



**University of Suffolk  
Access and Participation Plan  
2019/20**



This Plan sets out how the University of Suffolk will support students from all backgrounds with the ability and desire to participate in Higher Education (HE), to access, succeed, and progress from HE. This plan is submitted on behalf of the University of Suffolk, including its Partner Colleges.

The University of Suffolk is comprised of the main campus in Ipswich, and provision offered at East Coast College (based in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft), Suffolk New College (based in Ipswich) and West Suffolk College (based in Bury St Edmunds). The University was established in 2007 as University Campus Suffolk (UCS) with degrees validated by the University of East Anglia and University of Essex; and



Indicator	University of Suffolk Performance	Benchmark
<b><i>Widening Participation Indicators (2016/17)</i></b>		
Young full-time undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	26.5%	14.7%
Young full-time entrants from state schools	99.1%	

students (25.8%); and that young White students







aimed at young Carers, and for students from military families reflecting the high number of military establishments within the region. We will continue to target activities to these groups where possible.

*Success:* HESA data shows that we need to make progress against our non-continuation benchmarks for both young and mature full-time students, which means we must improve continuation and success rates for all students. However, internal data shows that students who are male, BME, or have a disability

The University has developed our courses to provide a progressively more academically challenging experience for students. Many arrive la









Friends events, the Student Union Council, and by direct engagement between Learning Services and course groups. Financial support will be evaluated through Focus Groups with students.

## **2. g: Monitoring Delivery of the Access and Participation Plan: Institutional Governance**

The University will monitor compliance with the commitments made in the APP and progress against targets and milestones. The following indicators will be monitored annually:

- Retention, achievement and continuation rates of full-time and part-time undergraduate students;
- Socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, age, disability and entry qualifications of new entrants;
- Graduate employability rates and progression of full-time and part-time undergraduates;
- Quantity and impact of outreach activities taking place in each year.

The University monitors the APP through termly Planning Group meetings, and annual reports submitted by the Registrar to the Executive and Board, which are also reviewed by the Senate.

have helped to increase understanding of the needs of our Muslim students.



recommended by [OFFA \(2017\)](#) in the development of new activities aimed at mature and part-time students, and will develop digital and print information on financial support, highlighting our part-time bursary. Case studies will address the range of factors that typically affect mature students (MillionPlus, 2018). We will expand academic and IAG activity with Access to HE students at the

*Younger Age Activity:* Research with Primary School children (Chambers et al, 2018) found that career aspirations are based on people they know or the media, and that gender stereotyping is set from a young age. Only 1% of the children in the study knew about a job from someone visiting their school. We will develop printed workbooks for delivery of activities in schools and on-campus and will expand our STEM innovation activities and our popular Family Awareness Days. Where possible, we will deliver sustainable activity with Secondary Schools and their feeder Primary Schools.

*Information, Advice and Guidance:* We will expand sustained outreach activities in schools and colleges, and will target activity using HEFCE Cold Spots data. We will deliver academic workshops to provide an insight into university-level study, including residential summer schools for students within target groups. We will prioritise activity for students studying BTEC qualifications as they are less likely than those with A Levels to progress to HE (Cochrane, 2015) and those studying in FE Colleges where progression is often lower than in Sixth Form Colleges (Gartland and Smith, 2015). The will provide advice and guidance to anyone considering higher education study, including making referrals to FE and other local providers, to provide a pathway to HE.

*Students with Disabilities:* We will continue to deliver activities aimed at raising the aspirations of young people with disabilities, and will expand the on-Specific Learning Differences or disabilities. We will introduce activities for mature students with disabilities, using existing students with similar characteristics as mentors where possible.

*Young White Males:* We will use evaluation and tracking from our 2018/19 project to expand our activities to promote HE to young white males from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

*Students from Minority Ethnic Groups:* We will use evaluation and tracking from our 2018/19 project to expand our activities to promote HE to students from minority ethnic groups.

*Accessing University Interviews:* We will provide a fund to help students in target groups attend interviews where financial reasons may make it difficult to attend.

*Subject Ambassador Scheme:* The Subject Ambassador Scheme will expand to offer increased inspirational taster sessions in schools. Student ambassadors can be seen as positive role models when involved in informal learning activities (Gartland, 2015); and student ambassadors that interact with students on campus visits are often seen as reliable sources of information (Slack et al, 2012).

*School Sponsorship and Governance:* We committed to undertaking research in 2018/19 on options for school sponsorship and will respond to this research in 2019/20. We

reviewing our provision to identify opportunities to increase accessibility, and the Partner Colleges play a key role in making HE available across our community. We will also be expanding our postgraduate portfolio to increase opportunities for our students to progress into postgraduate study.

#### **4. b: Student Success**

Continuation rates have not met all targets and milestones, and the Progression Strategy and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy aims to embed support across the full student population, targeting specific groups where possible. Promotional materials used to provide information and to promote activities will have diverse images and case studies from mature, male and BME students. Specific areas of focus in 2019/20 are:

*Study Skills:* Voluntary engagement -entry study skills programme has been low, and in 2017/18, we piloted delivery as part of the induction programme for a large group of courses, which included screening for learning difficulties. This model increased attendance but engagement declined across the three days. A series of specially designed, course-focussed one-day programmes will be trialled with a range of courses across the portfolio for 2018/19 and will be fully embedded into all induction programmes in 2019/20. This is likely to make it easier for part-time  
Embedded study skills will be expanded





*Supported Placement Programme:* The University trialled a Supported Placement Programme in 2017/18 to provide placement opportunities for undergraduate students who perceive that they have barriers to employment, particularly including students with disabilities. It will be continued and developed based on evaluation and we aim to increase the number of paid placements in 2019/20.

*The Suffolk Centre for Female Entrepreneurship:* The Centre provides events, workshops and

studying at least 50% of the Full-Time Equivalent and eligibility will be based on a SFE assessment of household income (less than £25,000). The Bursary will be £500 pro rata per year of study.

*Looked After Children Bursary:* This will be offered to students who live or have lived in local authority care. 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. 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. We will implement a new programme of evaluation of the Bursary in 2018/19.

## **5. Investment**

The University of Suffolk has a high proportion of under-represented students. In 2019/20 the University plans to spend £2.4m (22.5%) of higher fee income on additional access, success and



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