

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

ACCESS AGREEMENT 2018/19

This Access Agreement is based on maximum fees of £9,250 for 2018/19 as confirmed by the Department for Education on 1 October 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Access Agreement assumes that the maximum tuition fee will remain at £9,250 in 2018/19. If further changes are made by the Government or HEFCE, including adjustment of the permitted maximum tuition fee for 2018/19 in line with inflation; or approval for charging higher tuition fees for accelerated degree courses, we reserve the right to amend this Access Agreement accordingly. Tuition fees for part-time students will also be adjusted to reflect such changes.

In line with the latest guidance, we have also assumed that new EU students in 2018/19 will continue to pay Home/EU fees for the duration of their course. Should funding arrangements change for EU students in later years we reserve the right to amend fees to reflect this.

Our commitment

The University of Portsmouth's commitment to widening participation is laid out in our University Strategy 2015-2020, which confirms our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and improving social mobility through raising expectations and creating ladders of opportunity for access to higher education. Our Equality Objectives define our objectives in relation to students, staff and the wider community.

Through our proactive aspiration-raising work, fair admissions policies and excellent support for students on programme and into employment and further study, we aim to promote opportunity and achievement in higher education, bringing life-changing benefits to individuals, their families and the wider community. The specific objectives and milestones in this Access Agreement link to the University Strategy and our Equality Objectives.

Our context

Portsmouth remains a city with areas of significant deprivation and educational under-achievement. Our commitment to aspiration-raising and widening participation is essential to the University's future success and viability, and to that of the City.

The latest HESA performance indicators, published in March 2017, show our continued success in delivering on recruitment and retention against our Access Agreement targets. We continue to outperform locally-adjusted benchmarks against each of our main indicators and perform strongly against other HESA indicators.

Our approach

We will charge a full-time undergraduate fee of £9,250 in 2018/19. We will continue to proactively support recruitment and retention of widening participation students, despite continued reductions in associated HEFCE funding. We will also continue our investment in targeted student bursaries and a substantial student hardship fund to help ensure that students who can benefit from Higher Education are not prevented from attending or continuing due to financial hardship.

From 2017/18 a number of previously full-cost courses run in partnership with the NHS, that had previously been outside the scope of the Access Agreement, saw funding changes resulting in students becoming liable for the £9,250 per annum full-time tuition fee. It is anticipated that the CertHE in Dental Nursing and BSc in Dental Hygiene and Therapy will also become mainstream courses from 2018/19, however this is subject to confirmation from Government/HEFCE.

Our activities

We continue to deliver an ambitious outreach programme focused on raising aspirations and attainment in our target groups. Our commitment to widening participation is built into our Admissions processes, with sensitive use of contextual data and acceptance of a broad range of entry qualifications. We offer a strong financial support package and provide comprehensive financial advice to applicants and their families and to our undergraduates. Tailored support is available to priority groups including care leavers and applicants with disabilities.

We actively work with schools and colleges in our region, to promote progression to higher education. New activities from 2017/18 onwards include the opening of Portsmouth's University Technical College and the introduction of a 'Portsmouth Scholars' scheme in close collaboration with a Further Education College.

Our evaluation

Our investment in outreach and financial support has enabled the University to successfully recruit to internal recruitment targets since the introduction of increased tuition fees in 2012. We have consistently spent at or above the levels planned in our Access Agreement each year through fee waivers, bursaries, and hardship funding. We are committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our activities, to ensure that all expenditure and energy is committed effectively to achieve our widening access ambitions.

1. TUITION FEES 2018/19

1.1 Purpose

This Access Agreement sets out the University of Portsmouth's fee levels and financial support for UK/EU full-time undergraduate and PGCE students in 2018/19. Information about how to apply for financial support will be available through the University's website www.port.ac.uk

1.2 Tuition fees for new students

1.2.1 Tuition fees for new and continuing UK/EU full-time undergraduate, PGCE and Master of Architecture students in 2018/19

For this purpose, 'undergraduates' are students studying towards a First Degree, Foundation Degree, HE Certificate, HE Diploma, HND or equivalent. The following integrated master's courses are also classed as undergraduate for this purpose: MBiol, MEcon, MEng, MEnvsci, MGeol, MMath, MOptom, MPharm, MPhys; as well as Master of Architecture and PGCE.

Courses	Tuition fee 2018/19	Estimated 2018/19 entrants
All undergraduate courses unless specified below	£9,250	4,670
Franchised courses at South Downs College and the Isle of Wight College ¹	£6,165	30
Sandwich year out	£925	0
Language year abroad	£925	0
Erasmus year out	£0	0
All PGCE courses including School Direct	£9,250	150

¹ Except students continuing from 2016/17 or earlier at South Downs College, where the fee will remain £6,000

1.2.2 Tuition fees for previously full-cost courses

The University runs a number of full-time undergraduate courses which were NHS commissioned under previous arrangements. In 2017/18 the funding of a number of these courses was changed, with students liable for standard undergraduate tuition fees, bringing new entrants to these courses within the scope of our Access Agreement. These were:

BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and Medical Imaging
BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology
BSc (Hons) Operating Department Practice
BN (Hons) Nursing (Adult)

It is anticipated that in 2018/19 further changes to funding for NHS courses will come in to effect. This is subject to confirmation by HEFCE. If so, new entrants to the following courses are expected to come within the scope of this Access Agreement, with standard tuition fees and bursary arrangements for new entrants from 2018/19 onwards:

CertHE Dental Nursing
BSc (Hons) Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy

1.2.3 Tuition fees for part-time courses

Our part-time undergraduate courses are outside the scope of this Access Agreement, as our annual fees are below £6,165 per FTE pro rata to credit studied.

1.2.4 Tuition fees for 2019/20 onwards

We anticipate maximum allowable tuition fees will be increased by the Government in 2019/20 and later years. Tuition fees for both new students and continuing students will be increased at the rate determined by the Government and through any link to Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) outcomes.

1.3 Students covered by these fees

1.3.1 New full-time students in 2018/19

These fees will apply to all UK and EU new entrants to full-time undergraduate, postgraduate courses with regulated fees, and PGCE courses in 2018/19 supported by HEFCE, School Direct and the National College for Teaching and Leadership. These fees will apply if students enter the first year of an undergraduate course or if they enter direct to Year 2 or later, unless they are transferring or progressing from another undergraduate course and are classed as continuing under an earlier fee regime by the Student Loans Company (SLC).

1.3.2 Continuing full-time students from before 2018/19

Students who started full-time undergraduate and PGCE courses before 2018/19 are covered by the University's Access Agreements for the relevant years and by tuition fees for 2018/19 defined in this Access Agreement. This is in line with statements regarding increases in maximum tuition fees in the sector in each of our Access Agreements since 2012/13.

Due to the removal of the Government's National Scholarship Programme, bursary arrangements from 2015/16 onwards vary depending on the year students started their course and are defined in the relevant Access Agreement.

1.3.3 Continuing students covered by 'old regime' fees

Students continuing on a full-time undergraduate course who started before 1 September 2012 will continue to pay fees at the subsidised 'old regime' rate set by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2018/19, provided they are classed as 'continuing students' under this regime by the SLC.

2. STRATEGIC FOCUS & PERFORMANCE

2.1 Our Strategy

Widening participation into higher education continues to be a key strategic aim for the University of Portsmouth, as highlighted through our University Strategy 2015-2020; which states our commitment to “raising expectations and creating ladders of opportunity for people in our region to take part in higher education”.

Our Education Strategy to 2020 places a strong focus on student retention and employment, and highlights our vision to enhance educational aspirations and create high-quality, relevant, lifelong education opportunities, through working in partnership, including with schools, colleges, employers and alumni.

Our strategic ambitions against these principles are as follows:

- We will make a positive, clear and significant contribution to encouraging, extending, and sustaining the engagement of learners, and to inspiring and enabling their access to, and success in, higher education;
- We will continue and extend our commitment to a partnership approach to outreach activities, and our role in raising educational aspirations in our region;
- We will develop, promote and deliver a broader and more flexible range of routes for entry to the University, both for individuals and via strategic partnerships with educational institutions and employers, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- We will develop a variety of flexible learning programmes in partnership with employers and, where appropriate, professional and statutory bodies, as a means to both grow and diversify our student community;
- We will develop and deliver an enhanced offer of continuous and flexible professional development courses, including named awards through credit accumulation.

2.2 New Strategic Initiatives

From 2017/18 onwards we will be implementing four new major initiatives in pursuit of this strategy.

Firstly, as a member of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership the University is committed to working with employers in the City and surrounding region in developing programmes to address skills gaps across our whole portfolio, from undergraduate degree programmes to CPD provision. This includes our role as the academic lead sponsor of University Technical College (UTC), Portsmouth which opens in September 2017.

The UTC aims to both inspire students and help meet the national skills shortage in careers that require specialised engineering knowledge. To achieve these aims we have formed a powerful partnership between major employers, other education providers and organisations dedicated to supporting and enthusing young people through challenging and exciting enrichment activities. The UTC will offer a vocational route for 14-19 year olds in the region including pathways to degree apprenticeships alongside traditional degrees in STEM subjects. National data shows that last year 44% of UTC leavers went to university, compared to the national average of 38%. The UTC will also be striving to contribute to improvements in school attainment levels within the City of Portsmouth.

Detailed success criteria, targets, monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the UTC are defined through the UTC governance processes, including the UTC Board of which the University is a key founding member. It is not appropriate to add a target to the resource plan at this stage, as we have no baseline data on which to base this. Appropriate targets will be added in later years once baseline data GCSE and A level data is available.

Secondly, we have recently appointed a new Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education Partnerships whose focus includes the establishment of new feeder routes from local schools and colleges in to the University. He is leading the development of a 'Portsmouth Scholars' Scheme, introducing a cascade of peer mentoring between the University, Portsmouth College and local schools. The scheme is aimed at familiarising children, parents, teachers and students from Primary, Junior and Secondary schools with college and university and supporting their understanding of Higher Education, degree-level learning and the opportunities a good education can bring; the scheme is designed to engage with sections of the Portsmouth community with low participation rates. The scheme is open to all and will be physically based in the partner college's Learning Resource Centre. Primarily, the Centre will be a common space for the college to engage directly with school children and for the University to engage with college students. In addition we are forming closer links with a range of local colleges, including through the development of collaborative activity and progression routes with Fareham College.

Thirdly, we are introducing a range of degree apprenticeships. The University piloted its first Degree Apprenticeship programme in 2016/17 and has plans for significant growth in this area. Six Degree Apprenticeship programmes will be started in 2017/18 across a number of disciplines, with further developments in 2018/19 onwards. These are being developed in partnership with local FE colleges as well as employers, to offer an essential technical skills escalator to our local community.

Fourthly, we are involved in two HEFCE funded catalyst projects focused on reducing the attainment gap of black and minority ethnic (BME) students. The Portsmouth-led project is explained in section 4.1. As partners in a University of Sheffield-led project, we are promoting further strengthening of the links between our access work, admissions, retention, academic achievement and progression through the development and piloting of a HEFCE Catalyst funded, evidence-based, new personal tutoring platform which will offer enhanced personal tuition to students to ensure they make a successful transition to higher education. The platform will provide personal tutors with concise guidance about the specific challenges that their tutees who come from lower socio economic groups or from specific ethnic minority groups are likely to face. Early course-based interventions provide an inclusive means for academic staff and personal tutors to identify any individual knowledge deficits so that the necessary course-based tuition can be offered to these students with referral to additional academic and personal support as required.

2.3 Overview of Performance with Access Agreement Targets

The measures we first introduced in our Access Agreement 2012/13 have a successful track record of delivery. We successfully recruited to our HEFCE Student Number Control (SNC) in 2012/13 to 2014/15 and also recruited AAB+ and equivalent students to our baseline number removed from the SNC by HEFCE; we have recruited to internal targets since the removal of the student number cap in 2015/16. We have spent at the levels planned in our Access Agreement on fee waivers, bursaries and student support since 2012/13.

The most recent HESA performance indicators for 2015/16 (published in March 2017) show that the University has continued to outperform our strategic access agreement targets for the recruitment and retention of young and mature students.

Other external indicators of our performance include the benchmarked metrics issued for Year 2 of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). Our long-standing commitment to providing outstanding research-informed teaching and tailored support for every student has led to a consistently strong performance across the TEF Metrics. TEF metrics showed strong institutional performance with 48 positive and double positive flags across the full suite of student satisfaction, academic support, non-continuation and employment metrics; with particularly strong performance against the 'split' metrics concerning BME, disabled and disadvantaged students.

In each of the last ten years we have exceeded HESA benchmarks for the recruitment and retention of young and mature students from low participation neighbourhoods. For the same ten-year period we out-performed the sector average for overall National Student Survey (NSS) satisfaction. In the 2016 NSS, 19 of our courses across all five of our faculties achieved 100% for overall satisfaction. Our graduate destinations have steadily improved. Progression to highly skilled employment has risen from 62% in 2010/11 to 72% in the 2014/15 Destinations of Leavers from HE (DLHE) survey. The Department for Education's recent 'Longitudinal Education Outcomes' data put the University of Portsmouth in the top 25% of institutions at one, three and five years after graduation in terms of graduate progression to sustained work and further study.

In line with OFFA guidance we assess the impact of our activity to ensure that resource is optimally allocated to promote outreach and retention across the full student lifecycle. The University has invested in, and utilises, business intelligence capability which supports internal programme monitoring. This enables academic staff to explore student recruitment, retention, progression and attainment data across multiple dimensions at programme level.

3. ACCESS MEASURES

3.1 Widening participation profile

Through our University Strategy 2015-2020 we are committed to “raising expectations and creating ladders of opportunity for people in our region to take part in higher education”. Our success in recruiting and retaining a diverse student population can be seen through our strong performance against benchmarked HESA performance indicators. These include measures of our recruitment of students from state schools, social classes 4-7, and young and mature entrants from low participation neighbourhoods. We also perform strongly against benchmarked indicators relating to the retention of young and mature students from low participation groups.

The most recent HESA performance indicators, published in March 2017, show that the University has continued to outperform key targets for recruitment of young and mature students from low participation neighbourhoods included in our Access Agreements for 2012/13 onwards (HESA PIs Tables T1a and T2a).

Our retention rates, for young students from low participation neighbourhoods and mature students with no previous HE experience, also improved on the previous year, outperforming our Access Agreement targets and HESA benchmarks (HESA PIs Table 3b).

Ongoing improvement of our retention rates and promoting successful outcomes for our widening participation students continue to be key priorities for the University. We will continue to monitor our performance against annual benchmarks provided through the HESA performance indicators, as well as utilising our own business intelligence capacity to understand more about the profile of non-completing students and to identify areas or groups where attainment gaps exist.

3.2 Planned investment in aspiration-raising and outreach

In each of our Access Agreements since 2012/13 we have committed to invest in a range of aspiration-raising and widening access activities, building on our previous collaborative work through AimHigher. We have successfully continued to recruit substantial numbers of students from low income families at planned levels, despite the increased tuition fees.

We will continue to invest in activities which are shown to deliver significant benefit in widening access to Higher Education. We utilise data available to us to ensure that available resource is being used efficiently and with maximum impact.

Investment in aspiration-raising and outreach activities for 2018/19 reflects this commitment, with £2.8 million planned expenditure through this Access Agreement. We are committed to protecting activity previously funded through HEFCE student opportunity funding.

3.3 Aspiration raising and attainment

The University of Portsmouth is situated in an area with a historically low progression rate into higher education. Progression to HE is under 26% in much of our local area, with progression from some local wards as low as 8% (HEFCE POLAR3 data). Hence, our commitment to widening participation has a strong focus on raising aspirations and awareness of higher education.

Our strategy for outreach aligns with the Office for Fair Access Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 and the National Strategy for Access and Student Success (NSASS). We deliver a coherent, incremental and progressively intensive progression package, from Year 5 to Year 13, which systematically develops interest in and motivation towards higher education. Central to this is the maintenance of successful and sustained partnerships with schools and colleges. All of our widening participation work is targeted at institutions and/or young people where progression to higher education is low, deprivation is high, or where there are significant proportions of under-represented groups continuing to higher education.

We work with local children in Year 5 and Year 6 with the aim of changing their perceptions, and their families' views, about the importance and accessibility of higher education. In line with the NSASS, we will continue to invest in early intervention and our work with primary schools has been cited as an example of good practice within the national strategy. Aspiration-raising is essential in a city with Portsmouth's history of comparative educational under-achievement and exceptionally low progression rates to HE in some areas.

At secondary level and beyond our focus is on continuing to raise aspirations, combined with collaborative work with schools aimed at improving attainment. GCSE attainment of 16 year olds in Portsmouth has historically been low. In 2015/16 attainment of five GCSE at A*-C including Maths and English in Portsmouth was just 58% compared to 66% for the South East as a whole². Following a benchmarked review of activity against national and local evidence, a more impactful programme to include an increase in intense engagement with university staff and students, alongside attainment raising activities, will be developed for a targeted cohort of Year 7-11 pupils. This new programme will replace the more bespoke and ad-hoc interactions offered to schools up until 2016/17 academic year, which our evaluation process indicated as having less impact than a long term focused approach. The aim of the new programme is to make progression to post-16 education and on to higher education a more accessible option for local young people. In addition to activities provided by our Recruitment and Outreach Team, our academic departments run a range of subject-focused conferences and workshops for our target schools and colleges. As well as supporting attainment at GCSE, A-level and equivalent level, these are designed to showcase stimulating elements of HE study and promote interest and excitement about progression opportunities.

Our investment in widening participation work from 2018/19 will include a range of activities with a specific focus on particular target audiences or subject areas. These include attainment-raising in maths and English, using current University of Portsmouth students as subject ambassadors, and activities supporting the outcomes of the White Working Class Males in British Higher Education research project commissioned by the University of Portsmouth and Southampton Solent University as part of the SUN NNCO initiative³.

² Great Britain. Department for Education. (2017). *SFR03/2017. Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2016*.

³ Southern Universities Network. (2017). *White Working Class Males in British Higher Education. Pre and post-*

Additionally, during 2017/18 we will conduct an audit and review of the full range of current activity delivered by the University that contributes to raising attainment in our local schools and colleges. This review will include activity by our School of Education and Continuing Studies, as well as input from academic subject specialists. The findings from this review will shape our future collaborative activity, to ensure this has maximum impact in terms of aspiration raising and contributing to raising attainment in our local schools and colleges. We will also explore our approach to setting an outcomes based target for 2019/20.

3.4 Staff development to enhance widening participation

Our experience has shown that building strong academic and subject-specific links with target schools and colleges is an important way of breaking down perceived barriers and promoting accessibility of the University, as well as supporting pupil attainment. This is confirmed by the NSASS, which supports the concept that the quality of relationships with teachers is key to successful targeting. Hence, we offer professional development opportunities to school and college staff and Careers Advisers to build relationships and promote a smooth transition for students into the University.

This training for staff in local schools and colleges has the benefit of increasing their knowledge of the University of Portsmouth. We will develop our offer in 2018/19; specifically, we will offer CPD to staff in secondary schools and further education providers, supported by our School of Education and Childhood Studies, on HE changes and curriculum changes. In addition we will continue to provide training for University of Portsmouth staff, particularly those involved in admissions, on changes to the curriculum or organisation of schools and colleges. In the longer term we will look to develop resources on-line, thus enabling interaction on a much wider basis.

3.5 Development for School and College Governors

A number of University staff are governors of local schools and colleges, either on a personal basis or as representatives of the University. During 2017/18 we will introduce a professional development programme for these staff, to share good practice and support them in undertaking their roles effectively, with a particular focus on how governors can contribute to raising expectations and attainment in their schools.

3.6 Working collaboratively for impact

We will continue to work collaboratively with other HEIs and our target schools and colleges in order to ensure an effective outreach programme.

In 2014/15 the Universities of Winchester, Southampton, Portsmouth, Southampton Solent, Bournemouth and Arts University Bournemouth set up the **Southern Universities Network (SUN)** as part of HEFCE's National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) initiative.

The SUN Management Group includes senior WP leads at each of the six partner institutions who ensure that the HEFCE-funded National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) is complementary to pre-existing initiatives and collaborative activity.

The Management Group ensures that SUN NCOP staff identify and understand current outreach provision across the region, in order to focus NCOP spend towards new and innovative activity targeted at young people from HEFCE-acknowledged target wards with lower than expected progression rates. In some instances, therefore, students from target wards in years 9 to 14 will continue to engage in institutional WP and outreach activities alongside targeted SUN NCOP activity.

To ensure that under-represented groups in need of support are not overlooked, all six partners have committed to the SUN partnership activities outside the NCOP in 2018/19 and will work together to:

- Continue to **provide outreach opportunities for all state schools in the geographical region of Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight**, promoting these via the SUN website – www.sunoutreach.org.
- Develop and extend collaborative projects which support the **progression of students with disabilities**. This may include working with their parents, carers and advisers. We will draw on the expertise of specialists within our universities and those working in the field. We will also be guided by students currently at university, incorporating them into activities so they can share experiences with potential applicants.
- Develop and promote wider understanding of the issues facing **vulnerable children and young people** including the collaborative development of resources and interactions for specific groups in partnership with local authorities and voluntary sector agencies. This work will be informed by the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers.
- Arrange **staff development** for widening participation practitioners across the partnership, including students involved in our work via their student unions or as ambassadors. Students will be actively engaged in providing ideas and feedback in relation to outreach practice and projects.
- Share practice and outreach to potential **mature or part-time learners**. Deliver collaborative presentations to Access to HE students in local colleges.
- Promote and support the progression of students from **minority ethnic communities**. We will work with community groups to support and develop events and projects, with each university sharing its networks and maximising opportunities for collaborative delivery.
- Share **good practice in evaluation**, both in terms of each partner's activity and in terms of evaluating collaborative projects, and explore the use of HEAT and/or other tracking services to evaluate the impact of collaborative activity.

We will continue to work collaboratively with university partners to subscribe to, and help develop (through membership of the Management Group), the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service. This enables us to continue to target schools and young people engaging in our outreach programmes, to record activities and to track participant progression to HE.

In 2018/19 we will maintain our membership of the Southern Widening Participation Practitioners Network (SWPPN). Additional institutional memberships include the Forum or Access and Continuing Education (FACE) and the Higher Education Liaison Officers' Association (HELOA) all of which provide opportunity to share good practice and resources in relation to widening participation work with schools and colleges. We will also continue to work with partners such as the STEMNET and SEPnet to deliver STEM-focused activities for secondary school pupils.

3.7 Financial advice for potential undergraduate and PGCE applicants

The University of Portsmouth is proactive in offering financial advice to prospective applicants, their parents and carers, and to our undergraduates. We provide comprehensive and impartial advice focusing on the affordability of higher education, with information ranging from the level of support available whilst studying to budgeting and financial capability whilst on course. We will also continue to provide tailored advice for priority groups including care leavers, students with disabilities and those with children.

Providing clear, accessible financial advice will continue to be the focus for our activity for 2018 entry and beyond, to ensure applicants and their families make informed decisions and are not deterred from entering higher education because of incomplete or incorrect information.

The University's Student Finance Centre team will continue to offer specially targeted events for local schools and colleges which include impartial finance presentations for potential students, their parents and advisers. Focusing on support available to those from low income families, we strive to ensure people understand the costs and benefits of higher education and the financial packages available. The team delivered 137 events for prospective students, parents and staff in 2015/16 and will continue to strengthen and develop these relationships. Specialist advice is provided to potential PGCE applicants at targeted events.

3.8 Investment in student bursaries

We are introducing changes in the balance of expenditure within this Access Agreement (see section 2). In 2018/19 we will invest £3.8 million in bursaries for students from low income families. Research by OFFA and the University has confirmed the ongoing importance of bursaries, in ensuring that students are not deterred from going to university on financial grounds⁴.

The University of Portsmouth Bursary is currently offered to all qualifying students with household incomes below £25,000 and there are no restrictions on numbers. This low income group are traditionally debt averse and may encounter more financial difficulty whilst studying. The OFFA-commissioned evaluation tool kit would not be suitable for use at Portsmouth due to the lack of a control group to compare outcomes with. We continue to undertake in-house evaluation of the impact of our approach to financial support for students, including input from the University of Portsmouth Students Union. The value and impact of this scheme is evidenced by our continued successful recruitment of students from households with incomes below £25,000 and ongoing improvements to academic outcomes for this group.

⁴ *National Strategy for Access and Student Success: Interim Report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills* (18 January 2013). (HEFCE and OFFA)).

3.9 Our broader strategic contribution

We continue to make major investments in real and simulated learning environments to enable our students to develop their skills as practitioners. This is of particular importance given our diverse student body who may not have access to external networks and opportunities that will expose them to these environments first-hand.

We are committed to engaging with employers, alumni and other agencies to deliver targeted and relevant career-enhancing opportunities for all of our students; and significantly extending the breadth of opportunities for students to experience the workplace through a variety of means. We monitor the performance of our courses and have recently completed a review of our full portfolio of undergraduate provision, using a wide-ranging set of metrics to evaluate their attractiveness to students and their effectiveness in preparing graduates for the workplace or further study.

Section 2.2 of this Access Agreement includes detailed information on new initiatives including our role as a leading partner in the delivering of a new University Technical College in the city; the development of Degree Apprenticeships and the introduction of the 'Portsmouth Scholars' scheme with a local FE college.

4. STUDENT SUCCESS MEASURES

4.1 Promoting success for vulnerable students

Retention rates at the University of Portsmouth are healthy, with better than HESA benchmark non-continuation rates⁵. We will continue to invest in a wide range of support, to ensure students from diverse backgrounds have every opportunity to succeed at Portsmouth. In 2016/17 the University appointed a new Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for providing operational and strategic leadership in the enhancement and evaluation of the student experience.

Expenditure on student success and progression through this Agreement will be £2.7 million. This expenditure includes investment to ensure that our pro-active support for disabled students is maintained, despite previous reductions in the Disabled Students' Allowance.

We recognise that widening participation students may find it more difficult to complete their courses due to financial pressures. For example, mature students, students with disabilities, and students who are carers may face particular financial challenges. To reduce the risk that financial challenges will lead to withdrawal, the University will continue to offer bursaries to students from lowest income families and maintain a generous hardship fund. Section 5 has full details of this financial support for retention.

The University recognises an increase in students who have additional support needs which do not comply with the Equality Act 2010 definition of disability e.g. general learning difficulties. Our Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre has widened their remit to offer these students appropriate support to develop their skills and enable them to study to their optimum level. This support includes networked assistive technology, loan of equipment and study skill support through specialist qualified tutors, academic skills staff and learning development tutors within faculties. This more inclusive approach will also support the needs of international students, with and without a disability.

The University was successful in securing £0.5m funding from the HEFCE Catalyst fund to lead and deliver a project, alongside four other Universities, focusing on enhancing student mindsets in order to narrow attainment gaps between certain groups of students. This work builds on successful research already carried out by the University through interventions targeted at schools and FE colleges, which seek to remove the impact of stereotype threat.

4.2 Support to promote student retention and success

The University has a generous hardship fund, which provides flexible support, targeted at vulnerable students in greatest need, for example lone parents and disabled students. Feedback from individual students and from the Students' Union highlights the importance of these funds in helping students complete their courses successfully.

⁵ HESA performance indicators Tables 3b and 3c published in March 2017

In 2018/19, the University will continue to allocate £1.3 million to the Hardship Fund to minimise withdrawal of lower income students due to financial pressures. The allocation encompasses support for Care Leavers as well as additional support for disabled students who can no longer access full funding through the Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) for essential equipment.

A survey of recipients of hardship funds revealed that 94% of these students felt the funds they received enabled them to continue on their course and focus on their studies. A further 32% reported that they would have withdrawn from their studies without the hardship funding, demonstrating the value of this targeted financial support.

The University's Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre has introduced a new post, Senior Disability Coordinator. The role has been introduced to collaborate with colleges and schools to support disabled students through the transition to University, in particular those with complex issues such as autism and mental health issues. The role also provides a proactive service for academic departments, collaborative partners and other external education providers showing how this transition process can support the expectation of these students. The aim is to develop greater integration and alignment of the wide ranging professional services available to students with disabilities and support student needs effectively.

We are improving the student experience through investment in measures that support retention and student outcomes. The University library was extensively remodelled in 2014 to provide a blended learning space, with increased study spaces and IT equipment, whilst retaining access to traditional library resources. We have invested in 24/7 term time library opening which, coupled with extended hours during vacation periods, means our opening hours are among the highest in the sector. This provides additional flexibility for those students who engage in part-time employment alongside their study by ensuring that study facilities are available when they are needed.

Additionally, we have also launched 'MyPort', a project which seeks to make professional services more visible to students, whilst simplifying access. A digital 'hub' was launched at the start of the 2016/17 academic year which combines our new student portal with student services information acting as a digital one-stop-shop for all information, guidance and advice in relation to student support.

We have also provided 650 self-issue laptops available via laptop lockers located around the University campus, with further investment planned from 2017/18 onwards due to the popularity of these resources. The social profile of our students means that we cannot assume that students arrive equipped with such resources.

4.3 Broader finance-related activities to promote retention and student success

The University's Student Finance Centre team works actively with undergraduates to help develop and embed financial capability and literacy in students with the overall aim of enabling students to progress and ultimately complete their course. In addition to the students who access the service through visits to the Student Finance Centre, we delivered events to around 4,700 students in 2015/16. These include attending Fresher's Fair, delivering induction talks, and events across campus.

The University provided £120,000 in 2016/17 to support those students who are ineligible for support through the Disabled Students' Allowance. As the University works towards inclusive practice, there should be less reliance on funding and more emphasis on diversity, a belief in the strengths and capabilities of our disabled students. Therefore the specific level of funding will be reviewed in future years.

4.3.1 Outreach across Campus

The team have continued to deliver the 'Love Your Money' roadshow which is offered at various locations across the campus with the aim of engaging with students who may not access our service in the traditional ways. Students are able to find out how the Student Finance Centre can help them, including how they can apply for hardship funds and access budgeting advice as well as learning about financial capability.

An online questionnaire was utilised to gain feedback and 100% of the students who completed the survey said they found the roadshow invaluable and a high number fed back that they found information on developing their broader knowledge of financial credit scoring and payday loans to be the most useful subjects. Around 20% of students were not aware of the Student Finance Centre services before attending the roadshow so these events continue to be vital in ensuring students are equipped to deal with the financial challenges of studying.

We also continue to run our programme of money themed sessions, in collaboration with the Students' Union to coincide with the National Association of Student Money Advisers' (NASMA) initiative, National Student Money Week. This year's event took our sessions out to local WP-target colleges to show them aspects of student life on a budget. We also worked with Student Ambassadors on campus who helped us to engage with students and raise the profile of the Centre while alerting students to the support available to them. This important work will be maintained in future years.

4.3.2 Further developments

Through our Student Finance Centre, we will explore further opportunities to widen our outreach activities and reach vulnerable students who may not feel confident in approaching our service directly. The Centre works closely with the University's Equality & Diversity Team to gather and analyse data on students accessing the service and better understand the needs of our students. We aim to identify any potential gaps in service and identify common themes in reasons for approaching the service, so we can tailor our approach to reach and support those who are most vulnerable, including BME and Disabled students.

Our Student Finance Centre is working closely with the University's Wellbeing Service and Mental Health Advisers to establish a robust referral mechanism to support students with complex needs who may require a multi-agency approach to their support.

4.4 Academic and personal support to enhance student success

The University's success to date in recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds means that it is essential that we offer a comprehensive range of student support services, aimed at continuing students to increase academic success rates and progression to employment. Our benchmarked TEF metrics confirm the success of our comprehensive and coordinated approach.

Our students enter higher education with a diverse range of backgrounds and entry qualifications. Services including the Academic Skills Unit, Maths Café, Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre, Chaplaincy and the Counselling Service work with our academic departments to ensure that students have a positive experience of higher education, which meets their particular needs.

For a number of years, through our Access Agreement, we have made additional investments in promoting a high quality student experience, addressing the needs of students from diverse widening participation backgrounds. These investments included twenty additional posts in faculties to provide support for learning, additional funding for mental health advice and additional funding for our employability service. We have embedded these additional posts in our academic departments and faculties, as this is the most effective way to provide integrated support for retention. Vulnerable students can be supported with no stigma and referred to specialist University services if necessary in a sensitive way. The effectiveness of this embedded approach was confirmed by recent research into good practice in the sector⁶.

Through this Access Agreement we will continue to invest in support to promote the retention and success of target groups. There are dedicated posts across all faculties which provide support for learning and promote student engagement, and we continue to invest in learner analytics to help us to understand differential outcomes for target groups and monitor the impact of our interventions.

In addition our involvement in a HEFCE-catalyst funded project on personal tutoring, led by the University of Sheffield, will include research into attainment gaps through surveys and focus groups with personal tutors and students from lower socio-economic and BME groups, to identify the specific achievement barriers faced by these different groups of students. Following on from this, the students will co-create resources which will be integrated into the student-facing personal tutoring platform which is under development.

The University has appointed an Equality Adviser (Student Experience) whose role is to support our academic departments and professional services in addressing issues such as attainment for students. The Equality Advisor is currently developing proposals focused on supporting BME students, for example addressing the "white curriculum" and issues of "belonging" both of which research shows impact on student outcomes. A broader action is that all staff are now required to undertake Unconscious Bias training as part of the University "core" training package. Activity is also underway within our Faculties, such as identifying pilot projects to embed equality and diversity into practice; for example through a successful project using peer mentors which has improved achievement by BME students in Pharmacy. Again staff development will be a feature of our approach, with activities such

⁶ Bowes, L., Jones, S., Thomas, L., Moreton, R., Birkin, G., & Nathwani, T. (March 2013). *The Uses and Impact of HEFCE Funding for Widening Participation* (CFE and Edge Hill University report to HEFCE).

as a recent workshop on BME attainment delivered by the HE Academy. Work is also underway to identify strategic options in relation to under-attainment by male students.

To promote engagement with these issues, all faculties now receive tailored student and staff equality reports and are expected to develop actions plans to address any issues that may be highlighted. We will continue to evaluate the impact of all these measures through monitoring of withdrawal and success rates for different groups of students and analysis of students' reasons for withdrawal.

The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre continues to liaise with Autism Hampshire and their professional academic mentoring support, referring over 180 students with autism and mental health issues for academic support. This is a longstanding relationship of over 8 years and as part of the integrated support of the University, contributes to the support and experience of our students. The mentors liaise closely through the Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre to support the Student Wellbeing Service, to ensure that students are supported to develop their independent skills and strategies to enhance their learning experience.

4.5 Progression to employment and postgraduate study

Through and beyond the curriculum, the University aims to enable students to develop skills and gain experience which will prepare them for success in the graduate global labour market. The University has undertaken a long-term investment in physical and digital resources to support our students in this way with students across each of our faculties benefitting from high-specification real and simulated learning environments.

Our University Strategy 2015-2020 sets out our commitment to ensuring that every student takes part in career-enhancing activities such as placements, exchanges, enterprise, volunteering and work-based learning. A significant proportion of our full-time undergraduate students come from low income families. Our active support for employability assists all students. Those from low income families may derive particular benefit, for example, they are less likely to be able to take unpaid internships, so benefit from other ways of developing their skills in preparation for employment. Through our Department of Employability we also offer support to students seeking to find part-time work to carry out alongside their study.

The University has committed to offering up to 300 postgraduate scholarships worth £3,000 to Portsmouth graduates wishing to progress to Master's level courses in 2017/18, following the success of a similar scheme in 2016/17. Priority is given to students from low-income households who demonstrate high academic achievement. This scheme will be extended into 2018/19 if it continues to be effective. Funding for this scheme is in addition to our Access Agreement expenditure.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

5.1 Bursaries through the 2018/19 Access Agreement

These bursaries cover full-time undergraduate new entrants in 2018/19. Bursaries for new entrants who started in 2017/18 or earlier and are continuing into 2018/19 have already been agreed by OFFA and will not be changed.

5.2 2018/19 entrants

5.2.1 Home fee paying students resident in England on full-time undergraduate courses⁷

Residual Household income	Award in year 1	Award per annum in years 2 – 4
£25,000 or less	£750	£750
£25,001 or more	£0	£0

Awards will be payable to eligible English Full-time and Sandwich students on HEFCE supported courses, paying £9,250 fees. For 2018/19 this includes new entrants to courses which were previously NHS commissioned. It includes students continuing to the Master of Architecture course and other Master's courses which incur undergraduate fees.

5.2.2 Home fee paying students resident in England on full-time PGCE courses

Bursaries will only be payable for eligible English students on:

- i. PGCE Business
- ii. PGCE Further Education and Training
- iii. Schools Direct PGCEs, if no other bursary is received

Residual Household income	Award in year 1 only
£25,000 or less	£750
£25,001 or more	£0

Students on our other PGCE courses⁸ may receive National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) bursaries of up to £20,000, depending on their subject of study and UG degree class.

⁷ This includes students on the Masters in Architecture course which is treated as Undergraduate for fees purposes.

⁸ The specific courses eligible for these University of Portsmouth bursaries will be reviewed, if there are any changes to the courses for which NCTL bursaries are available in 2018/19.

5.3 Bursaries for new entrants from earlier years continuing in 2018/19

Bursaries for these continuing students will be payable at the rates approved in our previous Access Agreements.

5.4 Eligibility for our awards package

English full-time undergraduate students, paying their own fees of £9,250 in 2018/19 and meeting the family income criteria, will receive bursaries as detailed above. We will not offer bursaries to students from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or other EU countries outside the UK, as they are subject to different financial arrangements. Lower fees of £6,165 will be maintained for our full-time franchised courses⁹.

The fee for our on-campus and franchised part-time undergraduate courses will be no more than £6,165 pro rata to credit studied. As these fees are substantially lower than fees for Portsmouth based full-time undergraduate courses, these students will not be entitled to bursaries.

Students paying substantially lower fees for a language year abroad, an Erasmus year out, a sandwich year out or repeat year of study will also be ineligible for bursaries for that year of study. Students whose fees are paid or part paid through a sponsorship arrangement are also ineligible. However all students in need are able to apply for support from our Hardship Fund (section 4.2).

5.5 Income levels and awards in 2019/20 onwards

Bursary levels and income levels for eligibility will be amended in future, in line with OFFA requirements and taking account of University funding and priorities.

5.6 Additional support for Care leavers

We will offer an additional annual bursary of £1,700 for UK full-time undergraduate, Masters in Architecture, PGCE, and other students who are, or have been, looked after by any local authority or foster carer, or who are currently living in sheltered accommodation or a Foyer Federation. This bursary will not be means-tested and is in addition to any other entitlement. These students are offered a Personal Finance Adviser to provide tailored information and guidance about available funding and help with financial planning.

In 2016/17 the decision was made to extend this Bursary to our continuing Postgraduate students so as to provide a comprehensive package of support alongside the Postgraduate Loan and Scholarship Scheme. Care Leavers are less likely to progress on to further study and financial reasons are often key in this decision. Therefore the additional bursary will help them to progress to meet their academic potential.

We have assisted 54 students in 2016/17 and we are committed to continuing to support this small group of students who face particular challenges in entering and remaining in higher education. We will continue to work with Local Authorities, Social Workers and other universities to share and learn from good practice for supporting access and retention of care leavers.

⁹ Except students continuing from 2016/17 or earlier at South Downs College, where the fee will remain £6,000

5.7 Additional support for Estranged Students

As part of the University's commitment to supporting vulnerable groups we will take the 'Stand Alone Pledge' to demonstrate the comprehensive support we offer for students who are studying without the support of a stable family network.

These students often experience additional challenges, and as such, we have developed a tailored package which provides assistance through additional financial support in the form of a £750 Bursary for Estranged Students and they will be treated as a priority group for hardship funds, particularly over the summer period.

In addition these students will be supported with access to year round accommodation in halls of residence, ensuring that accommodation is available over the summer vacation where required. They will also be offered a flexible package of support through the Wellbeing Service including a named contact throughout their time at University.

Taking the Pledge is a starting point for our University, and we will embed support for this group within our Outreach and Transition work to ensure that these vulnerable students are not deterred from entering HE, and are supported to achieve their potential. We will continue to work with Stand Alone and our local networks to ensure we understand the needs of these learners and identify and inform best practice across the sector, so we can further develop the support provided at the University of Portsmouth and nationally.

6. TARGETS AND MILESTONES

6.1 HESA performance indicators

For our Access Agreement the University has selected targets that can be monitored consistently over time and for which benchmarking information is available, to enable meaningful evaluation of our performance. Table 7a of the Annex to this Access Agreement sets out our targets for HESA performance indicators, focusing on successful recruitment and retention of key widening participation groups.

In our Access Agreements since 2012/13 we have focused on recruitment and retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods, after taking advice from UCAS and HESA about the reliability of data on different indicators of widening participation. This focus on low participation neighbourhoods is helpful, enabling us to selectively target our outreach activities on schools, colleges and other organisations with catchment areas including these priority neighbourhoods. Our targets are based on the POLAR3 classification.

6.2 Other milestones and targets

Table 7b of the Annex includes a range of targets related to our outreach activity. This includes collaborative targets, where targets will be agreed with our partners following evaluation of the success of our collaborative activities. The resulting impact of these activities will be monitored through our achievement of headline strategic targets in Table 7a.

6.3 Developing additional internal indicators

While HESA performance indicators have advantages in terms of benchmarking performance and consistency over time, they also have disadvantages due to the timescale for publishing data.

Therefore the University has developed internal 'lead' indicators, to supplement the HESA 'lag' indicators. Access Agreement targets based on the POLAR3 classification are mirrored in our internal monitoring systems, where we track applicants from low participation neighbourhoods and ensure their applications get careful consideration, taking account of their context. We provide regular management information to senior managers on application and conversion of applicants from low participation neighbourhoods, enabling evaluation of progress during the recruitment cycle.

In recent years we have developed internal management information systems which enable us to review our performance in the recruitment and retention of students, and carry out more detailed analysis based on specific characteristics as part of our Programme Monitoring and Review processes. Capability in this area will be enhanced as a result of our HEFCE-supported 'Changing Mindsets' and catalyst funded projects (see sections 4.1 and 2.2) which will contribute to the development of more sophisticated analysis around student attainment gaps.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Arrangements and timescales

The University will monitor implementation of this Access Agreement in accordance with OFFA guidance. We will undertake timely monitoring of expenditure and recruitment of widening participation students, to evaluate the success of our Access Agreement and our overall commitment to widening participation in higher education.

Given the strategic importance of widening participation to the University of Portsmouth, monitoring data and trends are regularly considered by our senior management team, relevant University Committees and the Board of Governors.

7.2 Evaluation and impact of our outreach activities

We are continuing to build our evidence base to evaluate which outreach activities are most successful. Using an evidence-based approach we will consider what we do, how we can improve current practice, and the most appropriate allocation of future resources. We will continue to develop a robust Evaluation Plan for outreach work which fully describes the Why-What-How of our evaluation processes and how we use data and analytics to report our evaluation.

Our evaluation plan is subject to continual review both internally and in line with validated best practice guidance from the sector as a whole, and collaborative projects such as the HEFCE-funded SUN National Collaborative Outreach Programme. In addition, evidence from national evaluation is used to inform our planning. Organisations such as OFFA, HEFCE, Action on Access, the Higher Education Academy and the National Council for Educational Excellence have all produced research on the features of a successful education liaison and widening participation programme. The consensus is that our planned, integrated and sequential approach, operating from Year 5 to 13, is likely to be much more successful than one-off interventions.

Measurement of the longer-term impact and evaluation is an integral part of our activities and the findings inform future strategy development. Evaluation activities include:

Participant feedback	All participants are given the opportunity to feedback their comments following an outreach event. This data is analysed and used to inform future practice.
Good practice toolkits	Tools to measure impact are kept under constant review. The AMOSSHEE toolkit is currently in use and has been adapted for selected activities across all age ranges. This allows us to clearly articulate and measure the impact of a range of our activities across all age groups. We seek to determine whether an intended change, which is defined for each activity, has taken place as a result of an outreach intervention.
Tracking engagement	Data is utilised to target particular institutions and to track the pathways of selected individuals who have engaged with our more intensive activities through the student lifecycle.
Collaborative evaluation	<p>The University subscribes to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service which provides systems and data to support an evidence base to evaluate the success of our outreach work. Recent reports show us that progression to HE for individuals living in quintiles 1 & 2 (POLAR 3) who have taken part in our outreach activity is 31%, as opposed to the national average for these groups of less than 25%.</p> <p>We will be extending our use of HEAT to individually track students who come to us through access routes through admissions, retention, academic achievement in to further study and employment.</p>

As stated in section 3.5, the University is a member of the HEAT membership service which assists Higher Education Institutions in England to target, monitor and evaluate their outreach activity. By subscribing to HEAT we can take an evidence based approach to planning outreach delivery so that we can continue to invest in outreach activities that optimise progression with disadvantaged cohorts. The University uses the HEAT longitudinal tracking system which matches records on individual outreach participants to administrative datasets spanning Key Stage 2 data through to postgraduate study and employment. Tracking reports received from HEAT helps us to better understand the relationship between our outreach provision and the attainment and progression of disadvantaged young people. We are able to track student progression to any HEI, including this institution, so that we can assess the extent to which we are contributing to the increased participation rates of disadvantaged young people as a whole.

Being part of the HEAT service also enables the University of Portsmouth to engage with collective WP sector research. By using data from all members as an aggregate, the HEAT service is now able to explore new multi-dimensional ways of defining under-representation, disadvantage and differential outcomes and the effect that outreach can have on different groups of participants.

7.3 Measuring impact of our finance – related activities

The University has been proactive in delivering financial information within local schools and colleges for twenty years. The continued growth in this area has been driven by both information from our local providers about parents' and students' concerns over funding, and sector research which suggests financial issues are not only a key decision making factor but that financial barriers deter some students from progressing into HE.

We continue to measure the impact of the finance sessions through feedback questionnaires targeted at parents, students and school/college staff and "temperature checks" before and after presentations. These methods continue to demonstrate that our audiences have a greater understanding of university finance and are less concerned about the financial aspects of studying after they have attended one of our funding presentations.

Feedback from advisers and school/college staff has also indicated that they feel their students are better informed about finance as a result of the work we do and therefore can make informed choices about studying at University. Examples gathered from recent events include: "as usual, it was really clearly delivered and helped the audience understand the process and also reassured them about the impact of the finance application" and "brilliant presentation on student funding ... our evaluation indicated a 42% increase in knowledge and understanding of Higher Education funding".

Research¹⁰ shows that universities are highly trusted organisations whose information, advice and guidance is valued over and above third parties, and that students like to obtain this information through face-to-face activity, as well as through printed materials and websites and that these messages should be consistent. This external research reinforces the value of our investment in providing proactive financial advice and guidance for potential students. We will continue to work closely with Student Finance England to ensure the most up to date and accurate information is made available to prospective students.

7.4 Evaluation of financial support

The overall measure of success for our programme of financial support is our success in recruiting and retaining students from low income families and widening participation backgrounds. We will continue to monitor our overall performance through HESA widening participation indicators and Student Loans Company data on income groups of students.

Our Student Finance Centre will continue to measure the impact of the additional Hardship funds it administers. Students who received the funds are surveyed at the end of the academic year and continue to report that the fund was vital to them staying on course. The findings once again indicated that the Hardship Fund had a positive impact on the students who received it:

¹⁰ Diamond, A., Bowes, L., Michael, A., Thomas, L., Porter, A., & Sheen, J. (May 2012). *Formative Evaluation of the National Scholarship Programme* (CFE and the Widening Participation Research Centre, Edge Hill University Report to HEFCE).

The Emerging Undergraduate Market for 2012: Student Tracker cycle six (Autumn Term). (Havas People and Callen Associates Report)

- 81% of respondents stated they would have definitely or possibly withdrawn from study without the support, demonstrating a clear benefit to student retention for this group;
- 94% of respondents also stated the payment allowed them focus on their studies suggesting a possible link to improved attainment although this cannot be proven;
- 47% of respondents reported that the funds fully resolved their financial difficulties, indicating that more financial support would be welcomed by the remainder;
- 58% also applied more than once, suggesting students face a number of ongoing and complex issues which cannot simply be fixed with a single payment from the Fund;
- This finding was reinforced, as 70% reported that they needed to take out an additional loan on top on their statutory support (an increase on last year's figure of 42%) suggesting that for many, the Government funding is not sufficient to meet their needs.

These findings clearly support the need for the University's hardship fund and suggest that retention rates for vulnerable students would be impacted without these funds.

Additional University investment to the Hardship Fund for 2017/18 onwards will help to meet this additional need and we will ensure it is targeted at the priority groups identified by OFFA. We will continue to raise awareness about the Hardship Fund across campus to ensure vulnerable students are able to access this support where necessary.

Through the National Association of Student Money Advisors we will continue to share good practice and learn from experience within the sector. We will also consider from evidence of the effectiveness of different forms of support from OFFA research and feedback from other institutions.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

8.1 Promoting equality and diversity

The University is committed to ensuring that equality and diversity considerations are embedded into our day to day activity. These considerations have been embedded into the University's Strategy 2015-2020.

<http://www.port.ac.uk/realising-the-vision/the-way-we-work/>

Equality, diversity and inclusion are strongly embedded in the University Equality and Diversity Policy, Dignity and Respect Policy and Student Charter.

The University, through its strategy and values, is committed to 'inspire and support staff and students to achieve their potential', 'respect and celebrate diversity and equal opportunity through an inclusive culture' and 'listen and respond to the needs of our students and staff'. The core function of our Equality & Diversity Unit is to support staff and students in taking these commitments forward and making real differences for students and staff.

Actions relevant to this Access Agreement include:

Setting objectives	The University sets Equality Objectives. These objectives include clear objectives around student attainment, which evidence shows is a priority area in order to successfully widen access and achievement. Measures of Success are reported annually to the University Executive Board (UEB).
Monitoring and evaluation	The Equality & Diversity team prepare detailed annual Student and Staff annual Equality Data Reports at both University and Faculty level along with other data reports in support of Athena SWAN. More granular student data is provided to faculties through Equality sections in our business intelligence dashboards. Analysis of this evidence informs policy development, priority setting and specific interventions aimed at enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion across the University's activities, with a strong focus on admissions, student achievement and employability. These reports are examined by UEB and at faculty level, with an expectation that appropriate action is instigated to address any inequality of outcome.
Resources	The Equality & Diversity team is well supported and resourced, highlighting the importance the University places on this area of work. The team includes a dedicated Equality Officer focused on equality, diversity and inclusion for the student community. This role specifically supports and guides equality & diversity interventions across our academic and student support services, ensuring equality objectives set around student attainment and inclusion are met, as well as building closer working links with the Student Union and student societies. Recent work has included developing guidance for students and staff around on students who are pregnant or with young children and on student carers.

<p>Focus on attainment issues</p>	<p>A key objective of the Equality & Diversity Unit is to support work across the University to improve the progression and educational achievement of male students and BME students, based on evidence of some comparative under-achievement at present. The University has been successful in two HEFCE catalyst bids with a focus on addressing these issues. The outcomes will inform future policy development in these areas. Collaborative work with the Students Union will examine BME achievement data more closely and understand the potentially different issues facing different BME groups. We have faculty-based engagement officers with a remit to support students directly.</p>
<p>Focus on STEM</p>	<p>In November 2014 we were awarded the Institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award and we currently have ten departmental awards. The University signed up to the extended principles of Athena in December 2016 and the University will submit its renewal submission, under the new criteria in November 2017. The Athena Swan Co-ordinator, along with the Self- Assessment team, works with our all academic areas and professional/support areas and is now focused on taking forward this work. The coordinator will also be working towards the University signing up to the Race Charter in 2018/19.</p>
<p>Focus on widening participation</p>	<p>Ensuring that widening participation is integrated in the work of the Equality & Diversity team has led to the development of stronger links between this team and the University's Education Liaison and Outreach Team. This ensures that the University is represented at appropriate local events, giving us the opportunity to promote the University to the widest audience as a place to study and work. The University is a key supporter of local events.</p>
<p>Staff and student development</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity learning part of the "core" training requirements for all staff. This includes specific training for managers around dealing with bullying and harassment, mental health awareness, and unconscious bias. We continue to deliver targeted training for student ambassadors, sabbatical officers, student officers and society committee members. Work continues to explore the options for extending equality and diversity awareness training to the wider student body, which will supplement the student equality resource provided on Moodle. The University has also recently signed up to delivering Transgender and Disability Awareness as part of its learning and development programme.</p>
<p>Community collaboration</p>	<p>The University is determined to be a lead in the City for equality and diversity and has worked closely with other organisations in the City, including Hampshire Constabulary, Portsmouth City Council and Portsmouth Carers. We have also worked with Student Sabbatical Officers to ensure that students are represented on appropriate community groups, to ensure that our student population have a direct input on issues that affect them during their time in the City. We collaborate closely with Portsmouth Film Society to deliver LGBT History Month and Black History Month Festival, with screenings in the University which are open to the whole community.</p>
<p>Sharing good practice</p>	<p>The University continues to chair the Portsmouth Equality Practitioners' Network, which was set up by the University to bring together equality professionals from across the City to share resource and best practice.</p>

Benchmarking	We regularly audit our practices through benchmarking exercises offered by external organisations we engage with, including Stonewall Diversity Champions, Working Families (Top 30 employer in 2017), Mindful Employer and Time to Change.
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We have selected targets in this Access Agreement which focus on increasing the recruitment and retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods and low income families. By targeting these groups, our activities will also target key groups who are over-represented in low participation neighbourhoods and schools. This includes BME, and white, British men from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

8.2 Admissions arrangements

The University's Admissions Code of Practice¹¹ values and promotes diversity in the student community. We ensure that all our students are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in relevant subjects at appropriate levels. In accordance with this objective, we are committed to recognising the academic and other relevant achievements of each applicant. We welcome applications from motivated candidates from all backgrounds and recognise that student potential is not always identified from formal academic qualifications. Consequently we accept applications, taking account of prior experiential learning as well as a wide range of vocational and other qualifications. This is important as research¹² has highlighted that progression rates to HE for learners with vocational or non A-level qualifications are significantly lower than those for learners with A-levels.

The University continues to use contextual data about applicants in line with good practice highlighted by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) programme. Our admissions arrangements identify students with the potential to benefit from our courses by utilising relevant contextual data to inform our decision making, thus supporting consistent decision making. We ensure that applicants are given fair and comprehensive opportunities to be considered for the course of their choice and that suitable offers are made to individual applicants, recognising their potential as well as their academic achievements to date.

The contextual information used for this purpose is drawn from UCAS and the *common basket of data* proposed by the SPA. These data provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of disadvantage, specifically in relation to the educational background of candidates, including the average QCA score for the school and socio-economic factors such as the POLAR 3 classification.

We have developed and continue to build a comprehensive data set on our WP applicants. This data will be used to evaluate our success in achieving our widening participation recruitment objectives. Our Admissions staff and Education Liaison and Outreach team work closely to share information, including the HEAT database and to extend our evaluation processes to include applicant's schools and colleges, and outreach activity where that information exists.

¹¹ Available at <http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/academicregistry/filetodownload,14404,en.pdf>

¹² HEFCE and OFFA. (2013) *National Strategy for Access and Student Success: Interim Report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*.

8.3 Accessibility of professional courses

The Milburn report on Fair Access to the Professions highlighted the importance of access to the professions to promote social mobility. An analysis of the background of entrants to the professional courses run at Portsmouth (focusing on engineering, accountancy, law, architecture and pharmacy) found little difference in the representation of students from low participation neighbourhoods on these professional courses, compared to the average across all other full-time undergraduate courses. We will ensure that our combination of aspiration-raising work and sensitive admissions arrangements continue to support access to the professions.

8.4 Flexible provision

The University already provides a variety of routes into and through higher education, to provide opportunities in addition to traditional three year degree courses. In 2016/17 we began running Degree Apprenticeships, and will broaden this provision in 2017/18 and onwards. We also deliver CPD; full-time and part-time Foundation Degrees, with progression opportunities to Honours degree top-ups; as well as a range of part-time and distance learning courses.

The University sets part-time undergraduate tuition fees pro rata according to the standard study intensity of the course, with a full-time equivalent fee of not more than £6,165. This has minimised the impact of fee increases on part-time students, while recognising the different demands that they make on the University and the fact that many such students come from under-represented groups.

9. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

9.1 Provision of information to students

We are committed to providing clear and accessible information for potential applicants and their advisors, to allow effective decision making. This commitment includes taking a thorough and pro-active approach to meeting Key Information Set requirements. We will continue to provide timely information to UCAS and the SLC, to ensure public information about our fees and additional study costs are accurate. Our plans to provide effective financial advice for potential applicants and their advisors were outlined earlier in this document.

9.2 Provision of information for prospective students

The University continues to engage with its prospective students in a variety of ways via a relationship campaign and through targeted literature. This includes information on fees and financial support in the Prospectus. At all open days for prospective students we deliver financial advice in the form of talks and one to one advice at information stands. For those who require printed materials, we continue to produce a variety of literature, outlining general support for all students and also specific funding for target groups including students with disabilities or dependents, care leavers and those on part-time or postgraduate courses.

In 2016 the Student Finance Centre once again successfully gained accreditation to the improved **matrix™** Quality Standard. This standard demonstrates and recognises our commitment to the delivery of high quality information, advice and guidance by continual review, evaluation and development of our service.

9.3 Enhancing advice and guidance for applicants

We are further enhancing our relationships with local and target schools and colleges, expanding our points of contact within institutions, and also working with new partners to expand the level of finance specific outreach support offered.

We have introduced an email campaign into our communications with schools and colleges, sending messages and invitations about receiving support and event delivery throughout the academic year, which has increased engagement and uptake of activities. In addition, we will continue to work closely with our regional contact at Student Finance England to share information, best practice and event opportunities, and we will continue to meet annually for training and financial updates.

In 2018/19 we will continue to explore ways to develop our portfolio of presentations and workshops to ensure we are meeting the needs of and addressing concerns of both advisers and applicants alike, taking particular care to address concerns attributed to the cuts to NHS course funding and the Disabled Students Allowance. We will also continue to improve our use of digital and interactive technology within our delivery, where possible. We have already started using video messages from existing parents to help allay concerns and fears parents of prospective students may have.

We will continue to focus our messages in a positive light, explaining that there is no upfront cost associated to University, that repayments are income contingent, and identifying the differences in student loans to commercial lending, in effort to dispel misinformation or fears associated to the cost of higher education. Furthermore we will focus efforts on addressing the cost of living for students, implementing effective financial capability skills among students, in attempt to reduce the number of students experiencing financial difficulty.

Our Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre continues to proactively contact students who have declared a disability and provide them with information on how they can be supported through their academic studies. Students with complex disabilities are invited to attend a one-to-one interview and this is linked to a visit to their academic departments and student accommodation. Pre-entry support is offered to students with complex disabilities but in particular students with autism prior to the start of the academic year, to enable individual students to develop relationships with their academic departments, specialist support workers and to interact with other early entrants.

9.4 Broader advice and guidance

The changes to information, advice and guidance provision in schools have meant many young people have reduced access to a comprehensive careers education programme or the opportunity to discuss their future pathways with a trained careers adviser. Whilst we cannot fill this void completely we have considered how we can best enhance information and advice available to young people considering HE as an option.

For 2018/19 we are continuing to improve our range of printed and on-line materials for children, young people their teachers and parents in order to enhance their knowledge about HE and the pathways to get there. We will continue to evaluate and seek new opportunities for engaging and connecting with our audiences as technologies and behaviours change in response to this.

By continuing to build on the University's existing successful work in this area, we aim to overcome concerns about all HE access issues including tuition fees and finance, as well as ensuring that the University is strongly placed to meet our Access Agreement recruitment and retention targets.

10. CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

10.1 Consultation

Due to changes in HEFCE Student Opportunity Funding, we introduced changes in bursary levels for new students from 2017/18 onwards. We are grateful to the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU) who have engaged positively with consideration of alternative bursary models. Our approach to bursaries in 2018/19 continues to be based on UPSU feedback, as the Students' Union recommended a flat rate bursary each year as being most effective at supporting ongoing student engagement and retention.

The Students' Union was consulted about the increase in tuition fees from 2017/18 onwards in line with inflation. Taking account of feedback from the Students' Union, our Governors approved an increase in the overall proportion of fee income above baseline allocated to measures to support recruitment, retention and progression of WP students from 24% to 25% at the time this fee increase was agreed. This is 25% of the full amount of higher fee income above baseline, incorporating the additional fee income due to tuition fee increases from 2017/18 onwards. This increase will be maintained in 2018/19 reflecting student feedback.

As members of the Board of Governors, the President of the Students' Union and a non-UPSU student governor will also contribute to Governors' ongoing review of our performance in delivering this Access Agreement and associated targets.

Table 7 – Targets and Milestones – Access Agreement 2018/19

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Target Type	Description	Baseline Year	Baseline Data	Yearly Milestones				
				2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>YOUNG FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS FROM LOW PARTICIPATION NEIGHBOURHOODS (POLAR3) (HESA Table T1a)</p> <p>We aim to outperform our location-adjusted benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2013-14	Benchmark 9.7%	11.25	11.5	11.5	11.75	11.75
HESA T2a – (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>MATURE FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS WITH NO PREVIOUS HE & FROM LOW PARTICIPATION NEIGHBOURHOOD (POLAR3) (HESA Table T2a)</p> <p>We aim to outperform our location-adjusted benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2013-14	Benchmark 13.0%	15.5	15.75	15.75	16	16
HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>NON-CONTINUATION FOLLOWING YEAR OF ENTRY: YOUNG FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS FROM LOW PARTICIPATION NEIGHBOURHOODS (POLAR3) (HESA Table T3b)</p> <p>We aim to outperform benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2012-13	Benchmark: 7.7%	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
HESA T3c - No longer in HE after 1 year & no previous HE qualification (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>NON-CONTINUATION FOLLOWING YEAR OF ENTRY: MATURE FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS WITH NO PREVIOUS HE (HESA Table T3c)</p> <p>We aim to outperform benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2012-13	Benchmark: 14.1%	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.6	11.6
Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study	<p>Through active support for employability and progression to further study, we will ensure that graduate progression rates are in line with the HESA benchmark.</p>	2014-15	<p>Baseline: 92.7%</p> <p>Benchmark: 92.9%</p>	92.9%	92.9%	92.9%	92.9%	92.9%

Table 7b – Other Milestones and Targets

Description	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
				2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
University Residential For year 10 pupils from local target schools	No	2011-12	100 pupils	100 pupils	100 pupils	100 pupils	100 pupils	100 pupils
Initiatives for parents from target schools and colleges	No	2011-12	34 schools	34 events				
Taster events for targeted Secondary School and Post 16 students: Including generic 'Why HE?' and subject specific events	No	2011-12	1,500 students	1,600 students	1,600 students	1,600 students	1,600 students	1,600 students
Post 16 outreach: Talks for year 12 pupils about progression routes into HE, including routes for those on vocational courses	No	2011-12	1,000 students	40 events				
Mature learners: 'Why HE?' and transition engagement targeted at mature learners	No	2011-12	50 adults	100 adults	100 adults	100 adults	100 adults	100 adults
Aspiration raising: Use of student ambassadors and mentors to act as role models to inspire future students	No	2011-12	225 pupils	250 pupils	250 pupils	250 pupils	250 pupils	250 pupils
Aspiration raising activity: To promote the opportunities and benefits of HE	No	2011-12	6,500 pupils	40 activities				
Aspiration raising with Primary Schools: Year 5 and Year 6	No	2011-12	32 schools	32 schools	32 schools	32 schools	32 schools	32 schools
Financial briefings: Baseline Year 2009-10 Briefings at schools and colleges for potential applicants and their parents.	No	Other	5,300 students & parents	6,500 students & parents	6,500 students & parents	6,500 students & parents	6,500 students & parents	6,500 students & parents
Postgraduate ITT: Outreach / WP activity Baseline Year 2010-11 Financial briefings: Briefings on financial support available for potential applicants	No	Other	360 potential applicants	375 potential applicants	375 potential applicants	375 potential applicants	375 potential applicants	375 potential applicants
Postgraduate ITT: Outreach / WP activity Baseline Year 2010-11 Tailored support and aspiration raising: Support for potential BME applicants provided by a part-time BME Advisor	No	Other	40 potential applicants	50 potential applicants	50 potential applicants	50 potential applicants	50 potential applicants	50 potential applicants
Postgraduate ITT: Outreach / WP activity Baseline Year 2010-11 Tailored support for students Individual and group support sessions provided by a part-time BME Advisor	No	Other	15 sessions	15 sessions	15 sessions	15 sessions	15 sessions	15 sessions
Subscribe to the Higher Education Access Tracker database to enhance tracking, monitoring and evaluation	Yes	2011-12	Subscription in place	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data

Description	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
				2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
The Southern Universities Network (SUN) will promote and support the progression of students from minority ethnic communities with each university sharing its networks to maximise opportunities for collaborative delivery	Yes	2013-14	Not yet in place	Potential collaborative activities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities
SUN will organise staff development for WP practitioners and SU officers. SUN HEI representative to attend termly meetings of working groups relating to BME, Disability, VCYP, Mature & Part-time students.	Yes	2013-14	Not yet in place	Annual conference	Sharing of good practice emanating from working groups relating to BME, Disability, VCYP, Mature and Part-time learners	Sharing of good practice emanating from working groups relating to BME, Disability, VCYP, Mature and Part-time learners	Sharing of good practice emanating from working groups relating to BME, Disability, VCYP, Mature and Part-time learners	Sharing of good practice emanating from working groups relating to BME, Disability, VCYP, Mature and Part-time learners
SUN will explore running an annual collaborative event targeted at potential mature and part-time students	Yes	2016-17	Not yet in place	Potential collaborative event	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 2 participating SUN universities
SUN will develop and extend collaborative activities relating to disabled and vulnerable children and young people (including children in care and young carers) and/or those who support them.	Yes	2016-17	Not yet in place	Potential collaborative event	4 activities per year with at least 3 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 3 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 3 participating SUN universities	4 activities per year with at least 3 participating SUN universities
Portsmouth Scholars Mentoring Programme	No	2016-17	Not yet in place	Mentoring for at least 20 pupils	Mentoring for at least 20 pupils	Mentoring for at least 20 pupils	Mentoring for at least 20 pupils	Mentoring for at least 20 pupils