

# St Mary's University, Twickenham

## 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan

### 1 ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

St Mary's University Widening Participation Strategy (2015-2020) committed us to taking a strategic approach to widening access and creating a more diverse student body, using evidence from research and experience to change attitudes, encourage participation and improve outcomes in higher education. We recognise, however, that despite significant investment and some highly successful individual initiatives, we still have some distance to travel to close the gap in both access and success for underrepresented groups of students, particularly at undergraduate level. To address this, we will be launching bold and ambitious strategic and operational changes during 2018-19 to ensure our readiness for 2019-20. In the following section, we provide a range of data to demonstrate our current performance in access, success and progression across a number of areas and, where possible, compare this against national statistics, largely through the use of HESA, HEIDI+, UCAS MEM data and TEF metrics<sup>1</sup> (although we recognise that the statistics we present are largely descriptive and do not imply statistical significance). This analysis will inform and drive our ambitions and strategy for action in the coming years.

##### 1.1.1 Access: Student Numbers

In determining our performance on access, we have looked at the numbers of new entrants in each year broken down by various equality characteristics, using data from HESA returns. The table below gives overall numbers of new home fee-eligible, year one St Mary's students at first degree and PGCE<sup>2</sup> level, broken down by academic year and programme type. This shows an increase in undergraduate entrants in 2015/16, but a subsequent drop in numbers for 2016/17. Our internal data shows even greater reductions in numbers for 2017/18 and thus our recruitment forecasts for 2018-2021 have accordingly been adjusted downwards to more realistic levels (agreed with HEFCE in March 2018), This has unfortunately resulted in a proposed reduction in our predicted gross WP spend for 2019/20, but we will mitigate the effects of this somewhat, with an increase in the proportion of higher fee income that we allocate to WP (see Section 4).

Table 1: Number of new, home fee-eligible, first-year students (from HESA data)

HESA Programme type	Year		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
First degree	1322	1378	1316
PGCE	310	290	333

However, whilst undergraduate recruitment has been challenging, PGCE numbers increased in both 2016 and 2017 and we will continue to seek opportunities to enhance our postgraduate offer.

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency, Higher Education Information Database for Institutions, UCAS Multiple Equality Measure and Teaching Excellence Framework

<sup>2</sup> PGCE is our only postgraduate provision which meets the criteria for inclusion within the Access and Participation Plan.

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### 1.1.2 Success: Good Honours

There was a significant increase in the number of First Class honours degrees awarded between 2015 and 2016. This was due to sustained work with programmes by central and programme-located academic Learning and Teaching and Learning Development staff, including curriculum and assessment design and delivery, and a change in our degree algorithm to reduce disadvantage for Widening Participation (WP) students and bring St Mary's in line with common practice in the sector in degree award calculation. This has resulted in increases in the proportion of students from all target under-represented groups achieving first class honours degrees, except care leavers, although the proportion of this group achieving good honours (First/Upper Second Class) has increased overall.

Table 2: Proportion of graduates achieving each degree classification (from internal data)

	Classification	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
UnderGrad	First Class Honours	8.3%	11.8%	21.7%
	Upper Second Class Honours	52.1%	49.2%	51.2%
	Lower Second Class Honours	35.3%	33.5%	24.2%
	Third Class Honours	4.4%	5.5%	3.0%

There is a lack of information at a sector level surrounding degree awards broken down by some of the categories included in the Access and Participation Plan. We are unable, therefore, to make national comparisons, but will explore means of national benchmarking for 2019/20.

### 1.1.3 Success: Retention

We recognise that one of our greatest challenges is student retention. The table below shows overall retention rates as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. This includes students who withdrew at any time in the year, though students 'withdrawn pending appeal' are excluded.

Table 3: Withdrawals by level of study (from internal data)

	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	Successful	Withdrawn	Successful	Withdrawn	Successful	Withdrawn
UnderGrad	93.1%	6.9%	93.2%	6.8%	93.2%	6.8%
PGCE	95.3%	4.7%	95.8%	4.2%	90.5%	9.5%

The table below shows the overall retention rate broken down by year of study. PGCE students have been split by mode (full-time/part-time), as well as year of study.

Table 4: Withdrawals by year of study (from internal data)

		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
		Successful	Withdrawn	Successful	Withdrawn	Successful	Withdrawn
UnderGrad	Y1	88.6%	11.4%	87.7%	12.3%	84.6%	15.4%
	Y2	94.6%	5.4%	95.5%	4.5%	97.0%	3.0%
	Y3	97.2%	2.8%	97.7%	2.3%	99.2%	0.8%
	Y4	100.0%		100.0%		100.0%	

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PGCE	Y1	95.3%	4.7%	95.7%	4.3%	89.5%	10.5%
	Year 1 Part Time	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%		93.5%	6.5%
	Year 2 Part Time	93.8%	6.3%	93.9%	6.1%	100.0%	

Despite the introduction of initiatives such as Personal Tutors, peer mentoring schemes, curriculum embedded study-skills modules and changes to module delivery and assessment practices and despite notable successes in some programmes, reducing overall attrition has proved difficult, particularly in Year One. Internal review suggests that this is at least partly due to the fact that current initiatives are limited in scope, therefore in their ability to change practice across the whole institution. This will be one of the main issues addressed in the new, strategic, whole-institution approach we are initiating in 2018 (see Section 2).

#### 1.1.4 Progression

Progression data has been taken from the TEF Year 3 metric workbooks using 'Employment/ further study' and 'Highly skilled employment/ further study' measures. St Mary's has very high absolute performance on the proportion of students in employment or further study 6 months after graduation, particularly for part-time (P-T) students. The highly skilled employment measure, though lower, has been increasing since 2014 for full-time (F-T) students (from 69.9% to 74.3%), although it has declined for P-T students (from 83.3% to 76.7%), so this group will be specifically targeted in success and progression initiatives, including internal research on P-T and commuter students in 2018/19. More than 98% of PGCE students are in highly skilled employment or further study every year.

In the strategic, lifecycle approach to access, success and progression we are adopting from 2018/19, our assessment of current performance will also focus on discrete target groups of underrepresented students at both undergraduate and PGCE levels, particularly BAME<sup>3</sup> students, disabled students, care leavers, students from POLAR3<sup>4</sup> Quintiles 1 & 2 (PQ1&2) and mature students.

## 1.2 BAME students

### 1.2.1 Access

At undergraduate level, recruitment of non-white students has remained relatively stable since 2014. There was a slight increase in the proportion of black entrants in 2016 and a peak in the proportion of Asian entrants in 2015, whilst the recruitment of other minority ethnic groups remained stable.

Table 5: Proportion of home fee, first-year students, by ethnicity (from HESA data)

Prog type	Ethnic (group)	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
First degree	Asian	8.6%	10.1%	8.3%
	Black	11.6%	11.8%	12.8%
	Gypsy or Traveller	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
	Mixed	7.6%	6.7%	6.9%
	Other minority ethnic	2.3%	2.4%	3.2%
	White	69.9%	69.0%	68.8%

<sup>3</sup> Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic

<sup>4</sup> Participation of Local Areas

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PGCE	Asian	6.3%	6.6%	7.9%
	Black	3.0%	2.8%	4.8%
	Mixed	4.7%	4.9%	4.8%
	Other minority ethnic	1.0%	2.1%	1.8%
	White	85.0%	83.6%	80.7%

This data compares favourably with the national picture for first degree, first year, home fee eligible students across the sector (see Table 6). However, whilst St Mary's has a higher overall proportion of non-white students than the sector, we are below sector in recruiting Asian students and we are aware that our location as an outer London university means that our performance on this measure could be improved further. We will, therefore, focus on the recruitment of undergraduate BAME students for 2019/20 with a new WP Recruitment Strategy.

Table 6: Sector proportion of home fee, first year students, by ethnicity (from HEIDI+)

Ethnicity	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Asian	10.61%	11.17%	11.63%
Black	7.44%	7.77%	8.03%
Other (including mixed)	5.35%	5.68%	5.91%
White	76.60%	75.38%	74.43%

Our current Access targets include increasing the recruitment of BAME students to PGCE programmes and there has been steady improvement in proportions of non-white students between 2014 and 2017 (increased from 15% to 19.3%). The proportion of Asian entrants has increased steadily (to 7.9% in 2016), when the proportion of Black students also increased by 2 percentage points (to 4.8%) from the previous year. We will continue to focus on these target groups for 2019/20.

### 1.2.2 Success

The St Mary's TEF Year 3 metrics (which cover the HESA PIs between 2012 and 2015) show that continuation of full-time BAME students is 1.7 percentage points above benchmark, whilst continuation of part-time BAME students is 7.1 percentage points above.

In order to compare St Mary's achievement data with available sector data, Table 7 shows the proportion of students in the sector from each ethnic grouping who gained good degrees (First/2:1). However, unlike St Mary's data, which includes all home fee eligible students, HEIDI+ data only includes UK domiciled students

Table 7: Sector proportions of graduates receiving good honours, by ethnicity (from HEIDI+)

Ethnic grouping	Classification of first degree	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Asian	Good honours	65.2%	66.5%	69.2%
Black	Good honours	50.8%	53.1%	55.5%
White	Good honours	77.1%	78.4%	79.6%

The proportion of students in all ethnic groups gaining good honours degrees appears lower for St Mary's than the sector in 2014/15 and 2015/16, however, the changes outlined in section 1.1.2 have

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reduced disadvantage for some BAME learners. Comparison of internal data with Table 7 shows that the proportion of black students gaining good degrees in 2017 at St Mary's was broadly in line with the sector (8.4% gained first class honours and 47.4% gained 2:1s). However, the proportion of Asian students gaining good honours degrees was significantly lower than the sector (9.1% gaining first class honours and 42.9% 2:1). For 2018/19 we will disaggregate the classification of different ethnic groups to interrogate this picture further, in order to narrow discrepancies in achievement in 2019/20.

### 1.2.3 Progression

Full-time white students performed more strongly than full-time BAME students on both TEF employability metrics, but the reverse was true at part-time level. Full-time BAME students had an employment rate 1.7 percentage points lower than white students, although BAME students were flagged positively against the TEF benchmark. On highly skilled employment, our performance for white students was considerably higher than for BAME student, whilst part-time BAME students had an employment rate of 100% over 3 years, and a higher highly skilled employment rate than white students, although only P-T white students are flagged positively against benchmark.

## 1.3 Disabled students

### 1.3.1 Access

Until 2017/18, St Mary's was successful in increasing the proportion of disabled students. 2015 saw a 5.1 percentage point increase in students declaring all types of disability (from 9.1% to 14.2%), most notably learning disability (including dyslexia). This increase was maintained in 2016, when we recruited 14.9% of students declaring a disability compared to the sector average of 13.2%. At PGCE level, there was a small (1.4% point) increase in the proportion of students declaring a learning difficulty in 2015, but this gain was lost in 2016. There was also a similar pattern for the proportion of students with mental health conditions and other/multiple disabilities. However, most recently, the number of UG students with various disabilities has declined, particularly in 2017, as part of the larger decline in new entrants. Although St Mary's continues to perform better than sector average, attracting a higher overall proportion of first degree students reporting disabilities since 2015, we will continue to focus on the improvement of support for disabled applicants.

### 1.3.2 Success

St Mary's has a strong track record for supporting disabled students to complete their studies and full-time disabled students' continuation rates were above benchmark in the TEF by 0.7 percentage points. In fact, according to our internal data, since 2014, students who did *not* declare any form of disability have been more likely to withdraw than those with learning difficulties or other/multiple disabilities (including students on the autistic spectrum). However, students with a mental health condition were slightly more likely to withdraw than students with no disability in both 2014 and 2016, therefore this group will remain a priority target group.

Table 8: Withdrawal rate by level of study and disability classification (from internal data)

		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
		Successful	Withdrawn	Successful	Withdrawn	Successful	Withdrawn
UnderGrad	Learning difficulty	96.5%	3.5%	93.4%	6.6%	94.4%	5.6%
	Mental health condition	89.0%	11.0%	96.9%	3.1%	92.9%	7.1%
	Other/multiple disability	96.5%	3.5%	93.2%	6.8%	93.5%	6.5%
	No Known Disability	92.7%	7.3%	93.1%	6.9%	93.1%	6.9%

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PGCE	Learning difficulty	85.2%	14.8%	96.7%	3.3%	88.0%	12.0%
	Mental health condition	100.0%		100.0%		80.0%	20.0%
	Other/multiple disability	100.0%		100.0%		63.6%	36.4%
	No Known Disability	95.9%	4.1%	95.6%	4.4%	91.5%	8.5%

Analysis of degree classifications shows no significant differences between the achievements of disabled and non-disabled students. Students in the 'other/multiple disability' category were more likely to gain a first class honours than those with no known disability in 2014 and 2015 and equally likely in 2016. For example, in 2016, 22% of students in this category gained first class honours and 60% gained 2:1s, compared to 22.3% and 51% for students with no known disability. Over the past two years, however, students with learning difficulties have had the lowest proportion of good honours awards. In 2016, 14.6% of students who declared a learning disability gained first class honours and 48.3% gained 2:1s; this has prompted the need for scrutiny and the proposal for introducing more inclusive approaches to teaching and learning. Comparison with sector data (Table 9, which includes all fee statuses, whereas St Mary's data is restricted to Home and EU fee students) shows that St Mary's has outperformed the sector for students with other/multiple disabilities.

Table 9: Sector proportion of graduates receiving good honours, by disability classification (from HEIDI+)

Disability (group)	Classification of first degree	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Specific learning difficulty	Good honours	69.5%	71.3%	72.9%
Other/multiple disabilities	Good honours	70.8%	72.3%	73.5%
No known disability/unknown	Good honours	71.7%	73.4%	75.1%

### 1.3.3 Progression

Full-time students with no disability are slightly more likely to be in employment or further study after graduation than their disabled counterparts (96.2% rather than 94.7%) and to be in highly skilled employment (72.3% rather than 69%). However the TEF Yr 3 employment metric for part-time students showed 100% of disabled students to be in employment or further study and identified that disabled students performed above benchmark on all levels and modes of study.

## 1.4 Care leavers

### 1.4.1 Access

The number of care leavers at St Mary's tends to be relatively small and has remained at around 2% of our student population since 2014. We will be significantly increasing the financial and other support available for care leavers in 2018/19 in order to remove barriers to access.

Table 10: Number of home fee, first-year students, by care classification (from HESA data)

	First degree			PGCE		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Care leaver	27	19	17		1	
Not a care leaver	1174	1256	1186	177	228	292

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### 1.4.2 Success and Progression

Because of the small number of students who are care leavers each year, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about their retention, achievement and progression. The proportion of care leavers withdrawing at undergraduate level has been highly variable; in 2014 it was in line with the university average for undergraduates, in 2015 it was well above average and in 2016 no care leavers withdrew. Therefore, from 2018/19, together with the introduction of a more coherent and coordinated approach to supporting care leavers, we will also introduce more reliable and effective ways of monitoring, recording and reporting outcomes.

## 1.5 Students from low participation areas

### 1.5.1 Access

St Mary's is located in a POLAR Quintile (PQ) 5 area, with immediate surrounding areas also in PQ5 and we attract a large proportion of our students from a relatively local area. Perhaps because of this, St Mary's has consistently recruited low numbers of PQ1&2 students at both undergraduate and PGCE level. However the proportion of entrants from PQ2 at undergraduate level had been steadily increasing since 2014 (from 11.9% to 13.2% in 2017). At PGCE level, approximately half of all new entrants each year with a known POLAR quintile have been from PQ5 and although the proportion of entrants from PQ1 has been steadily increasing since 2014 (from 1.4% to 3.8%), students from PQ1&2 still only make up around 10% of new entrants. This will be a high priority in our WP Recruitment Strategy.

Examination of UCAS MEM data, which compares our performance against both all UK providers and other low tariff providers, suggests that between 2013 and 2017 the most advantaged students (MEM group 5) were between 3.0 and 3.6 times more likely to be placed at St Mary's University compared to the most disadvantaged students (MEM group 1). St Mary's ratio figures are better than aggregate ratios for all UK providers, but we need to be nearer to the figure for lower tariff providers which are typically between 1.8 and 1.9. Again, this emphasises the need for us to prioritise recruitment of less advantaged students through our WP Recruitment Strategy.

### 1.5.2 Success

PQ 1&2 full-time students had a continuation rate 0.6 percentage points higher than the benchmark in TEF metrics. Interrogation of internal data shows that PQ 1&2 students have been more likely to withdraw than PQ 4&5 students at undergraduate level (approximately 7.5% in 2014 & 2015 for PQ1&2, compared to 5.8% & 6.5% for PQ4&5). For PGCE students, PQ1&2 students had lower withdrawal rates than PQ4&5 students (3.7% compared to 4.9%) in 2014, but not in 2015 and 2016.

### 1.5.3 Progression

According to St Mary's TEF data, PQ1&2 part-time students considerably outperform PQ3,4&5 students on highly skilled employment (83.3% compared to 71.4%) although all part-time students are flagged for this metric. Full-time PQ1&2 students perform above their benchmark on highly skilled employment but their rate (64.7%) is still slightly below those of PQ3,4&5 students (68.8%).

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## 1.6 Mature students

### 1.6.1 Access

The recruitment of mature students (aged 21 or over on entry at UG level, 25 or over at PG level) has been steadily increasing from 18.8% in 2014 to 22.4% in 2016 for undergraduate students. This means that we are moving closer to the sector average of 26.4%. At PGCE level we have also increased the proportion of mature students in 2016 to 46.9%, an increase of 13.7% points from 2014.

### 1.6.2 Success

Internal measures show that retention rates for mature UG students are a concern; mature students have consistently been more likely to withdraw than young students every year since 2014. In 2014, 9.5% of our mature students withdrew compared to 6.4% of young students, whilst in 2016, 8.9% withdrew, compared to 6.3%. Our TEF metrics identify that full-time mature students had a continuation rate that was 1.3 percentage points below the benchmark, however part-time mature students were 2.2 percentage points above the benchmark and neither full-time or part-time students were flagged. At PGCE level the picture is more variable. In 2014, 6.2% of mature students withdrew compared to 3.7% of young students, whereas in 2016 although the difference between young and mature students had almost entirely been eradicated, both young and mature students were more likely to leave (9.2% of young students; 9.9% of mature students).

Scrutiny of our internal withdrawal data suggests that mature undergraduate students, like their young counterparts, are most likely to withdraw during their first year of studies. What has emerged as a focus for action in 2019/20, however, is the fact that whilst we have had some success in reducing the proportions of young students who withdraw in years 2 and 3 (from 5.5% in 2014 to 2.5% in 2016 for year 2 and 1.8% to 0.2% for year 3), the same is not consistently true for mature students (4.7% withdrawal in year 2 in 2014 and 5.5% in 2016) and mature students are more than 3 times likely than young students to withdraw in their final year of studies (3.1% compared to 0.2%)

Mature students were more likely to gain a good degree than young students in 2014, and in every year they have been more likely to gain a first class honours outcome. However the proportion of mature students gaining a 2:1 degree has decreased, which highlights the need for the examination of curriculum design and the development of more inclusive teaching and assessment practices; a key feature of our future strategy.

### 1.6.3 Progression

St Mary's TEF metrics show that mature students tend to have better employment outcomes than young students, with the exception of part-time students, where the rate for mature students is 1.2% points lower than young students. Mature students are positively flagged on all metrics except part-time employment or further study. They outperform the benchmark by 0.6 percentage points.

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## 2 AMBITION AND STRATEGY

### 2.1 Introduction

We want all our students to thrive. This means recognising our diverse student body and providing an inclusive experience for all. Following a rigorous and far-reaching review of our academic offer, our support services and the structure and organisation of our academic programmes in 2017/18,



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together with the recruitment of a new Dean for Teaching and Learning in April 2018, we are in a unique position to launch an ambitious and stretching process of change in the way we address widening participation and inclusion issues. To that end we will be launching a new Centre for Teaching Excellence and Student Success (CTESS) in summer 2018 and adopting a whole institution approach to WP, which will take a lifecycle approach to expectations about access, success and progression for our target groups. We will demonstrate a clear and explicit commitment to WP across the institution which will drive, monitor and evaluate strategies and initiatives to support the whole of our students' lived experience, including access, success, personal and social well-being, employability and financial support.

### 2.1.1 Widening Participation Strategy and Implementation

We will be defining new roles and organisational processes during 2018-19 so that we can deliver our ambitious aims during 2019-20 and beyond. Under the direction of the Pro Vice Chancellor for Academic Strategy, the Dean for Teaching and Learning will take strategic lead for WP and new academic roles of Associate Dean for Student Experience will be created within faculties.

Responsibility for strategic change management and operational delivery, overview and monitoring of WP strategy and the delivery and impact of WP initiatives will be led by the new post of Head of Widening Participation - Access and Participation and overseen by the new Widening Participation Strategy & Implementation Group, which will be established in 2018. This will involve members of staff from academic programmes, academic and professional support services, Students' Union role holders and other student representative. WP recruitment and outreach, Pre-entry programmes, NCOP activity, Learning Development success initiatives, Curriculum embedded academic development, Student support, Student Engagement work, Students' Union (SU) initiatives and PGCE and employability will be seen as part of a unified lifecycle pathway for WP students, driven by the Access and Participation Plan and supported by refocussed investment.

### 2.1.2 Equality and Diversity Strategy

As there are strong links between WP, which is focused on underrepresentation in HE, and equality, and diversity, which is focused on characteristics protected by the Equality Act (2010), our inclusive policies and practices in these two areas are closely aligned. Inclusiveness is one of St Mary's core values and integral to our Vision 2015. Furthermore, the establishment of CTESS and the creation of the new Dean for T&L and Head of WP posts for 18/19 will also ensure that work in both of these areas is mutually informed and strategically designed, planned and monitored in readiness for 2019/20 and beyond. Our Equality and Diversity Policy Statement and CoP and our Equality and Inclusion Objectives (2016-20) have both informed and reflect our stated priorities for the APP including: increasing our focus on student views and perceptions to include a more diverse range of students; collaborative work between the SU, Student Services, HR and CTESS to increase equality and diversity training (including e-learning) for all staff; reviewing our student and staff attraction and recruitment practices to ensure they are fully inclusive; increasing campus accessibility (including the use of DisabledGo since 2017 to map the campus and produce accessibility guides); developing a fitness to study policy (completed 2018) and increasing the scope of accessible learning practices, which will be the responsibility of CTESS. In addition, in 2018/19, we will review our current Equality & Inclusion committee structure and membership within the University and this, together with the new Head of WP role previously described, will facilitate communication, enhance the development of symbiotic policies and practices and ensure that measures adopted to promote and enhance equality and diversity for our students are aligned with the priority areas for the Access and Participation Plan,

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namely Access, Success and Progression. The Head of WP role will also be responsible for ensuring that the monitoring and impact measurement of WP initiatives will include consideration of equality and diversity measures for students with protected characteristics.

### 2.1.3 Structural Review

Since 2015/16, St Mary's has undertaken a systematic review of the ways in which data is used to drive improvements in student access, engagement, retention and success and programme teams and services receive regular information about student recruitment figures, withdrawal rates and achievement data, as well as key WP indicators and measures. The annual programme review process requires individual programme teams to reflect on operation and address key areas, such as student attainment and student feedback and other significant developments in the context of the quality of the student learning experience. This process will be reviewed and refined during 18/19 and the ways that students with particular WP characteristics are considered will be examined in relation to curriculum delivery and assessment design, leading to changes in both these areas during 2019/20 and 2020/21. Our whole institution approach will result in the expansion of whole cohort and targeted initiatives, including a more inclusive curriculum framework that governs all programmes, improvements to academic misconduct, reassessment support, leave of absence and extenuating circumstances processes. In addition we will increase targeted interventions for groups highlighted in our performance review, such as Black and Asian Students, Care Leavers, Students with Disabilities or Mental Health issues and Students from POLAR quintiles 1&2. We will also complete a wide-ranging, systematic overhaul of academic regulations in 2018/19 to ensure that they are inclusive and student-friendly.

Over recent years, we have developed a number of targeted interventions and initiatives which are showing some success in addressing the continuing problem of student retention, including pre-sessional programmes, in-sessional English for Academic Purposes programmes, curriculum and assessment review strategies, peer mentoring and the personal tutoring system. From 2018, their reach will be significantly expanded by a wider, more strategic and coordinated approach, major pedagogical work with programmes to embed high impact pedagogies and interventions with targeted student groups to raise achievement, reduce attrition and remove barriers to success. In order to action this, a thorough review of expenditure associated with the current Access Agreement is being undertaken and investment will be re-focused throughout 2018/19, with a new process for allocating WP resources and investment designed and implemented for 2019/20.

Having identified the key areas where most improvement needs to be made in Access, Success and Progression, the following section will outline whole-cohort and targeted initiatives which will be developed across the whole lifecycle, from primary school outreach work, through student success measures at university, to progression support beyond.

## 2.2 Whole cohort initiatives

### 2.2.1 Student Academic Development

The equality and inclusion agenda, together with research and scholarship, continues to drive the way student academic support is delivered at St Mary's. Our own data and national and international research suggests that WP students are least likely to self-select for voluntary or generic activities to support their learning. Therefore, the Learning Development Team (within CTESS) will be key to our

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strategy for supporting target WP student groups. They deliver whole cohort, collaborative academic skills development activities integrated into curriculum modules in several programmes, to ensure that they are accessible, delivered to all and fully inclusive. This is supported by focused 1:1 or small-group support for students identified as being at particular risk of under-achievement or withdrawal. We will continue and refine this approach during 2019/20. These measures are of importance for a range of WP target groups, but particularly students with from Polar Quintiles 1&2 and those with non-traditional qualifications (e.g. BTECs). Therefore, we will identify programmes with high proportions of these students and prioritise them for review under our strategic focus on redesigning curriculum delivery and assessment methods.

CTESS will lead on a range of activities and initiatives to support WP students at risk of failure or withdrawal, particularly those subject to reassessment, those who need to interrupt or intercalate their studies, those who make repeated requests for consideration of extenuating circumstances and those who fall foul of academic misconduct. In summer 2018 we will pilot a free, intensive summer reassessment residential for any level 4 students who require an exam resit.

### 2.2.2 Curriculum and Pedagogy

We will work with programme teams and students to develop an inclusive curriculum framework and deliver academic professional development and staff development activities promoting positive attitudes to diversity, inclusive teaching methods and 'sensitive marking' strategies. This investment in the design and implementation of a bold, new curriculum framework will be informed by sector research on 'powerful pedagogies'; approaches that support WP students to succeed and progress including forms of active and peer learning, and co-curricular learning. We already have a number of successful peer mentoring Schemes, including Global Peer Mentors, Access Peer Mentors and Transition to HE Peer Mentors, which will be extended and enhance throughout 18/19 and 19/20 to involve all academic departments. We will also pilot a scheme in which students who fail modules are offered a 'Reassessment Study Buddy'.

Through a radically revised Programme Validation/Re-Validation process, in 2018 we will interrogate and update module design, pedagogy, assessment and co-curricular elements to include high impact pedagogies and assessment methods which research and scholarship suggest enhance the experiences of WP students. WP students will be directly involved in influencing programme assessment practices and design at each stage of the validation process. To support this, we will develop VLE resources for academic and learning support staff, focused on evidence-based approaches to enhancing inclusive pedagogies and assessment, to be rolled-out in 2019/20.

We will investigate new online tools and mobile 'apps' that facilitate active participation and improve outcomes for WP students. During 2018/19, existing innovations in the use of mobile apps (e.g. 'Whatsapp') will be embedded via enhanced staff training. We will also pilot an institutional student polling tool that promotes enhanced engagement and enables real-time remote interaction between staff and students and, through enhanced CPD, maximise the impact of our VLE as driver of student engagement and success.

### 2.2.3 Foundation Year

In 2017/18 we introduced a Foundation Year at level 3, for 30 students who did not achieve the required entry tariff for level 4, the majority of whom are WP students (for example, 19 are BAME

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students, 4 are mature students). This programme offers an introduction to chosen undergraduate programmes, with academic skills development content embedded within modules, together with enhanced pastoral support, more timetabled contact than at level 4 and specific employability and progression skills modules. Early signs are that retention compares very favourably with similar level 3 programmes across the sector and this programme is expected to increase in scope and double in numbers for 2018/19 and increase in size again for 2019/20.

#### 2.2.4 Personal Tutors

The university's personal tutoring scheme has been in place since 2016/17 and by 2018/19 will include all UG students at all levels to assist engagement with the university experience and offer additional academic and pastoral support. During 2018/19 we will refine our tutoring policy, improve our Personal Tutoring Dashboard and increase guidance and training for students and staff, so that all parties can work together to maximise outcomes. The dashboard will display key information about tutees, enabling Personal Tutors to provide more individualised and specific support for students. We will also deliver staff development activities to support staff to understand, embrace and be empowered to approach WP issues.

#### 2.2.5 Student Engagement

Since 2016, we have significantly increased the range and scope of our engagement with students. Led by our Students' Union, we have examined the way that we use student Programme Reps and have redesigned both their recruitment and training. We are aware of the continued need to engage a wider range of students in discussions about the academic and pastoral aspects of student life and have run a number of daytime and evening activities examining issues such as assessment and retention. We are also increasingly using our Peer Mentors, SU Society members and WP student Ambassadors as invaluable mechanisms for engaging students in such dialogues. In 2017/18, we introduced a WP Student Ambassador Scheme, with 35 students selected and trained to a high standard to work specifically on a variety of WP projects, such as coaching, mentoring, aspiration raising and tutoring. The demographic of the ambassador scheme is largely representative of participants and a range of programmes is represented. Under the direction of CTESS and with Associate Deans for Student Experience, we will examine further opportunities for responding to student voice during 2018/19 and will expect a wider range of students to be fully represented in discussions about multiple aspects of programme and curriculum design, assessments, student support and academic regulations, as well as extracurricular engagement and enhancement opportunities, for 2019/20. We are also exploring ways to improve our information for students and will be redesigning both our student dashboard and university website to achieve this

During 17/18 a new approach to the Student Induction was implemented to ensure a more holistic, joined-up experience for students. A Project Board was established, ensuring a central point of responsibility and the benefits of a larger, more organised team are already being seen through the increased speed of planning and enhancement of creativity in the events planned for Induction 2018/19. We will work with our Students' Union and support services to ensure that for 2019/20 a range of activities supporting the transition of our target WP groups are included throughout the induction period and beyond. Induction will focus on both academic and social integration, and will integrate a wider range of practices highlighted as best practice in the sector e.g extended use of transition mentors, social events, co-curricular activities, site visits and group-based learning.

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Experience and research in the sector shows that membership of clubs and societies has a positive impact on student retention and progression. Therefore, we will continue to delegate a proportion of our Access and Participation investment to the Students' Union, but will tie the aims, outcomes and impact measurement of this allocation more closely to the needs of our identified target populations. We will expand this for 2019/20. Furthermore, a team of full-time Student Life Coordinators, with an in-depth knowledge of the support and wellbeing services available at St Mary's work closely with the SU, Wellbeing team and Sports St Mary's to build programmes of events and activities that enhance students' university, social and living experiences.

## 2.3 Target group interventions

Our strategic focus for target group interventions, based on assessment of our current performance, our location and local and national drivers, will be:

- Black and Asian students
- Disabled students
- Care-experienced students
- Students from POLAR Q1 and Q2 areas
- Mature students

### 2.3.1 Black and Asian Students

With our African and Caribbean Society (ACS), Brightside mentoring and a local Hounslow school, we are piloting a new Access mentoring programme for black pupils in years 10 and 12 during 2018/19. This programme provides mentees with an opportunity to develop their knowledge of careers, the university application process, and to receive advice from undergraduates who have recently been through similar decision-making processes. We will increase the scale of this project from 2019/20 and open the scheme to applications from a number of appropriate schools.

We have entered our second year of partnership with the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, where we contribute to the Compass Project for young women in Tower Hamlets, most of whom identify as Muslim. Many of these participants have the potential to go to university, but for complex reasons do not always see HE as a place they could flourish, so are offered mentoring relationships, exposure to university campuses and information and guidance, which will be extended for 2019/20.

In 2016/17 we took part in a London-wide BAME research project with AccessHE and have used the views and experiences of our BAME students to redesign many of our information, advice and guidance materials, as well as increase representation with the SU, which we will develop further with our Induction Working Group. We are also developing inclusive 'Staff and Student Networks' to encourage informal staff and student mentoring/role modelling, particularly with WP target groups in mind; a Women's Network was launched in 2018, and we will establish a BAME Network in 2018/19.

### 2.3.2 Disabled Students

To enhance recruitment of disabled students, we will develop a new campaign which highlights the support available at St Mary's. Featuring the 'No Ordinary Society' (see below), we will approach local schools and colleges to offer information sessions for disabled students and their families and enhance our website content and written information supporting access, success and progression. Furthermore, St Mary's will partner with local and national charities to improve the provision of information, support inclusion and enhance success of disabled students.

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Although a small minority of our entrants have a declared disability and, due to changes in the DSA, we anticipate that this trend is likely to continue, we also recognise that the number of students declaring a disability at entry stage does not fully represent the number of students requiring support. Therefore, we provide a range of measures to support our students from pre-entry to graduation and beyond. The number of students registered with our Disability and Dyslexia service has increased from 352 in 2013/14 to almost 1000 in 2017/18. All applicants declaring a disability at UCAS application are contacted, registration documents and evidence of disability are completed by email and support arrangements are agreed pre entry, so that all necessary support is in place immediately for the semester start. We also arrange priority and adapted accommodation. We have also extended the opening hours of our Wellbeing Centre and increased the number of specialist study skills tutoring hours provided for students with dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD from 540hrs in 2013/14 to 1,469 hrs in 2016/17. We can offer free dyslexia screening with a Wellbeing & Disability Adviser and, if appropriate, will refer students to an Educational Psychologist for a full assessment; the university will pay £250 of the costs of this assessment. Furthermore, in 2016/17, in partnership with Middlesex University, we also became an accredited outreach centre for DSA assessments and completed 94 assessments during that year and anticipate that numbers for both services will grow for 2019/20.

We know that Assistive Technology can empower students and promote independence and, in 2017, we opened a new Assistive Technology Suite (funded through charitable donation) with a wide range of site licenses. We also facilitate the provision of software through students' DSA applications, provide individual and group training to students and to staff, access to learning materials and loan specialist equipment. We will continue to consolidate, develop and promote all of these services through 2019/20 to enhance the recruitment of and support for disabled students.

We will also harness the potential of student societies. No Ordinary Society is an inclusive society celebrating the uniqueness and individuality of the St Mary's student population, which won the 'Best Society of the Year' award in 2018. It is supported by the Senior Disability Adviser and promotes awareness of disability issues, challenges stereotypes and stigma and improves the wellbeing of students. No Ordinary Society will continue to work very closely with the Student Wellbeing Service promoting and participating in events to improve the wellbeing of all students at St Mary's.

We will develop a range of interventions to support the rising number of students who present with, or develop, mental health issues at university. Our Well-being Service already provides specialist mental health mentoring to students with a mental health condition or on the autistic spectrum, to help them understand their condition and develop strategies to minimise its impact on their ability to study. This provision has increased very rapidly from 154 study hours provided in 2013/14, to 890 study hours in 2016/17. To support this, in 2018/19 we will deliver a number of 'train the trainer' sessions in mental health first aid, for staff and students and this will be extended in 2019/20. We will also develop or commission on-line training materials in mental health first aid and will ensure that staff undertake training as part of their induction or continuing professional development.

Disabled students and students with mental health issues (who declare at UCAS) are, and will continue to be, prioritised as the first group of students invited to attend the free pre-sessional Get Set for Success programme. This proactive approach gives them opportunities to work with other new students and Student Ambassadors, explore the campus and identify access issues, meet key Student Wellbeing, Learning Development and SU personnel, to increase their confidence, sense of

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belonging and knowledge of opportunities for support from the very first days at university. The programme is fully accessible and previous Get Set and current disabled students are encouraged to enlist as paid Student Ambassadors for this programme. Internal research shows that students attending GSfS are less likely to withdraw than the full population of undergraduates, so this approach will be further developed in 2019/20.

### 2.3.3 Care Leavers

First Star is a major success story for St Mary's and, being externally funded, represents WP spend above our fee-income investment in the Access & Participation Plan. It delivers transformational support helping young, looked after children in the UK progress to university and we were delighted to win the WhatUni? Student Choice award (2018) for this provision. The academy recruited its first 30 looked after young people aged 14 in the summer of 2017; for four years they will spend one day per month and four weeks each summer on St Mary's campus, supported by peer mentors drawn from St Mary's students in a programme which includes academic support, life skills and emotional resilience. We are continuing to develop our relationship with the Virtual School for Richmond, Kingston and Hounslow, and our relationships with key feeder schools and colleges, to ensure that learners who are care-experienced are enabled to make informed decisions and transitions are successful and this will be supported by participation in networks such as NNECL, AccessHE and First Star.

Our Widening Participation Outreach and Student Services teams work together to offer bespoke support to care leavers applying to St Mary's. Dedicated website pages, guides and named points of contact already provide essential support to students from the point of application, right through their transition to St Mary's and beyond. Once they have enrolled as St Mary's, care leavers' success and progression will be supported by a coherent package of measures which will address their specific financial, academic, pastoral and progression needs, including a dedicated financial bursary, guaranteed accommodation, automatic registration on our paid student ambassadors scheme, bespoke academic and careers guidance, summer financial support, access to internship opportunities and financial support to attend graduation. In addition we will review our 2018/19 pilot projects in Access Peer Mentoring with a view to extending this to care leavers in 2019/20

### 2.3.4 POLAR Q1 and Q2 Students (plus BAME and disabled students)

We have used our involvement in the NCOP, along with our own Outreach, to trial approaches to sustained access work with schools and colleges in POLAR Q1&2 areas. During 2017/18, we have established long-term attainment projects in providers, as well as medium-term (week-long) aspiration projects on campus, in the form of spring and summer schools. St Mary's will refocus its Outreach work for 2019/20 to develop and deliver programmes of activity and engagement that are progressive and sustained, since these are shown to be more impactful. We will develop a 2-year longitudinal programme to build academic skills and cultural capital for selected participants with the potential to succeed at St Mary's, and we will use a methodology for recruiting participants which prioritises our target student groups. This scheme will employ student mentors and offer academic support, careers exposure, and skills development in order to give participants experience in undertaking university-level work. The first year will culminate in a week-long summer school. The design and delivery of bespoke training, development and support sessions for our student mentors will also enable us to enhance their own academic and employability skills. The success of our transition peer mentoring scheme, evidenced by carefully designed impact measurement, has demonstrated that mentors

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benefit at least as much from involvement in the scheme as mentees and we will use this experience to develop a suite of new mentoring opportunities for our target groups.

### 2.3.5 Mature Students

St Mary's has adopted a lifecycle approach in our Outreach work, starting with primary school, and working with learners across the school and college year-groups. A next step for Outreach will be to establish a robust programme for mature learners, for which we recognise our local FE providers as crucial. We will give fresh emphasis to work with mature learners, including the development of a strategy for the recruitment and retention of mature students, reviewing the flexibility of our provision, increasing the accessibility of information and events, bespoke induction events, increased opportunities for mature student representation in programme and assessment design and other changes needed to make St Mary's a more appealing and rewarding option for mature learners. As we recognise that mature students are more likely to have competing priorities when undertaking their programme and therefore accessing the campus, during 2018/19 we will conduct a project, led by the Student Engagement Officer in collaboration with academics and professional and support services, to investigate how we can be more responsive to the needs of mature students for 2019/20.

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## 3 ACCESS, STUDENT SUCCESS AND PROGRESSION MEASURES

### 3.1 Access

#### 3.1.1 Recruitment

To support our strategy for improving access and participation, a range of targeted student recruitment initiatives will be developed to increase the number of applicants in under-represented categories (especially those currently under-recruiting e.g. mature, care leavers, PQ 1-2). We will also develop and implementing robust methodologies to target, track and monitor applicants (or possible applicants) from under-represented target groups and develop a range of appropriately adapted and targeted events and communications for WP students and their families.

Our approach to recruitment will be informed by the approach we have introduced during 2017/18 through our new targeting formula. By analysing various data sets such as POLAR3, Free School Meals (FSM), Percentage achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent), and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), we identify learners coming from more deprived backgrounds and their attainment. We will also continue to develop partnerships with schools in Hounslow, and our work with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP), partner organisations, and through establishing new programmes directly with local schools.

### 3.2 Outreach

#### 3.2.1 Outreach Raising Aspiration and Achievement

We will provide opportunities for learners in Key Stages 2-5 by using existing relationships with local schools and colleges to increase the reach of our work and offer enhanced support to those close-by who are most likely to benefit from the interventions, particularly in those areas of low HE



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participation. We also have an extensive programme of school visits, both on- and off-campus, for learners from less affluent backgrounds and who are under-represented in HE. In the academic year 2017-18, we have delivered in excess of 100 activities for schools and colleges, for learners in Yrs 5-13. We will continue to develop our relationship with Student Services colleagues in feeder institutions in order to run programmes of support for learners with the potential to succeed at St Mary's.

### 3.2.2 Partnerships

St Mary's enjoys strong and long-established relationships with many partners and we see the development of partnership work and the building of other strategic relationships with organisations sharing our aims crucial to our progress through 2019/20 and beyond. A brief summary of our key partners and initiatives for 2019/20 follows below:

- **Aimhigher London South** works to ensure fair access to higher education for young people from non-traditional backgrounds by linking schools, colleges, universities and education providers. In partnership with 11 universities, 28 schools and 3 further education colleges across London and the South East, it provides impartial information, advice and guidance to learners from years 8–13. Our successful partnership with Aimhigher London South will enable us to contribute to long-term programmes for young care leavers and their carers,
- **AccessHE** is England's largest regional network, engaging with over 300 London HEIs, schools, colleges and local authorities to widen access to HE. Being part of AccessHE allows us to develop strong reciprocal collaborative relationships with other London HEIs, share in joint activities with common goals and achieve objectives on access and participation efficiently and effectively. In 2019-20 AccessHE will convene Action Forums in a range of areas eg. with BAME students, care leavers and estranged students, supporting student ambassadors, evaluating widening access and supporting disabled, mature and P-T learners.
- **Linking London** comprises 45 universities, colleges, schools, awarding bodies, JISC Regional Support Centre, the London Councils Young People's Education and Skills team and unionlearn. The partnership supports recruitment, retention and progression into and through HE, including full and part time study, higher apprenticeships and work based learning. St Mary's works with Linking London to encourage better integration between FE and HE in the Capital, to gain a clearer understanding of the environment in the key St Mary's feeder colleges and to network with smaller London institutions to share best practice. Through LinkingLondon, St Mary's student ambassadors will serve as coaches and mentors to ward learners.
- St Mary's has begun contributing to the **Seren** network, which aims to inspire Welsh school students to consider future career options. We participated in the 2017 national conference and intend to continue this activity.
- We have also contributed significantly to the **National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)**, being one of the few London universities working within all three consortia described above. Our Senior WP Projects Officer (NCOP) manages the work of attainment-raising in LinkingLondon's hub-3 and we plan to emulate this work outside the NCOP programme for 2019/20. In 2018/19, we will co-organise a conference with Middlesex University for advisers and will seek continuation of NCOP funding to expand both of these initiatives in 2019/20.

### 3.2.3 Attainment Raising

A key barrier to university entry for disadvantaged students is prior educational attainment, so we will pursue three main avenues to our attainment-raising work:

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- First, as evidence suggests attainment in KS4 has a significant impact on progression to HE (IFS, 2016), we will pilot a new tutoring scheme for KS4 pupils in Hounslow, which aims to provide sustained academic support in key curriculum subjects, in the lead up to GCSEs by pairing undergraduates with groups of Y11 pupils to offer consistent and sustained support to young people who may not otherwise receive such provision. This is in the pilot stage and we would expect to roll out the programme on a wider scale in 2019/20.
- Second, we will offer meta-cognitive and study skills sessions in local schools and colleges. Working on a strategic level within the colleges, our work will be informed by curriculum leads and we will develop a programme of support bespoke to the college's needs. We will also substantiate our classroom support, matching undergraduate students with subject knowledge in classes where they can provide support to teachers in local Hounslow schools.
- Third, we will continue our collaboration with 'Team Up', an organisation which uses St Mary's students as tutors for those in receipt of pupil premium across the key stages.

#### 3.2.4 Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Hounslow is a local West London boroughs which has experienced significant increases in 'new arrivals' and non-UK born residents. Members of these communities can be isolated and may not access the council or other organisations for support and advice, and so we will increase our offer of support for migrants and refugees in Hounslow. We will develop and focus our resources to run information sessions about education pathways, develop links with potential points of engagement, such as mosques, GPs, leisure centres, and frontline council services and continue to build our relationships with schools to highlight this support.

#### 3.2.5 Evaluation

For a number of years, we have used the Kirkpatrick model of evaluation for Access activities. This has proven a useful framework and has allowed us to measure the impact of our interventions, but in 19/20, as we begin to work more closely with partners who adopt different models, we will review our approach to evaluation and consider more individualised evaluation methods for each programme. Robust monitoring and evaluation is an essential element to our new approach to access, success and progression. We have been using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) for a full academic year, making use not only of the core functionality, but also the student ambassador portal. We will continue to integrate HEAT into our work for 2019/20 and see it as essential for evaluating the long-term impact of our work. By working collaboratively, we can critically reflect on our approach to outreach data management which in turn helps us to continually improve the way we monitor, evaluate and build evidence of impact. Using data from HEAT St Mary's will assess the relationship between outreach programmes, disadvantage, attainment and patterns of progression into HE.

### 3.3 Success

#### 3.3.1 Institutional Practices and WP Expenditure

With the creation of the CTESS in a new central location on our campus, and a new strategic and operational lead for WP Access and Participation, we will place WP at the 'heart' of St Mary's. CTESS will drive excellence in many spheres from curriculum design and development to inclusive learning and teaching, will become the engine room of innovation around WP. Its focus will be on enhancing all aspects of the student experience, but in particular student success – the ability of all our students to engage effectively with their studies, to maximise their attainment and achieve strong academic

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outcomes that prepare them well for transition into graduate careers. We recognise that we need to reduce our student attrition rate, especially (but not solely) for Level 4 students, and enhanced WP retention will therefore be a key component of our expenditure moving forwards. This emphasis on promoting student success is reflected in the division of expenditure in our Financial Resource Plan where the largest allocation is dedicated to 'Success-focused' WP activities.

Data, evidence, research and impact evaluation will inform all aspects of WP work and responsibility for WP will be explicitly incorporated into both new and existing roles, policies, strategies and activities across the institution and a wider, more representative range of students and alumni will be involved in WP planning. This will enable us to develop a coherent, institutional framework of common action and effective evaluation-practices that recognises, and is sensitive to, student needs and profiles at Faculty and Programme level. This will help us to evaluate our own activities more effectively, and provide comparable data and evidence that can be used at an institutional level to inform practice. In particular, we will continue to build the type, quality and extent of the data we hold on retention in order to develop a more detailed evidence base and increase our understanding of the risk factors for WP students. We will also extend the volume and quality of qualitative data we hold on voluntary termination of studies across all student groups. This will be used to help shape appropriate and coordinated responses throughout 2019/20.

In 2018/2019, the Student Engagement Officer will lead on a range of 'sticky campus' initiatives to increase the number of low-cost or no-cost activities to encourage students to spend more time on campus. This will also include a review of St Mary's digital provision and how this can also be 'sticky', to recognise students' competing priorities and commitments. We will address low-level concerns in the student experience which aggregate into more significant dissatisfaction and may affect retention and achievement, particularly for WP students who may find it difficult to engage with campus-based activities because of commuting issues, caring responsibilities or other external factors. We will also address concerns which have been raised previously in relation to library resources and opening times, university-managed accommodation (costing/condition) and issues which impact on groups such as commuting students in disproportionate ways (timetable changes, university-wide communication, price structures in the Refectory) and look to improve the range and scope of social learning spaces throughout 2019/20 and beyond. Our Estates strategy places considerable emphasis on creating multiple, comfortable and informal learning/study environments and spaces on our campus and this is an important means of ensuring that mature and part-time, and commuting students will want to spend more time on campus, but also derive greater value from doing so.

### 3.3.2 Retention

A key factor necessary for success is for our undergraduate students to remain on course and to progress successfully through each stage of study. At present, however, too many students withdraw and so, as indicated in Section 1, student retention will be a key priority in 2019/20. In addition to continuing with the implementation of initiatives highlighted in our 2018/19 Access Agreement, we will invest in several additional activities and initiatives focused on improving student retention.

- Our new Centre for Teaching Excellence and Student Success (CTESS) will work with our faculties to drive, coordinate and evaluate institution-wide retention initiatives, working in close collaborative partnership with students and University professional and support services.
- CTESS will coordinate targeted interventions and support for programmes with low retention rates, based on internal data. As part of this, we will pilot Course Design Intensives in 2018/19 in time for an institution-wide roll-out in 2019/20. This will draw on successful CDI models, pioneered

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across the sector, to drive programme level enhancement in induction, teaching, assessment and feedback, use of TEL, identifying students at risk and facilitating early intervention.

- Building programmes that facilitate success for our target WP students will require a bold and ambitious new approach that places inclusive curriculum design at the heart of all our UG degrees. Consequently, CTESS will coordinate the development of a distinctive and dynamic St Mary's Curriculum Framework that is founded on sound research and best practice in the sector, and is characterised by high impact 'powerful pedagogies' and essential 'higher education literacies'; this will drive enhanced learning opportunities for all students, increase student engagement and enhance outcomes for target WP students.
- We recognise that building more inclusive practice is key to ensuring that our WP target groups can succeed and closing the BAME/White attainment gap. Therefore, enhanced staff development and training will be a major focus of our activities, with the emphasis on inclusive programme design, inclusive pedagogies, inclusive assessment, and inclusive use of learning technologies. We will also implement a programme of staff training addressing unconscious bias and supporting mental health and wellbeing, with a target of completion by 80% of all student-facing staff by the end of 2019/20.
- We will invest in new, staff-facing VLE-based online resources which will build inclusive approaches into programme design, learning, teaching and assessment. Evidence from the sector suggests that improvements in retention (including retention of WP students) are often related to improvements in programme level management or leadership. Therefore, we will focus on helping our Programme Leads to maximise the impact of their leadership on student retention and the wider student experience.
- We will continue to build on the foundation of good practice developed and promoted by our Induction Working Group by putting in place effective 'transitions' support for students progressing into level 5 and level 6 and beyond. Student Induction will therefore become a process rather than an event, with targeted, timely activities, interventions and support aligned with the particular challenges that students face at each level of transition.
- We will invest in improving the quality of our new staff induction and CTESS will collaborate with our HR teams to develop and enhance the range of support and training available, with a particular emphasis on building an early understanding of our student body, best practice in inclusive learning and teaching, and understanding 'what works' with regard to student retention.

### **3.4 Progression**

#### **3.4.1 Employability Hub**

The integration of the Centre for Workplace Learning and the Careers Service into a new Employability Service in 2018, with one strategic lead, will provide a central senior presence to lead relationships with programmes, review the extent to which all employability services are focussed on graduate outcomes, and lead integration of the two services. They will lead on a strategic and systematic review of all programmes across St Mary's to consider the most appropriate employability offer for each programme, taking into account the occurrence of WP characteristics amongst students in different disciplines. The outcome will be that every student on every programme will have the opportunity to benefit from experience, professional development and graduate level planning. This will be of particular importance for our WP students as sector research suggests that they may not have the social capital or opportunities to develop their employability skills in the same way as other, more privileged students. In addition to developing students' employability skills, the new service will

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work with academic staff and tutors to facilitate their employability work with students, embed it more fully across the curriculum and continue to develop the network of academic staff who are employability liaison tutors.

#### 3.4.2 Internship Opportunities

St Mary's attracts many students from non-traditional backgrounds and those who are first generation HE attendees; these students often do not have the social capital required to build supportive or expert employment networks. In order to address any disadvantage this may cause, we will offer a minimum of fifteen 4-8 week paid summer internships (sponsored by Santander) in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for students at level 5-7 and recent graduates not currently in employment. The internships are specifically designed to enhance the experiences of WP students who may lack the social and cultural capital required to access holiday work placements through other sources. WP students will benefit from this programme, and from opportunities for collaboration and confidence-building, to help them start businesses or achieve successful graduate-level employment. In the pilot year of this programme (2017), 9 students completed internships of between 2 and 8 weeks at 7 different SME's. Of these, 6 interns were from WP target groups, 2 were asked to stay on in paid part-time employment and 2 were offered graduate positions. In addition, during 2018/19 we are developing plans for short winter paid internships for final year WP students and recent graduates most at risk of not securing graduate level employment upon completion. This will be reviewed and if successful will be repeated and expanded for 2019/20 and beyond.

#### 3.4.3 Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education

In response to the growing demand for the workforce to have entrepreneurial skills, in self-employment or new and emerging industries St Mary's strategic plan commits to creating an enterprise culture amongst its students. To this end we are establishing a student entrepreneurship programme, aimed primarily at our target WP groups, to stimulate the entrepreneurial aspirations of students and provide them with opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to positively impact on the workplace as employees or in their own businesses. 'Enterprise St Mary's' will be a fully evaluated two-year project (2018-2020), comprising accredited in-curriculum entrepreneurship modules which form part of the undergraduate degree offer, making them accessible to all students. In conjunction, there will be a three-stage extra-curricular programme of workshops and activities with access to business, funding, mentoring and finance specialists. The three stages, Imagine, Explore, Perform, will present students with opportunities to develop an enterprising mind-set through generating ideas, thinking creatively and developing skills and knowledge. Expert guidance and support will be provided for students wishing to take a business concept from inception through planning to pitching and beyond and we will ensure that WP students are properly and proportionally accessing these opportunities to develop their employability skills, confidence and networking abilities, strongly positioning themselves in the graduate employment market and meeting the changing aspirations of the millennial generation.

#### 3.4.4 Employability and Careers

We have been using Careers Registration (CR) since 2016; piloted at level 4 in 2016/17, it has been scaled up throughout 2018/19 and by 2019/20 we will have a full picture of all students at each level. Through the personal tutoring programme, students' career-readiness is assessed annually at registration; this learning gain tracker then enables employability staff to identify the careers thinking progression of all students, identify differentials between particular groups of students and put

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initiatives in place to address inequalities in opportunity. The CR responses can then be mapped on to student profile data and used to plan targeted and appropriate interventions and support. We currently provide a number of targeted events and these will be scaled up in 2019/20.

### 3.4.5 International Opportunities

Delivering mobility opportunities that engage disadvantaged and under-represented students will improve student experience, work toward closing the attainment gap, and create a generation of globally-aware and outward-looking graduates. Universities UK International's research has shown a correlation between students being mobile and receiving better academic and employment outcomes through improved personal development and equipping them with an enhanced global outlook, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds when compared to their non-mobile peers. St Mary's International Department will evaluate and increase the ways we encourage WP students to participate in mobility opportunities and support them throughout the whole process, including the promotion of short-term opportunities, fostering academic engagement and collaborations to increase opportunities for embedding mobility in the curriculum, using more diverse marketing channels and providing accessible information to parents and guardians. We have also created an International Student Ambassador Scheme to offer students the opportunity to both mentor and be mentored in advance of and after their mobility activities and we will both increase and enhance this scheme and ensure that as wide a range of WP students as possible are represented.

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## 4 INVESTMENT

### 4.1 Financial Support

In response to the regulatory authority's advice, student opinions and the outcomes of national research, we conducted an investigation into the effectiveness of scholarships and bursaries in 2016/17 and we have consequently adjusted our practice for 2018/19 onwards. We have removed fee waivers (except in very exceptional cases) and replaced them with a suite of fewer, but more rigorously targeted and higher value scholarships and bursaries (worth £2,000-£3,000 pa for each year of study), including an excellence scholarship and bursaries for care leavers, estranged students and students from low-income homes. To be eligible for any of these, students must have 'home' or 'EU' status for fee purposes. For the excellence scholarship, students must also have a household income of £25,000 per annum or less and achieve a UCAS tariff of 136 points or above (ABB from three A levels or equivalent). For the St Mary's Bursary, students must have a household income of £15,000 or less and for the care leavers bursary, students must be under the age of 25 at programme commencement and have spent at least 3 months in local authority care (including 16<sup>th</sup> birthday) or be in a residential home, foster care or a Foyer resident and/or supported by the local authority at enrolment. Students' can apply for scholarships or bursaries both during the application process, or at the time of enrolment and eligibility will be checked using information provided on UCAS and loan application forms. Whilst allocation of the care leavers' award will be automatic upon enrolment, for the excellence scholarship, estranged students' award and St Mary's bursary, students will provide a short application statement and priority will be given to mature students, students with additional needs, disabilities, unpaid carer responsibilities or refugee status. In addition, we have increased the allocation to our student hardship fund, from £200,000 in 17/18 to £310,000 for 18/19 onwards. This fund is specifically aimed at students who are carers, mature or disabled students, students who are

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homeless and those who have been in care; eligible students will be required to provide evidence that shows they are in severe financial hardship. We will evaluate the impact of these scholarships and bursaries in terms of retention and achievement and continue this strategy from 2019/20, when we will increase the range of WP target groups specifically eligible for financial awards (such as carers, estranged students and disabled students). Furthermore, in response to the financial challenges caused by cessation of maintenance grants and changes to disabled students' funding, we will increase our general Hardship Fund support for 2018-20.

## 4.2 Increasing the proportion of higher level fee investment

Our investment to support the Access & Participation Plan in 2019/20 will total £2,578,304 in cash terms. A significant proportion of this total (27.57%) will be devoted to student financial support (Total: £711,000). The remainder (£1,867,304) will be devoted to Access, Success and Progression as follows (as a proportion of the total APP spend):

Access	£334,776	12.98%
Success	£1,056,500	40.97%
Progression	£476,028	18.46%

As a result of sector-wide challenges in student recruitment, St Mary's agreed revised recruitment targets with HEFCE in March 2018, which will result in a decrease in our **total** higher level fee income above the capped fee. However, our continued commitment to WP students will be demonstrated by exceeding the required 22.5% proportion of higher fee income devoted to our Access & Participation Investment Plan and by incremental increases in this proportion; in 2019/20 we will allocate 24.5% of higher level fee income (from 24.1% in 2018/19) and this will grow to 25% in 2020/21.

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## 5 PROVISION OF INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The primary mode of student consultation is currently through the Students' Union, Programme reps and Student Ambassadors. SMSU, through its elected Executive Members and full-time Sabbatical Officers, represents students on all university committees and many working groups and also feeds information back to the student body through different fora such as the SU, Programme Reps, website and social media and has been fully involved in the production of this Access and Participation Plan. However, as previously explained, our increased work with student ambassadors, peer mentors, Programme Reps and the entire student body, especially through the Access and Participation Strategy and Implementation mechanisms, will ensure that we develop increasingly effective and informative ways of working with students. We will also conduct an audit of 'student voice' throughout 2018/19 to ensure that we give greater emphasis to the views of the full range of our diverse student body in academic and non-academic matters. St Mary's considers this partnership approach as integral to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities and the wider student experience and it will be improved and increased in 2019/20. We will publish our approved Access and Participation Plan on our student dashboard and our website and will produce summary documents that are fully accessible for all students. In addition, we will run activities for staff and for students to explain the pertinent changes from previous Access Agreements to the new Access and Participation Plan and will ensure that this is part of the wider conversation we are committed to having, by placing WP at the heart of everything we do at St Mary's.

\* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

Tuition fees are likely to be increased annually in line with inflation (within the appropriate maximum fee cap).

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	Sport Science foundation degrees	£8,000
Foundation degree	Education foundation degrees	£6,000
Foundation year / Year 0		£9,250
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£9,250
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree	- Education foundation degrees - Healthcare ethics & Youth Ministry (PT only)	£4,750
Foundation degree	- Education foundation degrees - Pastoral ministry (PT only)	£2,375
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		£4,625
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*



**Table 8a** - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	State school	<b>HESA T1a</b> - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Target for the percentage of young first degree starters who come from state schools	No	2013-14	93.6	95.5	95.5	96			Despite having set ourselves a more stretching target, further progress has been made on this measure. We anticipate that this will continue through as we expand our schools liaison work with state schools and colleges
T16a_02	Access	Socio-economic	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Target for the number of young first degree starters who come from Social Class 4 - 7	No	2013-14	37.5	40	40.5	41			This data is no longer published by HESA and so we will continue to monitor this target using internal data. Progress has been made towards meeting the revised target.
T16a_03	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	<b>HESA T1a</b> - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Based on young first degree entrants	No	2013-14	5.5	11.5	12	12.5			This target was reviewed 2 years ago and a more stretching target agreed. Through investment in the NCOP, we hope to make good progress in this area. We are establishing better links with local colleges with a high proportion of PQ1 learners and plan to step up this work. Additionally, our new sustained engagement scheme will prioritise learners from low quintile wards. It is worth noting that POLAR data is particularly problematic for London and we are exploring the use of IMD data to provide a more useful measure.
T16a_04	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>HESA T3a</b> - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	This is based on young first degree applicants who progress or qualify.	No	2013-14	94	95	95	95			Although some good progress was initially made in this area, recent figures suggest that improvement is required. Student progression is a key priority for the University and the APP provides a detailed plan for achieving this. This target continues to be challenging in the short term.

T16a_05	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>HESA T3a</b> - No longer in HE after 1 year (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	This is based on mature first degree applicants who progress or qualify.	No	2013-14	89.4	90.6	91	91			Performance against this target has not been as anticipated and further work will be done to improve progression rates for mature students. This is outlined in the APP. This target continues to be challenging.
T16a_06	Student success	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>HESA T5</b> - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	Based on all first time first degree entrants, regardless of age on entry	No	2012-13	81.2	83.5	84	84.5			Although some good progress has been made in this area, recent figures suggest that improvement is required. Student progression is a key priority for the University and the APP provides a detailed plan for achieving this. This target continues to be challenging.
T16a_07	Access	Low income background	<b>Other statistic</b> - Low-income backgrounds (please give details in the next column)	This is seen as a percentage of all of our full time undergraduate student population whose family earnings come into the bottom two categories of earnings £0 - 25,000 and who would qualify for full support under the old system. (This can adjusted if the range of the categories changes in future.)	No	2012-13	39	41	41.5	42			The original target in this are was exceeded and so we set ourselves a more ambitious target. Our new targeting methodology allows us to prioritise participating schools with a high proportion of pupils from lower income backgrounds.
T16a_08	Other/Multiple stages	Disabled	<b>HESA T7</b> - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	Based on all first time first degree entrants, regardless of age on entry	No	2013-14	7.2	7.8	7.9	8			This is an area in which we have consistently performed well and have exceeded both our benchmark and also the original milestone target. Last year we increased our target slightly, in order to be more ambitious, but we feel that we should firstly be looking to maintain our good performance in this area and consolidate progress.

T16a_09	Access	Gender	<b>Other statistic</b> - Gender (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of male students recruited to our undergraduate ITT Primary Teaching programme.	No	2013-14	8.3	16	16	16			We originally set ourselves a target in this area that has proven to be quite ambitious. However, we have decided to retain this milestone at the level that we previously specified and to continue to work hard towards attaining this level. Data for 2016/17 shows a marked improvement on the baseline.
T16a_10	Access	Gender	<b>Other statistic</b> - Gender (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of male students recruited to our PGCE Primary course	No	2013-14	16.1	25	25	25			The target as originally set in this area was very stretching. Although a dip was experienced based on the figures from the 13/14 cohort, strong progress has been made towards this ambitious target, so it has been retained in its original form.
T16a_11	Access	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of BME students recruited to our ITT Primary Teaching programme	No	2013-14	10.2	14	15	15			A stretching target was set for this area and significant progress has been made in this area. We consider the original target to be ambitious and still valid.
T16a_12	Access	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of BME students recruited to our PGCE Primary course	No	2013-14	13.7	15	15	15			The original target that was set for this category was considered to be ambitious. We made solid progress towards achieving this, from a low base. The most recent set of figures show that we are achieving this target and so the current target continues to be relevant as we look to consolidate progress made.
T16a_13	Access	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of BME students recruited to our Secondary PGCE course	No	2013-14	23	27	27.5	28			Our current performance in this area shows reasonable progression from the baseline. Performance has fluctuated somewhat in the meantime. We believe that maintaining the 25% target is realistic and suitably stretching.
T16a_14	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of students in employment after one year	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	80	82	83	84	85		This data is taken from the institutional level report for LEO which gives the figures for graduates for further study and sustained employment after one year, with a baseline that starts in 12/13. We await the next data release from DfE in order to assess progress.

T16a_15	Progression	Other (please give details in Description column)	<b>Other statistic</b> - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	The percentage of students in employment after five years	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	79	81	82	83	84		This data is taken from the institutional level report for LEO which gives the figures for graduates for further study and sustained employment after five years, with a baseline that starts in 12/13. We await the next data release from DfE in order to assess progress.
T16a_16	Success	Attainment raising	<b>HESA T1a</b> - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	The number of students taught on our 'Get Set for Success' summer school	No	2015-16	100	140	160	180	180		Get Set for Success is a pre induction programme designed to help students from a variety of WP backgrounds (including disabled students and care leavers) to transition into higher education and is one of a number of pre-session programmes we will deliver. We aim to increase the number of students on these programmes in a sustainable fashion without changing their nature and reducing their efficacy. The classification of this has been changed from 'Access' to 'Success' to correct a mistake in the previous classification
T16a_17	Access	Attainment raising	<b>HESA T2c</b> - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Mature, full-time, other undergraduate entrants)	Working with St Mary's students to train them as tutors in partnership with 'TEAM UP' in POLAR3 schools and colleges.	Yes	2016-17	30	40	45	50	55		As we increase the scale of our attainment-raising work, we have changed this target to more accurately represent the scale of our projects. We aim to work with this number of participants in attainment-raising projects through our work with Team-Up and our classroom support and study skills sessions.
T16a_18	Success	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	% Black students achieving Good Honours	No	2016-17	55.5	59	62.5	66.5	70	73	Areas for improvement that have been identified through the APP
T16a_19	Success	Ethnicity	<b>Other statistic</b> - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	% Asian students achieving Good Honours	No	2016-17	69.2	70	71	72	72.5	73	Areas for improvement that have been identified through the APP

**Table 8b** - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Other (please give details in Description column)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Taster Days, campus visits, work in schools and colleges that will be co-ordinated in conjunction with our collaborative partners across London Numbers of Year 9 to 13 students to be reached.	Yes	2013-14	1600	2000	2000	2000	2000		We have expanded our work in this area and will continue to do so. New initiatives came on stream during 2016/17 and we have more planned for 2019/20. Our arrangements with existing and new partners will enable us to meet this collaborative target.
T16b_02	Access	Other (please give details in Description column)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Outreach work initiated by St Mary's (non - collaborative)	No	2014-15	700	700	700	700	700		We expanded our provision in this area in 2016/17 and pending the evaluation of these projects, will do so in a more targeted way in 2018/19. We will continue to develop our own outreach activities and plan to maintain the number of participants we are engaging with in 2019/20.
T16b_03	Access	Other (please give details in Description column)	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	The number of students involved in the outreach work initiated	No	2014-15	10	40	50	50	60		This was a new target for 2015/16 and via our Learning and Development Team we continue to invest in the training of Student Ambassadors, particularly in the area of BAME recruitment. The growth in our Widening Participation Student Ambassador scheme will enable us to meet this target.
T16b_04	Progression	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	To increase interaction yearly with POLAR3 schools and colleges	No	2015-16	5	10	15	15	20		This was a new target for 2017/18 and reflects the work we are doing with schools and colleges in Hounslow. We have significantly stepped up our engagement with local schools and colleges with a high proportion of learners in lower quintile wards. Our new targeting rubric maintains lower quintile wards as a priority.

**Optional commentary on milestones.**

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.

When developing the OFFA Access Agreement the University set itself some very stretching targets. Whilst some good and sustained progress has been made towards meeting these targets there are areas which require further attention and intervention in order to make further progress. The University has undergone substantial change over the past 10 years and since the establishment of OFFA and the introduction of the Access Agreement (and now the OIS & the APP) the University has obtained both degree awarding powers and University status. Through this period of change the University has seen a change in the entry profile of its students and as such has made investments to support the growing need for a focused approach to supporting students from all backgrounds to access, succeed in and progress from Higher Education. The University has recently undergone a significant structural change which has brought together a series of Access and Participation activities across the University into a central place. The APP provides a coherent and ambitious strategy for further developing our activities and making more significant progress towards our targets.