

IEC19D007

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Issue

This paper is a new standing item on Inclusive Education Committee agendas to provide a headline progress update on implementation of UEA's Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2020/21 to 2024/25. The focus of current activity is on action planning, piloting key activities and resource allocation to set the foundation for implementation.

Recommendations

To note The update on implementation of UEA's 5 year APP.
To advise Whether this paper provides a useful level of regular implementation update and of any specific areas of required update at future meetings

Resource Implications

UEA is committed to continue annual investment up to equivalent of 25% of higher fee income on access and participation across the lifetime of the plan as needed to reach our targets. In our APP 2020/21 to 2024/25, we have made specific commitments to investment levels in Access, Financial Support and Research and Evaluation but we have also committed internally to estimated spend levels on Success and Progression to meet our aims.

Risk Implications

In addition to the impact on social mobility and outcomes for students, there are considerable institutional risks associated with failure to both implement inclusive education at UEA and meet the targets outlined in our APP including:

- Progress towards our APP targets is a condition of registration with the Office for Students.
- Success in the Teaching Excellence Framework relies on strong retention, student satisfaction and progression across different student types.

Sustainability

UEA's Inclusive Education Policy, APP and related actions are designed to support social sustainability both within the framework of the UEA community and in terms of broader social mobility. In addition, our combined approach, implementing inclusive measures where appropriate and piloting targeted exclusive initiatives when necessary, builds financial sustainability into our approach by ensuring investments benefit beneficiaries in the long-term.

Equality and Diversity

UEA's Inclusive Education Policy and APP are specifically designed to support diversity in the student cohort and equality of opportunity at UEA.

Timing of decisions

This paper does not require specific decisions but rather provides an update.

Further information

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Background

UEA APP Commitments

In its APP 2020/21 to 2024/25, UEA committed to the following strategic aims and objectives and *specific targets and milestones*, to address access and participation gaps for students with specific characteristics.

- Increasing access to Higher Education (HE) generally, and UEA specifically, for students from areas of lower higher education participation and of social deprivation and a whole lifecycle approach to support retention, attainment of good degrees and progression to further employment or further study for these students at UEA.
 - *With our Outreach approach developed, our milestones reflect steady annual increases in our proportional intake of young POLAR Q1 students working towards **eliminating the gap in entry rates between the most (Q5) and least represented (Q1) groups by 2030-31.***
 - *Allowing for new inclusive and exclusive measures to have impact, we predict slow initial but accelerating movement on closing attainment gaps. We aim to **close attainment gaps between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students by 2024/25.***
- Increasing access to UEA for specific Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students and a whole lifecycle approach to close the black attainment gap at UEA.
 - *Building on existing activity and progress, we predict annual improvements to **close the retention gaps between black and white students by 2023/24.***
 - *Allowing for new inclusive and exclusive measures to have impact, we predict slow initial but accelerating movement on closing attainment gaps. We aim to **close attainment gaps between black and white students by 2027/28.***
- Increasing access to UEA for mature students and supporting the student experience to level the playing field in terms of retention and success.

- *Access to HE agreements with local FECs will be in place by 2020. We predict **steady annual increases in intake of mature students from local Access to HE courses aiming for 36% of participants attending UEA by end of this plan** halting the downward trend in our mature intake.*
- *Building on existing activity and progress, we predict annual improvements to **close the retention gaps between mature and young students by 2025/26.***
- Supporting the whole student lifecycle for disabled students, particularly in terms of ensuring success and progression, including particular focus on supporting students with mental health problems, learning difficulties or Asperger's Syndrome or other Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
 - *Allowing for new inclusive and exclusive measures to have impact, we predict slow initial but accelerating movement on closing attainment gaps. We aim to **close attainment gaps between disabled and non-disabled students by 2022/23.***
 - *Noting the need for us to develop a better understanding of the reasons for the gaps and implement appropriate measures along with the time lag on this metric, we predict slow initial but accelerating progress on **closing the gap in progression to graduate level employment or further study for disabled students generally and those with mental health problems specifically by 2026/27.** (Based on DLHE data so indicative of the progress we want to make; adjustments will be made using Graduate Outcomes data).*
- Increasing understanding of, and support for, students who experienced disruption in their education including having been in local authority care and/or from military families.
- Increasing understanding of, and support for, students with different educational backgrounds including non-A level qualifications or significant breaks from education.
- Increasing understanding of, and support for, students facing additional pressures including estrangement from parents, being parents and/or having other caring responsibilities.

We also committed to a number of overarching principles that require cross institution planning to ensure we take effective and impactful action. Of particular note in this context are:

- **Collective action and collaboration** across departments at UEA and between UEA and other HEIs, FECs and other organisations.
- A **focus on a bedrock of inclusive education policy and practice** that is then supported by exclusive approaches when necessary and effective.
- **Targeting of activity to be needs-based drawing on evidence and understanding of shared journeys to and through Higher Education** (i.e. based on shared information and support needs not simply demographic characteristics).
- A **strategic focus on understanding and addressing contributory factors** and how these build into a full Theory of Change to achieve longer term aims in closing gaps.
- A **cohesive focus on the whole lifecycle** – measures to address access, success and progression are not distinct but rather part of a progressive journey. For example, much of the activity to address HE retention and academic attainment needs to start as part of Outreach.
- **Understanding that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution.** We will implement a wide range of institutional developments and strategic measures. There are many complementary measures, both inclusive and exclusive, needed to close the gaps across the student lifecycle.

The following diagram summarises our planned multifaceted approach spanning the whole student lifecycle and requiring cross institutional action.

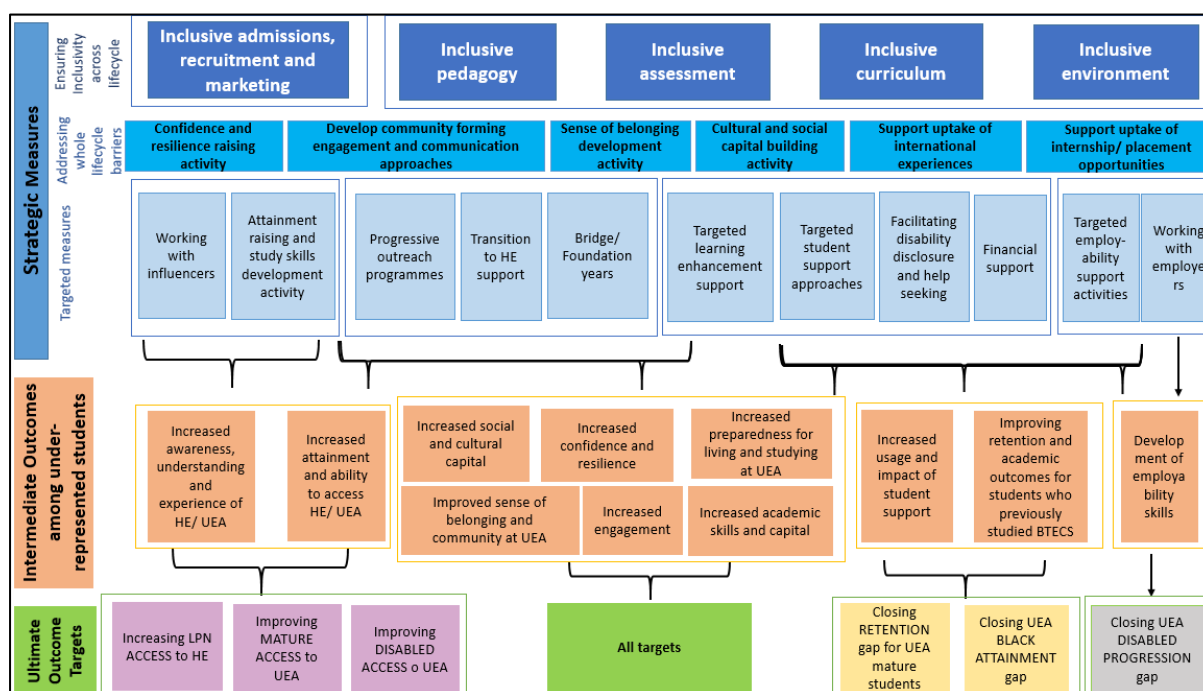


Figure 1 UEA strategic level theory of change diagram

In line with OfS requirements, our APP focused on strategic level aims and objectives but we also included a commitment to making these real through an action planning process centred on the development of action plans for each key characteristic based on full evidence based theories of change.

Discussion

As outlined in paper WPC19D001 – ‘Access and Participation Planning and Monitoring Proposal’ to the November 2019 meeting of Inclusive Education Committee (formally Widening Participation Committee) an action planning process is now underway to ensure work towards these commitments. We are, of course, also not waiting to 2020/21 to take action; in addition to continuing to implement and review existing widening participation activities, new evidenced-informed approaches as being piloted and evaluated.

The following gives a quick overview of the key points of recent progress and planned developments.

1. Update on development and implementation of action plans

Characteristic action plans – compiling inclusive and exclusive action to reach targets

- **Closing the degree awarding gap for Black Students** – agreed WPC Nov 2019 – an ongoing series of meetings with specific areas of institution continue to drive forward implementation – examples of action underway include
 - o School based inclusive practice reviews continue

- UEASU pilot of BAME ambassadors in four target schools is underway with a review planned for Summer 2020 to agree next steps in development/expansion.
 - A pilot of an outreach BAME mentoring project in London is underway with a review planned for Summer 2020 to agree next steps in potential expansion
 - Planning regarding BTEC qualified students support – see related paper (IEC19D008)
 - Analysis of explained and unexplained gaps is due Spring 2020 with further action planning to take place based on findings.
- **Lifecycle plan for mature students** – a cross-institutional planning event took place in October 2019. Drafting and further consultation is underway to develop an action plan for agreement at IEC March meeting.
 - **Lifecycle plan for disabled students** – with particular focus on progression for disabled students general and those with mental health issues specifically. A cross-institutional planning event took place Jan 2020. Drafting and further consultation is underway to develop an action plan for agreement at IEC May meeting.
 - **Lifecycle plan for POLAR students** – A cross-institutional planning event being arranged for Spring 2020. Drafting and further consultation will then be undertake to develop an action plan for agreement at IEC May meeting.
 - **Increasing understanding of impact of disrupted journeys to and through Higher Education**
 - Data and evidence review underway – the addition of questions to the registration task September 2019/20 has provided data on the profile of UEA students in terms of experience of care, parental and caring responsibilities, estrangement and military families. A review of these data in terms of access and performance is underway and to be brought, with a proposal of action, to the May meeting.
 - A cross institutional group (WP Evidence and Evaluation team, Outreach, Student Services, UEASU and academic representation) are applying to take part in a sector wide Commuter Students project, hosted by Edge Hill University, in collaboration with the National Union of Students. This will focus on utilising research evidence about developing a whole institution approach to improving commuter student engagement and success. The aim will be to develop, implement and evaluate interventions, approaches or strategies, and share best practice across participating institutions.

Thematic Plans – underpinning all aims

- **Sense of Belonging**
 - In November 2019, Student Experience Committee agreed a draft Sense of Belonging action plan and joint working continues between WP Team, Internal Communication Team and UEASU on developing a communication and engagement plan to be in place from September 2020 through to 2023 that will assist students' transitioning into UEA and feeling a sense of belonging to the institution. A series of student communication activities are underway in 2019/20 that will help to pilot this

new approach and inform the detailed project plan produced by the Internal Communications Team.

- Joint working with UEA SU on a pilot conversation series with different student groups – planning currently underway with aim to hold several events this academic year to inform a larger scale approach for 2020/21. A mature student breakfast event has already been held.
- The concept of conversations is also being built into the second phase of the Changing the Culture programme focussing on tackling racial harassment. STS colleagues are currently developing plans based on recent Theory of Change planning sessions with the Implementation Group.
- Assistant Head of Planning (WP) is on the Welcome Week Implementation group ensuring consideration of factors to address transitions for all students. Evaluation of the impact of the Week, and future developments based on findings, will include consideration of different student groups.

- **Employability related and Social and Cultural Capital development**

- Overseas Experience – APP funded role in ARM's Study Abroad Team continues work to develop approaches to widen access to overseas experience.
 - Pilot of outbound short course and related scholarship support in summer 2020.
 - Planning underway for broader approach for 2020/21 onwards including on campus activity, outbound short courses and more tailored support.
- Placement and Internships
 - Wellcome scholarship – UEA has been awarded £166,500 for Biomedical Vacation Scholarships (BVS) for widening participation students. Projects will be offered in a range of SCI Schools over Summer 2020, 2021 and 2022.
 - APP funding continues to support the Placements and Internships team in CCEN. A workshop was held with the team in 2019 to support understanding of gaps and factors driving lower take up of opportunities for underrepresented student groups and a review of impact is planned in summer 2020.

James Goodwin, Head of Careers Service and Becky Price, Assistant Head of Planning will be reviewing the impact of APP investment in the Careers Service and planning for appropriate action to meet APP employability targets for disabled students. An update on this work will be brought to IEC.

- **Financial Support** – Laura Harvey, Widening Participation Academic Officer (SSF), and members of the WP Evidence and Evaluation team are undertaking an evaluation project of UEA bursaries with the aim of understanding impact and adjusting approach as required to increase impact. Three stages have been agreed to be completed in 2020 with the aim of bringing findings to IEC in Autumn 2020

- Stage 1 - Quantitative Analysis using HESA and core student survey data to test significance of bursary impact on core student lifecycle outcomes across subgroups

- Stage 2 - Quantitative Analysis using Internal Data to look at more up to date impact and build in engagement markers to the analysis.
- Stage 3 - Qualitative Analysis – To be developed based on the findings of the qualitative work to broaden understanding of findings and potential actions to revise financial support approach.

2. Ongoing development of evidence and evaluation process – see related paper

3. Embedding inclusive practice and APP consideration into whole institutional approaches

In its APP, UEA committed to a whole institutional approach and the importance of inclusive practice. One key strategic measure is, therefore, to embed consideration of relevant issues into broader approaches/reviews. The following provides a brief update on recent activity and planned next steps in this area

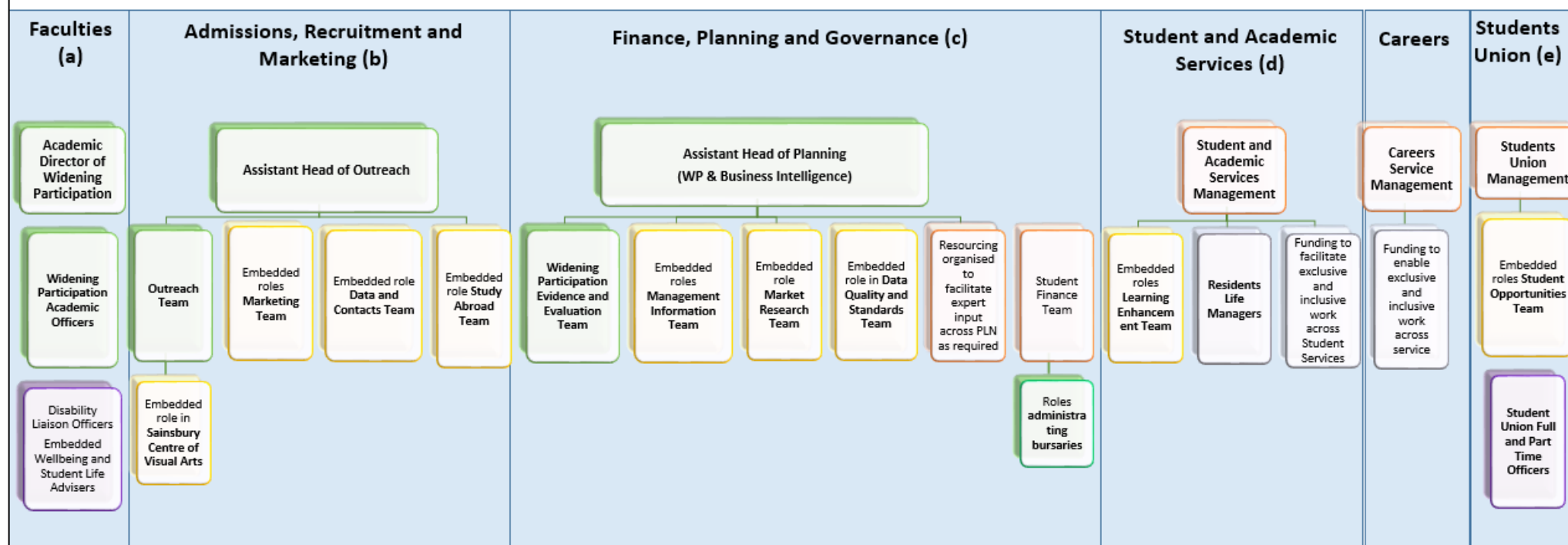
- **Development of Inclusive Recruitment and Marketing** – The Business Intelligence Unit and cross ARM management are working to ensure that consideration of Access targets is embedded in recruitment and marketing strategy and approach.
 - Considerable data analysis and reporting is underway to support understanding and decision-making that embeds recruitment of students from areas of educational disadvantage into broader approaches.
 - BIU participation in JISC cross sector project looking at data lead targeting of Outreach and Contextual admissions
- **Embedding consideration of inclusivity and differential student outcomes and experience into current UEA strategic reviews** including of advising and curriculum and development of the new UEA plan.
- **“Who is in my classroom/uses my service”** – An ongoing work strand to increase awareness and understanding across UEA of student profile in terms of different demographic and educational experience groups, how this has and continues to change and consideration what this means in how we teach/support/cater for students.
 - “Roadshow” of workshops with different areas of the institution including Faculty and School meetings and central services team and divisional meetings.
 - Working with Academic Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement on potential to embed in the new MAHEP.

4. Increasing specialised and embedded roles to deliver on plans

Work has been undertaken to review and ensure that we have the right roles in place to deliver on our Inclusive practice and Access and Participation commitments. The following chart summarises these roles with examples of recently recruited or expanded roles including

- Outreach Team - A student lifecycle mature student role and one focussed on outreach activity with BTEC students.
- Student Services – Addition of a Learning Enhancement Tutor (Inclusive Education), which will include capacity for staff training, the expansion to full time of Learning Enhancement Tutor (Widening Participation) role, which will include resource to provide expert support embedding attainment raising resources and activities in Outreach projects to ensure a whole lifecycle approach.

Widening Access and Participation Roles Summary



Key

- Fully or partially Access and Participation funded roles in specific teams focussed on work to support widening access and participation
- Fully or partially Access and Participation Plan funded roles that focus specifically on work to support widening access and participation embedded in expert teams
(*nb expectation of nominal one day a week to support wider work of host team to balance the support to these roles provided by management and other team members*)
- Non Access and Participation specific roles that provide leadership/support to dedicated and embedded roles (some are proportionally APP funding whilst others as funded through reciprocal support from APP funded role)
- APP funding used for specific roles and/or more general budgets where roles are not widening access and participation specific but designed to facilitate wider implementation of support relating to widening access and participation issues across team/division
- Non Widening Access and Participation specific but closely related roles