



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

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

1. Ambition and strategy

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

Building on our strong record of accomplishment in widening access to under-represented groups, we want to maximise the opportunity for participation in Higher Education and to increase opportunities for social mobility. We commit to providing access to all, "enabling people, irrespective of their backgrounds, to fulfil their potential, develop as global citizens and meet their life and career goals" through a number of enabling strategies. These include:

- A continuous approach to outreach, long-term public and social engagement and enhancing progression to higher education through our development of the Burnley campus.
- A role in developing people and places using creative and integrated physical and digital learning spaces will promote innovation, collaboration, employability and the development of communities of learning.
- Continuing to invest in student support, providing tailored and targeted support.
- Learning from our own experiences and actively drawing on research from across the sector.

We set up the School University Network (SUN), working in close partnership with several secondary schools and their feeder primary schools to create sustained engagement with schools and young people and this has been the focus of our long-term WP outreach strategy.

A particular focus for us, given the known skills gap in the region and the gender imbalance (Lancashire Enterprise Partnership, 2015; Engineering UK, 2017) in participation, is Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). We address this gap through our Young Scientist Centre and Lancashire Science Festival.

We remain committed to working collaboratively to extend educational opportunity within the region. Our collaborative partnership is one of the largest HE/FE collaborations in England. Our relationship with FE college partners has, and continues to, change in the light of revisions to government policy, which has led to a significant reduction in indirectly funded student numbers and a growth in partners gaining directly funded numbers. UCLan is also a strategic partner with the West Lakes Multi Academy Trust. We continue to act as lead institution on the Future U project (Lancashire Uni Connect) and we committed to working with HE providers across the region to deliver collaborative outreach.

As part of our Pennine Lancashire Strategy, the University continues to invest in the development of our Burnley Campus. Our overarching aims are to:

- Become a regional asset situated in the heart of Pennine Lancashire with national and international recognition and reach.
- Deliver the benefits of higher education to individuals, employers and the wider community and contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of the Pennine Lancashire area.
- Help to transform life opportunities and empower our students and staff to achieve to their full potential.

We provide non-standard access to all our undergraduate degrees through a suite of foundation entry year courses. We continue to invest in our Centre for Collaborative Learning (previously Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching), through which we are providing enhanced support for staff engaged in learning and teaching. This includes a greater focus on inclusive learning; enhanced provision of interactive technologies (our sector-leading practice in the use of Surface Pros has been recognised and showcased by Microsoft); and continuing to ensure we have a high proportion of staff with teaching qualifications. We continue to invest in our curriculum and focus on inclusive learning. Our objective is to further develop our cultural competence to provide an accessible and enabling learning environment to all students, regardless of background.

We recognise the diverse needs of our student population and provide targeted professional and financial support. Our approach to financial support is continually evolving as a result of our analysis of students' reasons for withdrawing from their courses, Students' Union feedback from current and previous students, and the outcomes of national research. The Students' Union favours an approach which continues to provide a high level of support to the very poorest students, but allows for differing levels of support for other students presenting varying needs. Our financial support is focused on incentivising progression and requires all students in receipt of additional payments to identify how this funding has benefitted them – overwhelmingly these case studies report that such funding makes it possible for them to continue their studies.

Continuation is an area of challenge for us; we are making progress in our work to address this and are embedding a new strategy to ensure we focus our activities on the things that are most effective. We have invested heavily in work to understand the causes of this lower rate of retention and the most effective solutions to it. Our work has identified that there is no single simple solution, rather a multi-faceted approach is required. As a result, internal figures show that progression from these courses into year 1 has now improved from 60% to 70%.

Graduate outcomes are a key area of focus. A significant proportion of our students originate within the local area and 74% of our graduates stay within the North West. Many of our students are the first in their family to participate in higher education and are firmly embedded within their communities, which means that a high proportion of graduates have much more restricted access to high quality employment opportunities than graduates in places like Manchester and London, where the density of job opportunities is greater and salaries higher. In recognition of these obstacles, we have established a two-pronged approach to improving outcomes for our graduates. The first centres on our long-term commitment to Lancashire and the North West and sees us contributing strongly to efforts to improve the long-term prospects of our region through active roles in the Northern Powerhouse, Lancashire LEP, and other such programmes, as well as a strong focus on entrepreneurship and support for graduate start-ups. The second prong focuses on ensuring that we are equipping our graduates to make the most of the opportunities that are available in our area. National research has clearly shown that graduates with work experience are more successful in gaining high quality employment, and we have embedded structured work experience into every programme.

2. Self-assessment of targets

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

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of University of Central Lancashire'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)	To remain above benchmark for the recruitment of full time students from low social classes. Because of data fluctuations, the baseline used is an average over the past three years (2011/12-2013/14).	Other (please give details in Description column)	42.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	To remain above benchmark for the recruitment of full time students from low participation neighbourhood. Because of data fluctuations, the baseline used is an average over the past three years (2011/12-2013/14).	Other (please give details in Description column)	17.4%	19.5%	20%	Percentage	2019-20	14.2	Limited progress
T16a_03 (Student success)	To achieve year on year increases in the percentage of students expected to complete their degree. Because of data fluctuations, the baseline used is an average over the past three years (2011/12-2013/14).	Other (please give details in Description column)	77.3%	82%	83%	Percentage	2018-19	67	No progress
T16a_04 (Student success)	To reduce the attainment gap between BME and White students (baseline 2010/11 qualifiers)	Other (please give details in Description column)	16.3%	max 9%	max 8%	Percentage	2019-20	10	Limited progress
T16a_05 (Progression)	To increase the proportion of full-time first degree leavers in employment/further studies (HESA PI E1a). Baseline 2014/15 leavers (published in 2016).	2014-15	92.2%	94.2%	94.7%	Percentage	2016-17	95.5	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)	To engage high school students through a range of outreach activity aimed at increasing engagement with and aspirations for higher education	2011-12	50 students	800	900	Headcount	2019-20	1434	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	To work in collaboration with FE partners to strengthen the progression of students living in low HE-participation neighbourhoods, into HE	2011-12	0 students	400	500	Headcount	2019-20	215	Limited progress
T16b_03 (Access)	To engage primary school pupils through a range of outreach activity aimed at increasing engagement with and aspirations for higher education	2015-16	0 students	300	350	Headcount	2019-20	2400	Expected progress
T16b_04 (Access)	To raise attainment in schools by running 6 subject based conferences inviting all teachers across Lancashire and Cumbria to develop subject expertise and best practice in raising attainment (attendees 280)	2016-17	0 conferences	N/A	N/A	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_05 (Access)	To improve school students' (years 10/11) performance in STEM practical assessments based on GCSE assessments	2018-19	to be gathered	increase in attainment post workshops	TBC following pilot	Percentage points	2019-20	16	Limited 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	£1,123,495.00	£1,103,000.00	-2%
Financial Support	£4,090,860.00	£4,016,000.00	-2%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected University of Central Lancashire 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_02	We are currently in the process of introducing new institutional EDI goals, including a more nuanced one in relation to POLAR 4.
T16a_03	We will continue to build on the new investments made in supporting students to continue as well as further investments in enhanced learner analytics and student tracking systems to better understand the impact of interventions that are in place. We are designing a 'Course Health' dashboard that will inform portfolio discussions and course-level corrective actions around continuation and attainment, as well as satisfaction and graduate outcomes. Retention is a key priority for the university, and is at the heart of the new university strategy that is currently being revised.
T16a_04	The focus of activity is now the Black / White attainment gap, as stated in the 2020/21- 2024/25 APP. We have created a methodology to analyse the factors influencing this. We will also be setting an institutional goal to eliminate the BAME attainment gap and achieve this through implementation of a new institution-wide inclusive curriculum approach, staff development and a review of the wider environment.
T16b_02	This is not a target that we will be working towards in the 2020-2025 APP where our focus is on maintaining performance in POLAR4 recruitment and closing participation gaps.

T16b_05	We will continue to deliver the workshops and we are looking at adapting them to be delivered in schools if we are unable to host school groups on campus in 2020-21.
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5. Confirmation

University of Central Lancashire 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	
University of Central Lancashire 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 Graham Baldwin
Position	Vice Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

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

Target reference number: T16a_02
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The original commitments were based on the POLAR3 measure which has now been replaced by POLAR4, which uses different neighbourhood populations.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
As outlined in our 2020-2025 plan, we are focussing on POLAR4 gaps.

Target reference number: T16a_03
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
UCLan's completion rate has decreased with young students less likely to complete their studies.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have introduced a programme of work to improve overall continuation rates including the implementation of an early intervention model and approach across the university, coupled with significant investment in a predictive learner analytics system to identify students at risk of disengaging, and investment in the recruitment of student coaches across all academic areas. We have also launched the Centre for Collaborative Learning with the aim of sharing and embedding good practice across the institution. We have developed a Curriculum Framework that places inclusive learning at the heart of our pedagogic design principles, which informs our approach to curriculum and portfolio review over the coming 3 years.

Target reference number: T16a_04
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
Although the target of 8% has not been met the attainment gap has reduced. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic methods of assessment have changed which may have had an impact.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have invested in a new senior level Director of EDI role. This will allow for an enhanced institution-wide focus on this area. In addition we have funded 5 PhD studentships, one which is specifically looking into the Black/White attainment gap.

Target reference number: T16b_02

How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We have met our commitments in relation to maintaining a successful FE partnership that enables access.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have maintained a strong FE partnership model as outlined in the plan.

Target reference number: T16b_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
We delivered the workshops but were unable to deliver as many as hoped due to the university campus being closed from March 2020 onwards.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
We have been unable to take any additional steps as we could not deliver the workshops in 19-20 due to the pandemic.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

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

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	
T16a_02	UCLan is performing well against the sector, where the figure stands at 12.2%, there has however been a slight decrease in performance from 2018/19, where the figure was 14.6%.
T16a_03	
T16a_04	
T16a_05	The HESA E1 performance indicator still relates to DHLE data.
T16b_01	
T16b_02	In previous years we reported on vocational learners who are progressing to UCLan through the FE partnership. We adapted this for 18-19 onwards to specifically focus on POLAR4. Whilst we still have institutional aims around POLAR4 gaps, the FE partnership plays a stronger role in providing flexibility for part time and mature students.
T16b_03	
T16b_04	
T16b_05	Students completed two sample exam questions on a specific topic. Those who took part in a workshop between the first and second test saw a 21.4% increase in marks compared with 5.19% increase in the control group who received the normal class teaching of the topic between the tests. Extreme caution needs to be taken with these results. The treatment group has 158 participants and the control only has 11. The RCT will continue when we are able to deliver sessions and the number of students in the control group should increase. When the RCT is complete we should have more robust data that can be analysed.