFFA's strategic plan for 2015-2020.

4.1 Changes to targets and milestones

We anticipate revising our outreach targets following our review of activity (section 3.4.1). This could include adopting different or new measures of performance should existing activity or target groups change or become obsolete.

We recognise that it would be helpful to demonstrate the impact of additional activity relating to success and progression through new targets. However, our available data is not currently sufficiently robust enough to enable us to take an informed approach when setting a baseline and appropriately stretching targets. For progression activity in particular we have made less progress than anticipated on disaggregating data relating to engagement and participation by under-represented groups in careers and employability activities.

With the development of our internal data monitoring (section 5.1), we anticipate that gaps in performance which drive our strategic priorities rather than absolute measures could also feed into institutional targets.

5 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

The University undertakes to monitor compliance with this agreement and our progress towards milestones. This responsibility sits with our Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) who will be supported by the new Academic Director for Widening Participation (section 3.2.3). Our WP working group includes representation from across UEA including the Union of UEA Students, the Careers, Student Support and Learning and Teaching Services, the Outreach Team and the Equality and Diversity Office. We are currently moving this group over to a more formal committee structure with revised membership and terms of reference.

UEA's strategic approach to WP is underpinned by an emphasis on monitoring and evaluation to prioritise activities and interventions with the greatest impact. We achieve this by utilising data to establish baseline and identify gaps in performance between different

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[16] Thomas 2012. Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: final report from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme.
[17] McCaig et al. 2016. Understanding the impact of institutional financial support on student success: Phase One Report.

groups and build an evidence base of effective activities, good practice and areas for improvement.

5.1 Data and monitoring

UEA has made significant progress since our last Access Agreement in terms of utilising both HESA and internal data to monitor performance. We have a range of institutional WP reports for three years of data looking at entrants, non-continuation, degree outcome and graduate destinations broken down by the key characteristics outlined in section 3.2.2. We also have reports for each statistical target tracking actual performance against milestones.

In order to further our understanding of challenges faced by different groups we plan to review data at Faculty and School level, for disability and ethnicity sub groups and by multiple indicators of disadvantage. We also need to further our understanding of various groups in the context of our admissions cycle.

5.2 Monitoring and evaluating activity

Monitoring and evaluation is embedded within all our outreach activity. We consider outputs and outcomes in terms of both short and long term impacts. However, we recognise the need for an even clearer focus on outcomes to demonstrate the value of specific interventions and target resources most efficiently.

Although monitoring and evaluation of interventions does occur for a range of activities, our WP Strategy identifies that we need to develop a WP monitoring and evaluation strategy that reflects all aspects of the student lifecycle. This will map against institutional structure and coordinate with equality and diversity measures. Our cross institutional team of monitoring and evaluation coordinators already cover the student lifecycle and we are reviewing our WP data group's terms of reference to ensure we maintain momentum and develop best practice.

5.3 Evaluation and research

Our Business Intelligence Unit undertake cross analysis of internal surveys to highlight any possible differences in requirements and experience of UEA provision for different student groups. For example, responses to our Reasons for Choice Survey have been analysed by POLAR quintiles. This annual survey of enquirers, applicants and offer-holders explores decision making in terms of important factors and information sources used and the impact of these on opinions of UEA. Responses to our Student Experience Survey have been analysed comparing the responses of those who reported receiving a full or partial grant whilst studying at UEA against those from who have not. The aim is to highlight any possible differences in experience/ satisfaction with provision between these groups.

We are also undertaking a tracker project - qualitative interviews with a small (30 students) panel of 1st and 2nd year home undergraduate students across the academic year following their experience of a year at UEA. This will help us understand any differences in the experience of choosing, studying at and living at UEA between WP and non WP students including the impact of these on success and retention factors; including questions around level of engagement academically and socially, how time is spent, financial situation and pressures, highs and lows of experience and likelihood to continue.

Going forward we will utilise the academic expertise within UEA, in particular through our HE Research Group. We plan to support in-depth research into specific WP issues and are currently funding five short term fellowships to improve our knowledge and understanding of specific topics:

- Mature students and widening participation: towards understanding and improving student access and success at UEA.

- The effect of financial stress on student wellbeing, attainment and retention.
- Understanding effective outreach to improve access
- Strategies to foster a sense of belonging at university for WP students: A literature review and narrative analysis of student stories.
- Looking beyond the first year experience: best practice in supporting student transition

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

UEA takes equality and diversity issues into consideration when designing access agreements and has executed our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Equality and diversity is embedded across the student lifecycle through inclusive teaching, learning and support. However, we also target some activities at specific groups. Examples include our mature student events for potential students, or the support provided by our Dean of Students office for disabled students studying here.

Our current equality strategic priorities cover the four protected characteristics which overlap with our WP target groups. Gender, race/ethnicity and disability are identified as key areas for priority, either in terms of activity or greater understanding in terms of performance. Although age is considered a secondary priority overall from an equality perspective, we recognise the non-continuation of mature students as a significant WP issue.

As highlighted in section 3.1, all UEA's performance measures in relation to WP and the student lifecycle are evaluated by the protected characteristics noted above where data is available. Current analysis is focusing on disaggregating data further by sub-categories of race/ethnicity and disability. Our equality and diversity working group has also identified a need to improve understanding of the intersection between POLAR quintiles and other protected characteristics. These analyses will inform our Access Agreement and both our WP and Equality and Diversity Strategies and activity going forward. Our Access Agreement monitoring and evaluation activity will therefore inform insitutional equality and diversity strategy development and our WP activity supports the achievement of UEA's wider equality and diversity aims.

Our equality and diversity and WP staff work closely in partnership and are represented on committees that steer both areas of activity. UEA's Head of Equality and Diversity is involved in the development of our access agreements and monitoring returns.

7 PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

UEA is committed to publishing clear and accessible information for existing and prospective students on the fees we intend to change and the financial support we offer. Once this agreement has been submitted we will publish fee and financial support information online, noting it is subject to approval by OFFA. We will ensure we provide timely and accurate information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) so they can populate their course databases in good time to inform applications.

We recognise the importance of ensuring prospective students, especially those from under-represented groups have access to information to make their decisions on higher education. We provide this information across a range of sources, from hard copy information leaflets to emails and webpages.

We have recently reviewed our communication plans for prospective students in light of CMA guidance. These cover electronic and paper communications that enquirers and applicants receive. We also plan to review our existing hardcopy materials for pre and post 16 students and their influencers.

As a result of focus group research with prospective students, including those in our target outreach schools, we are currently redeveloping a section of our website. Our 'Information for Parents, Teachers and Young People' pages are being restructured with updated content to reflect young people's feedback. Alongside this we have an intern in place to explore opportunities for improved communication, and sustained impact, with young people from under-represented groups who have participated in outreach activities. Our 'Reasons for Choice' survey (section 5.3), indicated that potential students from LPN are more reliant on their own research in selecting institutions and less likely to use advice from friends and teachers/ careers advisers. In contrast, LPN students reported using the UCAS website to gather information more often than those from POLAR quintiles 2-5.

We will need to ensure that students receive accurate information about the implications of any policy and funding changes. For example, in relation to the Disabled Students' Allowances we will make sure that students have a clear understanding of the support they can expect to receive from UEA. For potential Health Sciences students, and all those from low household income who would previously have received a grant, we will ensure clarity in terms of the implications of funding changes and the support available.

8 CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

Student representation in terms of WP falls within the remit of the Undergraduate Education Officer within the UEA Students' Union (SU). They, and a senior member of Union staff, are members of our WP working group. The Officer is also a member of other University committees such as the Learning and Teaching Committee, Employability Executive and Equality and Diversity Committee which enables them to input into discussions and decisions which impact on WP across the student lifecycle. Through their involvement in our WP working group, the UEA SU have contributed to both our WP Strategy and the development of this Access Agreement.

The UEA SU are also heavily involved in cross institutional reviews that have the potential to impact on WP, such as the review of student services and the resulting enhanced support for mental health issues. Our Code of Practice on Student Representation has recently been revised. This ensures students are represented at school and faculty level and enable students to contribute to the management and enhancement of their programmes. Looking forward UEA SU will have a key role to play in the review of our financial support (section 3.7).

UEA also regularly gathers student feedback and views through institutional surveys and focus groups. We have a clear schedule of planned engagement to prevent survey fatigue so try and integrate WP into this broader activity. Some examples of this are outlined in section 5.3. We have agreed with the UEA SU that they will facilitate engagement with the network of Student Representatives to offer additional opportunity for consultation on WP issues both to develop access agreements and for the longer term implementation of the WP Strategy. We gather feedback from our Student Ambassador cohort, and in particular will be utilising their experiences as part of our review of Outreach activity (section 3.4.1).

UEA's outreach team continue to work closely with the SU to support their volunteering activity with schools and colleges through the provision of training and school engagement.