



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by Birkbeck College against targets, objectives and written commitments set out in its 2019-20 access and participation plan. This document is a summary of information submitted by the provider to the OfS. This document is a self-report by the provider only and does not indicate any OfS assessment of compliance.

1. Ambition and strategy

Birkbeck College's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

Access

Our access outcomes are strong and so our approach was to continue to make gains where possible, particularly with low income communities, mature students and other underrepresented groups. We also aimed to ensure that our student body continued to reflect the ethnic diversity of London.

Student Success

We aimed to maintain our above-benchmark part-time student success levels and reach benchmark for our full-time students.

We intended to test interventions designed to increase undergraduate retention and performance with larger samples of students.

Following the initial success of our degrees with foundation year, we planned to expand these programmes across our portfolio and also introduce part-time versions, to provide more entry routes into our degrees for those with non-traditional entry qualifications.

We planned to undertake research to understand the impact of various student characteristics on the likelihood of achieving a good degree and direct our efforts to addressing any gaps identified.

In acknowledgement that there is an achievement gap of good degrees between ethnicities, we planned to complete regression analyses to understand the underlying causes of this and develop an action plan to address identified issues.

As many of the initiatives arising from the recommendations of our Student Experience Review were expected to target students with lower entry grades, we anticipated that these would have a greater impact on Black students. We planned to evaluate these initiatives against their success in terms of reducing the ethnicity gap and the overall impact on the student body as a whole.

Progression

Using our Birkbeck Talent and Careers Service, we planned to offer appropriate tailored support to mature students to combine study with work experience. We also set a specific target to improve disabled student progression rates.

Evaluating and Monitoring

We planned to monitor and evaluate each initiative to measure outcomes against objectives.

Equality and Diversity

We explained that our new Education Committee would ensure that Equalities and Diversity work would be integrated into our curriculum and processes and our APP aimed to support our E&D approach by identifying resources to direct towards E&D priorities.

Following aforementioned research into student retention and student characteristics, we aimed to conduct further statistical analyses looking at student success (e.g. retention, good degrees) and to explore the extent to which protected characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, disability) impact on student success.

Consulting with Students

Our Student Union aims to empower and represent underrepresented groups and we explained that it would also be working with the College to understand how faith relates to the student experience.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by Birkbeck College of progress against the targets approved in its 2019-20 access and participation plan.

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of Birkbeck College's 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	Proportion of part-time students who meet the eligibility for the highest value maintenance loan	2013-14	39.1%	42%	43%	Percentage	2019-20	57	Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	Proportion of full-time students who meet the eligibility for the highest value maintenance loan	2015-16	40.8%	42%	43%	Percentage	2019-20	75	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Percentage of young, f-t students from lower NS-SEC classes	2013-14	39.7%	45%	45%	Percentage	2019-20	60	Expected progress
T16a_04 (Access)	Percentage of full-time students in receipt of DSA	2013-14	7.9%	8.5%	8.5%	Percentage	2019-20	9.1	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Access)	Percentage of part-time students in receipt of DSA	2013-14	6.7%	7.5%	7.5%	Percentage	2019-20	7.6	Expected progress
T16a_06 (Student success)	HESA T3e - HESA T3e - No longer in HE after 2 years (part-time, all entrants)	2013-14	31%	27%	26%	Percentage	2018-19	27	Expected progress
T16a_07 (Student success)	Percentage of full-time students not in HE after 1 year	2013-14	14.4%	11%	10%	Percentage	2019-20	13	Limited progress
T16a_08 (Access)	Percentage of black and ethnic minority students, p-t and f-t degree	2014-15	49%	54%	55%	Percentage	2019-20	57	Expected progress
T16a_09 (Access)	Percentage of students who declare a disability	2015-16	16%	17.5%	17.5%	Percentage	2019-20	19	Expected progress
T16a_10 (Student success)	Proportion of students with disabilities who progress to second year	2015-16	64%	69%	70%	Percentage	2018-19	69	Expected progress

T16a_11 (Progression)	Number of non-traditional students supported to interview for paid opportunities	2015-16	90	105	110	Headcount	2019-20	494	Expected progress
T16a_12 (Access)	Index of Multiple Deprivation, quintiles 1 & 2	2015-16	73%	75%	77%	Percentage	2019-20	60	Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	UnionLearn - 10% discount to unionlearn members as part of memorandum of understanding with unionlearn. Target relates to number of UG students the discount was granted to.	2014-15	250	300	300	Headcount	2019-20	190	Limited progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Number of students who attend a Get Started workshop and percentage who successfully enrol	2014-15	500	500	500	Headcount	2019-20	398	Limited progress
T16b_03 (Access)	Number of students who apply through an Institutional Progression Agreement	2014-15	145	180	190	Headcount	2019-20	193	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	Number of students who receive one to one guidance interviews via a single, holistic Information, Advice and Guidance service in partnership with UEL	2013-14	2191	2700	2800	Headcount	2019-20	1064	Limited progress
T16b_05 (Access)	Mature students attending Get Ready programme	2017-18	n/a	100	125	Headcount	2019-20	380	Expected progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£553,110.00	£532,000.00	-4%
Financial Support	£1,426,942.00	£821,000.00	-42%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected Birkbeck College has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_07	The ongoing implementation of projects arising from the 2017 Student Experience Review, continued expansion of our foundation year provision, more targeted skills development support for these students to ensure their academic confidence to continue.
T16b_01	We are monitoring and working closely with union partners to respond to the impact of the recent cut to funding for the Union Learning Fund, Union Learning Reps losing their jobs and the post-COVID recovery agenda. We are currently conducting a piece of research into the future of this work with the unions, identifying their priorities, concerns in education priorities as well as speaking to current union members studying with us. The outcome of this research will shape our work and the uptake of the discount around this. This will be concluded summer 2021.
T16b_02	Given the success of online delivery, we are working on a long-term programme of blended activities which will include a significant online component, to reach as wide a range of potential learners as possible.

T16b_04	<p>Learning from the success of online delivery during the pandemic, our approach will continue focus on delivering access activity in the boroughs with low participation rates into HE. Our future outreach which will incorporate more online delivery and will not have to be limited to delivering activity in buildings that we own or manage in East London. We will therefore continue to build relationships and partnerships with community-based organisations who have facilities that applicants know and culturally trust.</p>
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5. Confirmation

Birkbeck College confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
Birkbeck College has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Professor David Latchman
Position	Vice-Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

Birkbeck College's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_07
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
These have been partially met. We set our target to be within the sector benchmark for full-time student continuation, and to retain our above-benchmark performance for part-time continuation. This we have achieved. Since setting this target, we have recruited a larger proportion of Foundation Year students, who normally have lower continuation rates, which has meant that our actual rates are a little lower than planned.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We continue to implement interventions to aid progress in this area, as seen in our 2021-25 APP.

Target reference number: T16b_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Given the challenges facing union-based adult learning (such as Brexit and cuts in public services which traditionally have large union memberships), we are pleased to have a significant student base still taking up the discount offer with us. Despite it being under target, we know our partners were facing significant challenges during this critical year and so we are still pleased with this achievement. We continue to have a strong and successful partnership with the trade unions.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
In 18/19 we created a dedicated post to working with trade unions. Their work and plans were developing during this time, with the aim of growing the number of union partners and assessing their needs and priorities which in turn determined ours. We have developed an extensive programme of work with partners which has stemmed from consultation and conversations and in 19/20 we worked with 310 participants across 20 activities, such as developing a Toolkit specifically for front-line union learn advisors in the workplace, guest lectures in workplaces, careers advice and guidance workshops.

Target reference number: T16b_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We have nearly met the commitment of this target. Work to reach this target took place in 18/19 when we delivered a full face to face provision of this programme both on campus and in community settings. We were aware that engagement was reducing with our target audiences and we began a process of changing this for 19/20. Whilst we had small scale ambitions to introduce digital elements in 19/20, the speed and breadth of the change to our offer was also driven by the pandemic at an institutional level.

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

We have 398 new students in 19/20 as a result of this work. Whilst we are disappointed not to have met this target, we have reviewed and understood why this is, in line with our wider institutional understanding of how much our mature students can engage in activities and learning. However we are pleased our successful move to online delivery has opened our reach and connected us with more communities. This too echoes the moves our partners have adopted to online - we have broadened our delivery mechanisms. Given these changes and flexibility in our programme going forward, we are confident we will reach our target.

Target reference number: T16b_04

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

Since the benchmark was established the operational partnership with our Stratford building has changed. This means Birkbeck is now reporting only on its own access activity and so the numbers published reflect only our contribution to the target. Birkbeck no longer offers an in-person advice and guidance service in University Square Stratford with 1-2-1 sessions also being severely curtailed in academic year 2019/20 as a result of the pandemic.

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

This IAG provision with UEL has been replaced by a revised and more holistic offer suited to the evolving needs of communities in East London. The Access and Engagement team has led a cross-institution approach to outreach, incorporating a number of student support services in the guidance provision. In 19/20 we supported 1064 people. This was achieved through a tailored programme of online workshops and community-based advice sessions, which included campus learning experiences, university preparation workshops and subject taster events.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

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

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	No longer have income data from SLC, now using income data collected at enrolment as a proxy.
T16a_02	No longer have income data from SLC, now using income data collected at enrolment as a proxy.
T16a_03	
T16a_04	
T16a_05	
T16a_06	
T16a_07	
T16a_08	
T16a_09	
T16a_10	
T16a_11	In 19/20 23 non-traditional UG students were supported into paid employment via College-employer connections and 29 students started their own business after completing our Enterprise programme. Overall 988 UG students were supported with job application/interview preparation, at least half of which we estimate to be non-traditional.
T16a_12	This was a target that was carried forward from the 2017/18 Access agreement and we are not certain what percentages were used in the baseline or targets. However the proportion of FT undergraduates entering from quintiles 1 and 2 has remained stable since 2015 at 60% using IMD 2015 (57% using IMD 2019) measures.
T16b_01	20/21 data shows we have exceeded this target in numbers taking up the discount
T16b_02	We are developing a post-pandemic blended approach to delivery of this work and will continue to monitor the engagement and progression from this new offer.
T16b_03	BTEC students are an important part of our student community and long term WP commitments. We are concerned about the changes to post-16 qualifications and the emergence of T Levels at the potential cost to BTEC learners of the future.

T16b_04	Being able to deliver our outreach work targeting east London has been hugely impacted by the pandemic. Newham has been one of the worst affected boroughs in the country. Groups and partners we have worked with have shifted priorities to deal with the fallout from the pandemic. We remain committed to working in the area but recognise our work will need to be led by the priorities and pressures facing the groups we aim to support.
T16b_05	