

## 2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

### Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by University of Durham 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

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

The 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan Durham drew attention to how strongly widening participation features in the University's ten year strategy and stated Durham's ambitions for addressing these challenges as follows:

- to generate applications from disadvantaged groups through highly targeted outreach activity;
- to adopt a holistic approach to assessment of merit and potential, including the use of information about the context of prior academic achievement;
- to ensure a high degree of academic and non-academic support to all students, but to be targeted towards at-risk cohorts where necessary;
- to focus on employability by offering opportunities to develop key skills and to engage with employers;
- to offer financial support packages to support access, success and progression where there is most need.

(<https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/strategy2027/DurhamUniversityStrategy2017-2027Summary.pdf>)

## 2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by University of Durham 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 University of Durham’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)	Percentage proportion of young entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods in the academic year as measured by the HESA KPI	2013-14	4.5%	5.6%	6.0%	Percentage	2019-20	6.9	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	Percentage points below the HESA KPI benchmark for young entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods	2013-14	1.8	0.7	0.3	Percentage points	2019-20	0	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Percentage proportion of entrants in the academic year from postcodes classified as ACORN categories 4 or 5 as a proportion of all entrants from postcodes classified within the ACORN dataset	2012-13	7%	13.9%	14.9%	Percentage	2019-20	14.07	Limited progress
T16a_04 (Access)	Applications in the admissions cycle to Durham from those who participated in the Supported Progression Scheme	2011-12	41	170	180	Headcount	2019-20	169	Limited progress
T16a_05 (Access)	New enrolments in the first year at Durham from those who participated in the Supported Progression Compact Scheme	2011-12	31	110	115	Headcount	2019-20	89	Limited progress
T16a_06 (Access)	Enrolments at other selective universities (average institutional tariff points on entry of 375+) from participants in the Supported Progression Compact Scheme	2011-12	2	40	40	Headcount	2019-20	40	Expected progress

T16a_07 (Access)	New enrolments in the first year at Durham from those who participated in the Sutton Trust Summer Schools	2013-14	19	50	55	Headcount	2019-20	56	Expected progress
T16a_08 (Student success)	Maintain the current excellent non-continuation rate	Other (please give details in Description column)	2%	Maintain 2%	Maintain 2%	Percentage	2019-20	2.4	Limited progress
T16a_09 (Progression)	Enrolments of students who qualify for the postgraduate £3,000 fee waiver	2015-16	0	100	0	Headcount	2019-20	70	Expected progress
T16a_10 (Access)	Number of guaranteed places offered to County Durham schools for the Supported Progression Programme.	2016-17	0	4	4	Other	2019-20	4	Expected progress
T16a_11 (Progression)	The Graduate Prospects score for students who have progressed from the Supported Progression Scheme and enter employment or further study	2016-17	72.5%	78%	80%	Percentage	2016-17	72.5	Expected progress
T16a_12 (Student success)	Number of targeted placements/internships undertaken by students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and/or from postcodes classified as Acorn categories 4/5.	2016-17	0	25	25	Other	2019-20	25	Expected progress
T16a_13 (Access)	Percentage of Supported Progression students who need further concessions beyond the Supported Progression offer to be accepted by Durham.	2016-17	14.2%	10%	8%	Percentage	2019-20	10	Limited 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 (Access)	Collaborative target for NE Raising Aspirations Partnership (this is a target for the whole partnership)	2014-15	8623	21000	18000	Headcount	2019-20	21273	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Minimum number of children and young people involved in Museums educational outreach activity	2011-12	7000	14000	16000	Headcount	2019-20	13091	Limited progress
T16b_03 (Progression)	Promoting scholarships and other forms of financial support to taught postgraduate applicants and enquirers who meet fair access criteria.	2016-17	n/a	Activity in place.	Activity in place.	Other	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	Explore the viability of opening a Durham Maths School	Other (please give details in Description column)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Other	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_05 (Access)	Implement a CRM system for targeted communications with enquirers and applicants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and/or postcodes classified as Acorn categories 4/5.	2016-17	n/a	Activity in place.	Activity in place.	Other	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_06 (Access)	Use contextual data to make differential and guaranteed offers to students of outstanding potential in target categories, including Low Participation Neighbourhoods	2016-17	n/a	Activity in place.	Activity in place.	Other	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_07 (Access)	Number of Durham staff members volunteering as school governors to support school teaching and learning.	2016-17	8	20	30	Headcount	2019-20	42	Expected 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	£4,450,000.00	£5,070,000.00	14%
Financial Support	£5,236,475.00	£5,195,000.00	-1%

### 4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected University of Durham 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_03	Following guidance from the OfS about future national measures of disadvantage, the proportion of Acorn 4/5 entrants is no longer a target in our 2020-2025 Access and Participation Plan, where the focus is on access from low participation neighbourhoods. That said, we will continue to use Acorn 4/5 as a validating condition for identifying disadvantage and eligibility for a contextual offer, and we will continue to monitor the percentage proportion metric internally in that context, building on the remarkable performance against this measure in 2021.
T16a_04	This Supported Progression conversion target does not appear in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. The Supported Progression Scheme has changed and is now specifically focussed on delivery of POLAR 4 targets in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. There is no longer a separate target for the number of participants in the programme converting to applicants. The aim of the refocussed programme is to engage participants who represent the most important targets of disadvantage, such as LPN. As a result the programme will be smaller in scale but more intense, and progressively more focussed on LPN. We are already beginning to see the success of this change in the proportion of LPN entrants among the participants who convert. In the light of the reduced rates of conversion from the 2019 programme, we will

	specifically review the recruitment value of the financial support package to determine what change may be required.
T16a_05	<p>This Supported Progression conversion target does not appear in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. The Supported Progression Scheme has changed and is now specifically focussed on delivery of POLAR 4 targets in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. There is no longer a separate target for the overall number of participants in the programme converting to enrolments. The aim of the refocussed programme is to engage participants who represent the most important targets of disadvantage, such as LPN. As a result the programme will be smaller in scale but more intense, and progressively more focussed on LPN. We are already beginning to see the success of this change in the proportion of LPN entrants among the participants who convert.</p> <p>In the light of the reduced rates of conversion from the 2018 programme, we will specifically review the recruitment value of the financial support package to determine what change may be required.</p>
T16a_08	<p>In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, online examinations will continue to be the norm for 2021. Moreover, under the title 'Academic Safety Net', we are continuing with the most successful elements of the 2019/20 'No Detriment Policy'. Our detailed analysis, by student group, of degree outcomes and assessment performance directly informed this decision. We anticipate that the arrangements will benefit our target underrepresented groups.</p>
T16a_13	<p>This Supported Progression target does not appear in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. That said, in the light of research into the effect on student success of contextual offer-making, we are becoming bolder in our use of contextual offers, which is allowing us to widen the pool of potential disadvantaged students to whom contextual offers can be made, including participants in the Supported Progression Scheme. We will continue to recognise potential and make further adjustments of offers consistent with research findings, that they will not compromise future success in students' programmes of study. In the light of this research, the initial contextual offer will be bolder and the need for further concession reduced.</p>
T16b_02	<p>The new digital offering, developed as a response to the pandemic, is a major enhancement to the programme which we hope will prove popular among the hard to reach key stages 3 and 4. At this level it is difficult for schools to create space in teaching timetables to enable a visit to Durham for on-campus activity. The digital offering is a very practical alternative.</p>

## 5. Confirmation

University of Durham confirms that:

<b>Student engagement</b>	
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	
<b>Verification and sign off</b>	
University of Durham 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	
<b>Accountable officer sign off</b>	
Name	Professor Stuart Corbridge
Position	Vice-Chancellor

## Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

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

<b>Target reference number: T16a_03</b>
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We have met the commitments in the plan related to this target. Acorn 4/5 was a criterion used both for selection for access programmes and in the issuing of contextual offers. Compared with earlier Access Agreements, the target for 2019/20 was adjusted upwards because of the exceptional progress made against the original target in the 2017/18 Access Agreement. Further progress was made in 2019/20 but not quite as great as anticipated. It rose year-on-year by 0.63 percentage points.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We increased the tariff differential in the use of guaranteed contextual offers to students in the ACORN classification target categories. As a result, the performance on this measure for 2020/21 was a remarkable 16.88%.

<b>Target reference number: T16a_04</b>
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We have met the commitments in the plan related to this target. These were students who came through our programme in summer 2019, which had the highest number of participants since the programme began, but the conversion rate was lower and we missed the milestone by a margin of 11 applicants. As set out in our 2018/19 Access Agreement, we reduced the monetary value of the bursary attached to this programme in the light of research findings into the value of bursaries in supporting the success of students. However, this change did not take account of the value of the bursary as a recruitment incentive. Lower conversion rates from participation in the programme to application and enrolment were consequent on a reduced level of bursary. .
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
This target does not appear in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. In the light of the national access POLAR 4 targets set by the OfS we have been redesigning our flagship access scheme to contribute towards the achievement of POLAR 4 targets. The original target for this scheme, as stated in the 2019/20 APP, measured the overall number of participants who subsequently applied to Durham rather than the extent to which those applicants represented the most important targets of disadvantage, such as LPN. The scheme is becoming more strategically aligned, smaller in scale but more intense, and progressively more focussed on LPN. So within two years, from 2017/18 to 2019/20, we have both nearly doubled the proportion of these applicants who are from LPN backgrounds, and increased the actual number of LPN applicants from this source.



**Target reference number: T16a\_05**

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We have met the commitments in the plan related to this target. These were students who came through our programme in summer 2018, which at that point had the highest number of participants since the programme began, but the conversion rate was lower. As set out in our 2018/19 Access Agreement, we reduced the monetary value of the bursary attached to this programme in the light of research findings into the value of bursaries in supporting the success of students. However, this change did not take sufficient account of the role of the bursary as a recruitment incentive. Lower conversion rates from participation in the programme to enrolment were consequent on a reduced level of bursary.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

This target does not appear in the Access and Participation Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25. In the light of the national POLAR 4 Q1 access targets set by the OfS we have been redesigning our flagship access scheme to contribute towards the achievement of POLAR 4 targets. The original target for this scheme, as stated in the 2019/20 APP, measured the overall number of participants who converted to enrolments rather than the extent to which those enrolments represented the most important targets of disadvantage, such as LPN. The scheme is becoming more strategically aligned, smaller in scale but more intense, and progressively more focussed on LPN. So within two years, from 2017/18 to 2019/20, we have both nearly doubled the proportion of these entrants who are from LPN backgrounds, and increased the actual number of LPN entrants from this source.

**Target reference number: T16a\_08**

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We have met the commitments in the plan related to this target. We continue to have an excellent non-continuation rate, albeit just exceeding the 2% target in 2019.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

In the context of moves to online examinations in 2020 we were concerned about how to protect the interest of students, and introduced a suite of 'No Detriment' policies intended to counter any uneven effects of the pandemic. We subsequently looked at the assessment performance of students from under-represented groups compared with their cohorts which showed that our actions appeared to have been positive for students from those groups. We saw a narrowing of the gaps in the proportion of students achieving a pass mark and in mean marks.

**Target reference number: T16a\_13**

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We have met the commitments in the plan related to this target. The scheme supported the academic attainment of its participants. We made contextual offers to these students within

the range of what we then judged to be sufficient recognition of potential, based on the academic support and assessment during the summer school.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

In the light of research into the effect on student success of contextual offer-making, we are becoming bolder in our use of contextual offers, which is allowing us to widen the pool of potential disadvantaged students to whom contextual offers can be made, including participants in the Supported Progression Scheme. Further adjustments of offers are consistent with research findings, that they will not compromise future success in students' programmes of study. In the light of this research, the initial contextual offer will be bolder and the need for further concession reduced.

**Target reference number: T16b\_02**

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?

We have met the commitments in the plan related to this target. The large number of children and young people involved in Museums educational outreach activity relate to the first half of the academic year before the pandemic lockdown began and visiting became impossible.

Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

We have developed a digital version of the museum activity which is proving popular and allows us to reach schools beyond the region. As the pandemic eases we will be offering both face-to-face and digital activity.

## Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

University of Durham's commentary on any of the targets listed in [Section 2](#).

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	POLAR4 data was used in place of the discontinued POLAR3 data.
T16a_02	The University bettered the benchmark by 0.5 percentage points.
T16a_03	
T16a_04	
T16a_05	
T16a_06	
T16a_07	
T16a_08	
T16a_09	
T16a_10	
T16a_11	HESA has replaced DLHE with a Graduate Outcomes survey. Comparable data is no longer produced.
T16a_12	
T16a_13	
T16b_01	Prior to March 2020, a total of 21,273 students, parents, carers, teachers and professionals participated in NERAP activities of which 16,318 were students.
T16b_02	
T16b_03	
T16b_04	Following approval of the business case by the DfE, the Maths School project moved into the formal Pre-Opening Phase. During this phase, the first objective is to identify a site, a process overseen by the DfE. This will take time due to the limited land availability within the search area. So our current target opening date is in 2023.
T16b_05	
T16b_06	
T16b_07	