

University of Worcester

Access and Participation Plan: Office for Students Registration 2019-20

1. Introduction

1.1 The University of Worcester is home to over 10,000 students, over half of whom study on academic courses relating to Health and Education. The University places a strong emphasis on **student engagement, progression and employment**, as the Statement of Findings from the year two (2017) Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) demonstrates: *“the University metrics, supplemented by the submission, indicate that students achieve excellent outcomes.”*¹

1.2 The University has long adopted a ‘**whole institution**’ approach to widening participation, and is committed to continuing and developing this initiative. Whilst this approach shares many features with other inclusive institutions, it also has some innovative aspects, particularly in its approach to developing students’ learning spaces. For example, the University Library, the Hive, is the first Public and University Library in the UK and the first such integrated library in Europe. This integration allows the University to engage in outreach across the region, raising the aspirations of children and young people from all backgrounds. There is tangible evidence of its success: in the year after its opening, book borrowing by teenage readers (not including University of Worcester students) increased by 356% and has remained at this high level since. The University has taken a similarly inclusive approach in the development of its other academic buildings, such as the University of Worcester Arena, the UK’s first indoor sports arena designed specifically for the needs of disabled athletes.

1.3 This Access and Participation Plan is set out in five parts:

- Part 1 Assessment of Current Performance, which is divided into 5 key indicators
- Part 2 Ambition and Strategy: Student Access, Success and Progression Goals
- Part 3 Investment
- Part 4 Provision of Information to Prospective Students
- Part 5 Consulting with Students

2. Part 1: Assessment of Current Performance

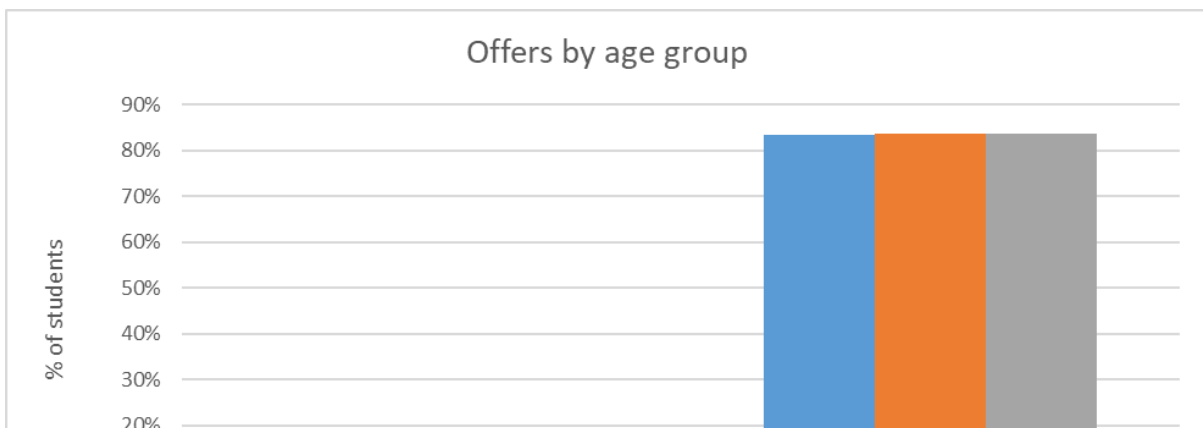
2.1 Approach

2.2 We have systematically addressed each of our locally adjusted benchmarks in order to assess **where we have made progress**, and to establish **where we need to make greater progress**. Wherever we identify an area that requires further attention, we have set targets to ensure that we make the requisite progress, and identified actions that will ensure that we meet those targets.

¹ TEF Panel, TEF Outcomes, The Office for Students, viewed 17 May 2018,
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/#/provider/10007139>>



3.3 The table below shows that there is no significant difference in the proportion of offers that are made to students from either age category. Interestingly, though, the proportion of mature students accepting an offer and then registering at the University of much higher than for the young category: 65% mature compared to 27% young in the academic year 2017/18, this pattern has been consistent over the previous 3 academic years.



POLAR

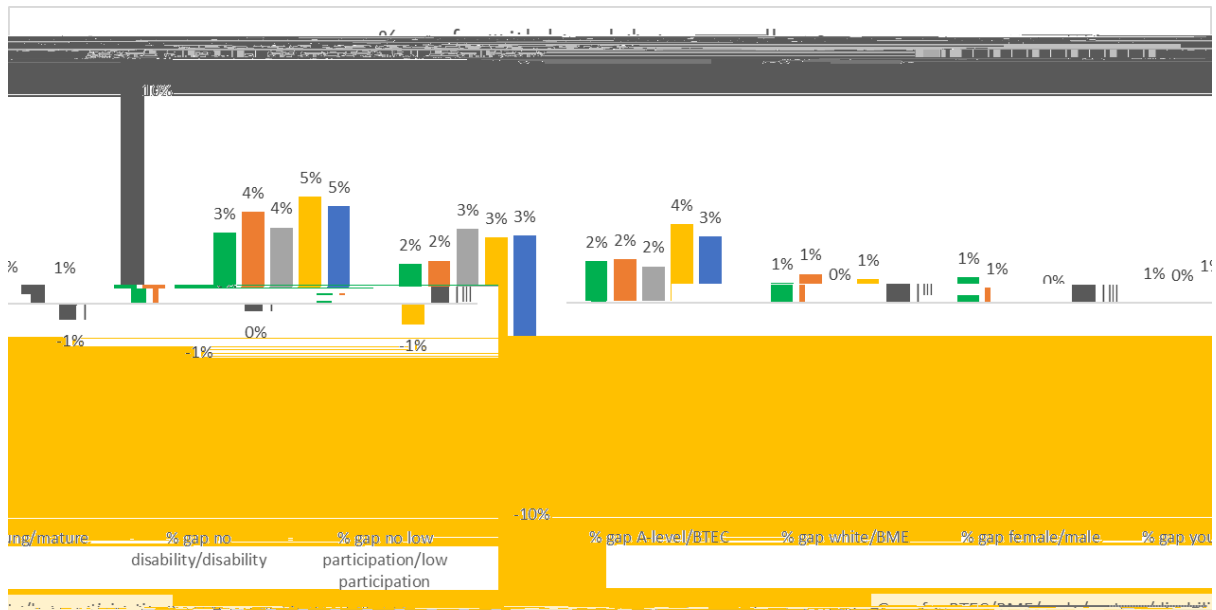
3.4 The analysis of our data confirms the findings of the recent HEPI report², that the university attracts applications from each of the POLAR quintiles in broadly the same proportions that they are in society, and also evenly across all quintiles.

² Martin, I 2018, Benchmarking widening participation: how should we measure and report progress?, HEPI,

3.5 There is no material difference in the number of offers made to students, with offers being made across quintiles in the same portions as applications received. Registrations are also broadly in line with the proportions of offers made across all quintiles.

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vulnerable to early withdrawal or non-completion but also young males from low participation neighbourhoods.



4.4 Our own interrogation of withdrawal data also shows that continuation/completion can be challenging for mature female students and for young male students on FD/HN courses.

5. Section C: Attainment

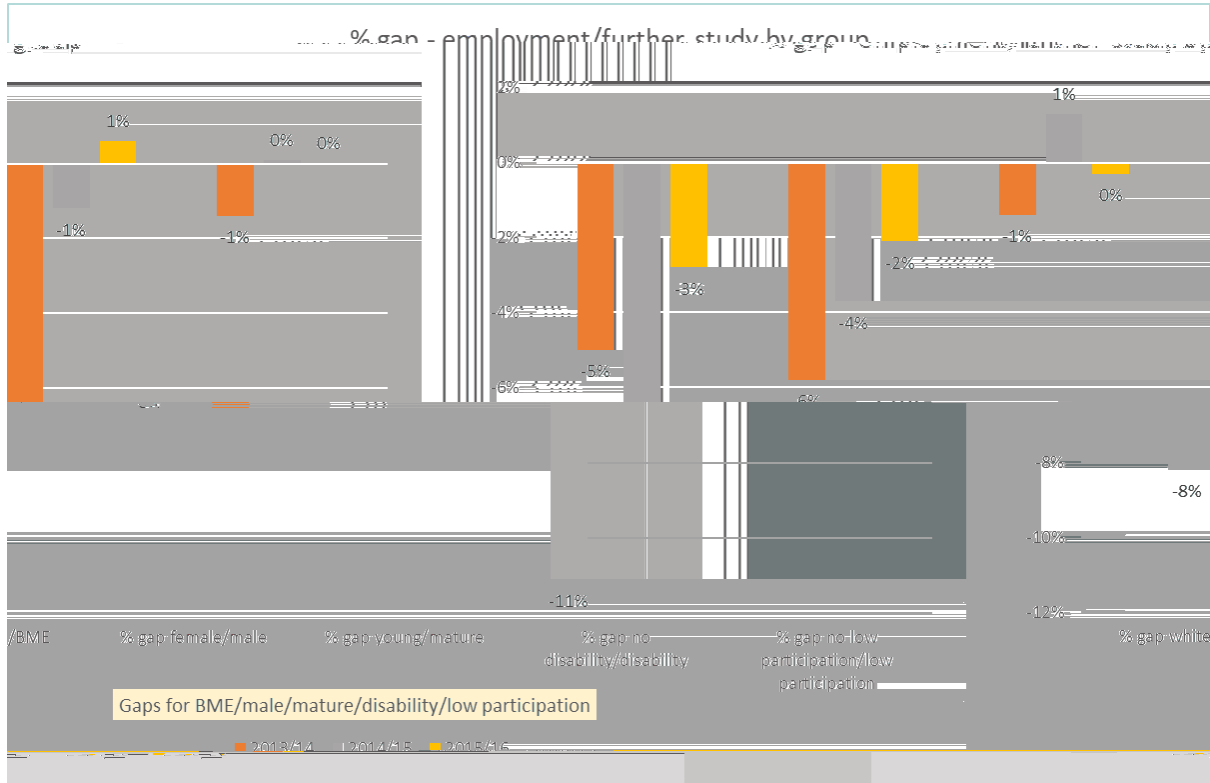
5.1 65.5% of 2017 University of Worcester graduates gained a 1 or 2:1 compared with 70.8% for the sector overall.

5.2 We have carried out an analysis of student attainment by student characteristics, and this shows, as can be seen below, that the most significant performance gaps relate to entry qualification and ethnicity, as is the case for the sector as a whole. There is no comparable benchmark for assessing the outcomes for graduates with different entry qualifications (as opposed to UCAS points equivalent), although recent analysis published by HEFCE shows this is significant (HEFCE, 2018). Our performance gap for BME students at 17% is the same as that for the sector as a whole and is based on small numbers (122 students graduating with 1 or 2:1 in 2017). There has been some improvement over the five year period, and we remain committed to further narrowing the gap.

5.3 The outcomes gap for students by gender shows a persistent gap for males of 12/14% for the University as compared to a 5% gap nationally. There is also a persistent gap in outcomes between young and mature students at 14/15%, which is slightly above the 12% national gap. The gap between graduates without a disability and those declaring a disability is small and narrower than the national performance gap for these groups (3%). Similarly, although there has been a small increase in the difference in outcomes between graduates from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2, and those from 3, 4 and 5, this is narrower than the national gap of 10% since 2013/14.

Asian students there is a -2.2% and -3.6% difference between the indicator and the benchmark, and for disabled students a -2.1% difference – but again these are not marked as statistically significant.

6.4 An analysis of outcomes for different social groups over the last three years is set out below; we have not at this point been able to benchmark the analysis with national data.



(Source of data – internal Careers Service reports on DHLE survey)

Ethnicity: 2015/16 graduate data shows that we have made considerable progress in reducing the size of the gap in progression rates for BME graduates, reducing it to 2.8%, which is considerably narrower than the -5 and – 8% gap of the previous two years. We are, of course, committed to continuing to reduce this still further. It should be noted that the number of BME University of Worcester graduates each year is small, with 10% of students overall identified as BME.

Gender: 2015/16 graduate data shows -2.1% gap for male graduates, which is narrower than the -6% and – 4% gap of the previous two years.

Age: There is no significant gap in progression to further study/employment for young and mature students.

Disability: 2015/16 graduate data shows graduates with a disability were 0.6 more likely than those without a disability to be in further study or employment which is quite different from the -11% gap for disabled graduates three years ago.

Low participation

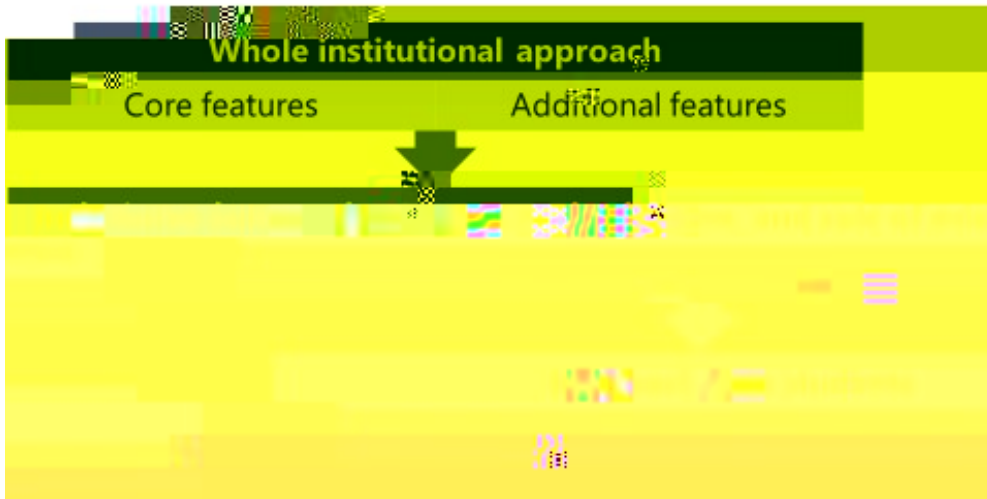
- Implementing the recommendations of our direct entrant transitions project;
 - Supporting student transitions with a particular focus on BTEC entrants and access to pre-entry and first-year study skills support;
 - Embedding within courses planned and coherent strategies for the development of6TG6.5 (cade-2 (o)10.(opm)- .(opm)-7 0 Td [a5 o)10.5 (685 0 Td [> Td [a
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12. **Goal 5: To further strengthen our whole institution approach to access and participation through the development of institutional practices in relation to delivery monitoring, evaluation, reflection and planning.**

12.1 Our strategic plan commits us to providing an outstanding educational experience for our students, based on inclusion and enabling all students to fulfil their potential. This ambition drives and frames our objectives and priorities in relation to improving student outcomes, within a whole institution approach to access and participation. We have evaluated our progress in implementing a



outreach, through to pre-entry support and admissions, learning, teaching and assessment, academic support and progre(ea)10.5 (c)-2 (hi)2-87on7 (and pr)-5.9 (o0)-5s



[from Thomas, L. Understanding a whole institutional approach to widening participation: final report, 2017, OFFA]

12.9 During 2019/20 we will use this model and the inclusion toolkit to systematically review and evaluate the key features of our whole institution approach. We will do this through self-evaluation at institutional and departmental level(12.)-6. insd depapnsen-6 syst(m)-5.9 (at)-6.6 (i26.6 ac)-2 (m).6 on(i)2.6 (t)-6.6 (h)10.6 uring of s59 (o)17.5 f:9

- Addressing any differential attainment, specifically success for BAME students, mature students and disabled students
- Development of 'Diversity Competence' through our learning, teaching and assessment practices
- Development of extra-curricular activities which contribute to students developing diversity competence
- Developing staff to ensure that they are diversity competent and can support and teach students in a way that embeds equality and diversity.

14.4 We have clear aspirations which are being championed by the Pro Vice Chancellor Students to achieve the Race Equality Charter mark, and we have an ongoing commitment to the development of our equality work e.g. we are aiming to achieve the Athena Swan bronze award.

15. **Part 3: Investment**

15.1 We have made informed predictions of our student numbers for 2019 -2023 based upon the actual numbers for 2017-18 alongside a forecasted impact of the demographic changes. The demographic decline in school leavers is likely to result in a reduction in overall student numbers accessing higher education over the period covered by this plan. The result of these changes will impact on the total amount that we are able to commit to access, student success and progression compared to what was predicted

15.5 The approximate distribution of funding will be total expenditure of £4,959,662 on access to learning financial support and bursary expenditure; profiled as follows:

£1,032,261 on additional outreach and access measures:
£1,548,392 on student success:
£1,346,728 on progression:
£1,032,281 on financial support.

16. Fees

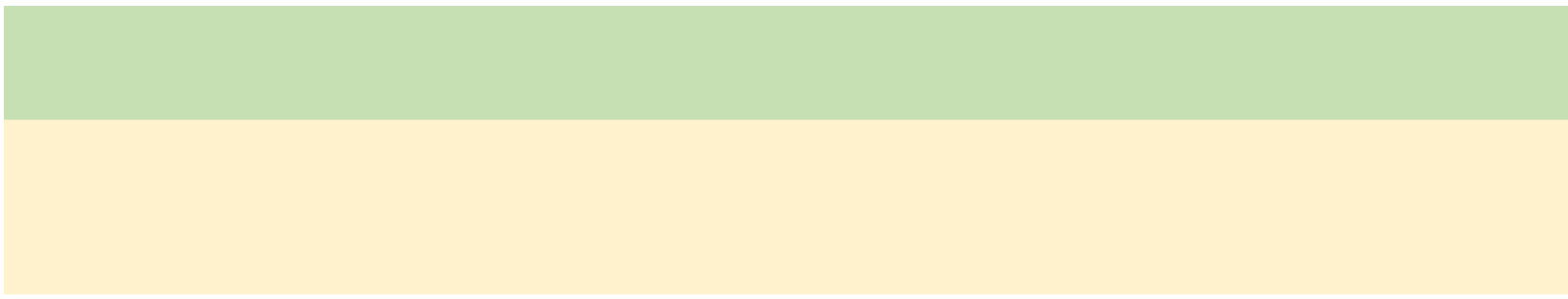
16.1 The University will charge the maximum fee of £9250 (plus inflation) in 2018/19 for all our undergraduate courses. Students studying part time will not exceed the maximum fee level of £6935 (plus inflation). The University has established a Fees, Scholarships and Bursaries Committee, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor Students and comprising representatives from relevant disciplines across the University including Finance, Registry, Academic Departments and Access and Inclusion. In reviewing this year's fee proposals, the Committee considered at length the potential impact of fee levels on students, and sought to achieve a fair and reasonable fee arrangement. The Committee made its recommendations to the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Group, which considered and discussed the proposals and approved them on behalf of the University.

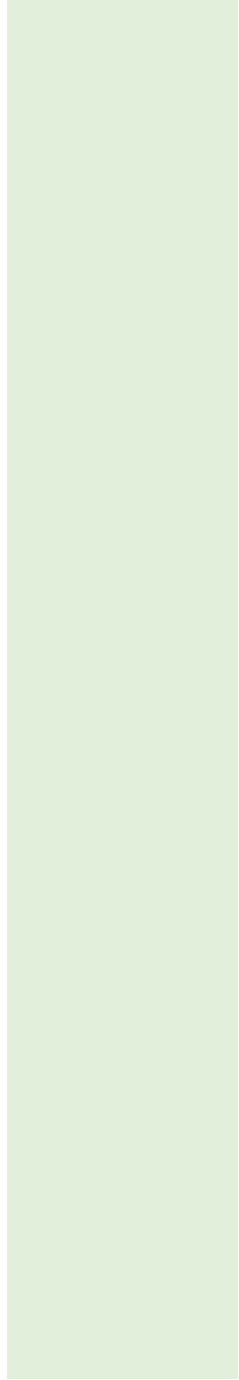
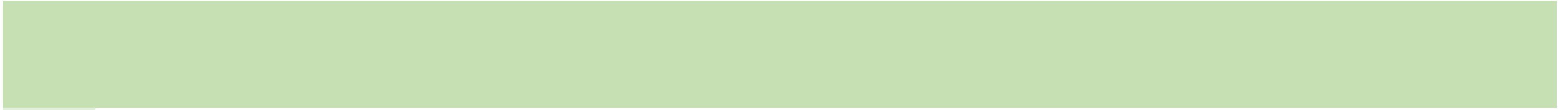
16.2 Fee Increases

16.3 Where our fees are below the fee cap we may apply annual increases in fee levels for continuing students. Where we do this, it will be in line with the appropriate inflationary measure set by the government. Any fee increases will be calculated using the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast RPI-X. This information will be clearly articulated in

progression. We provide a range of resources and support to the Worcester Students' Union, to enable them to help us to hear the student voice and to provide effective student academic representation and advice and guidance. This includes monetary advice, academic and disciplinary representation, and the development of sports societies and volunteering. All of these activities are vital in improving the student experience and all have a positive impact on student happiness, retention, progression and success. The 2018 Course Experience Survey (CES) has shown a 3% rise in satisfaction with the Students' Union.

- 18.2 The Students' Union exists to represent all students at the University and prides itself on embracing diversity and on promoting inclusion. From electing Full and Part-Time Officers representing different cohorts of students, to campaigning on issues of diversity, to ensuring the presence of Welfare and Inclusivity Officers on each sport and society committee, the Union takes this aspect of its work very seriously. An example of this in action is the proactive promotion of the national #TakeAStand campaign during the annual Varsity competition.





T16a_20	Success	Attainment raising	Other statistic - Completion/Non continuation (please give details in the next column)	Reduce withdrawal rate of students entering with BTEC qualifications	No	2015-16	9% gap	Year on year improvement	Year on year improvement				
T16a_21	Success	Attainment raising	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Narrow gap in attainment of top honours students with BTEC entry qualification	No	2013-14	34% gap	Year on year improvement	Year on year improvement				
T16a_22	Success	Attainment raising	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Narrow gap in attainment of top honours for BME students	No	2016-17	17% gap	Year on year improvement	Year on year improvement				
T16a_23	Success	Attainment raising	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Narrow gap in attainment of top honours for mature students	No	2016-17	14% gap	Year on year improvement	Year on year improvement				
T16a_24	Progression	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Narrow gap in progression to highly skilled employment or further education for students frm BME backgrounds	No	2013-14	6%gap	Year on year improvement	Year on year improvement				
T16a_25	Progression	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Narrow gap in progression to highly skilled employment or further education for students from low participation neighbourhoods	No	2013-14	5% gap	Year on year improvement	Year on year improvement				
T16a_26	Progression	Multiple	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	HESA Table E1A employment indicator including further study	No	2015-16	95%	1% above benchmark	1% above benchmark				

