



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by Buckinghamshire New University 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

Buckinghamshire New University's ambition and strategy as detailed in the 2019-20 access and participation plan:

--Strategic Objectives:

Since our founding in 1891 as the School of Science and Art in High Wycombe, the mission of Buckinghamshire New University (Bucks) has been to transform lives through employment-focused and skills-based teaching. Our educational aim is to provide highly accessible university learning that will transform lives and nurture abilities in all our graduates to enable them to succeed and ultimately change their world.

The University's Strategic Plan set out an ambitious agenda for the institution to ensure that Bucks is a leading University for professional and creative education and careers. Student success and consistency in outcomes for all students feature throughout the strategy. Bucks is an inclusive learning community and it is our aim to ensure that our courses and services enable success for students from diverse backgrounds.

This plan is informed by and in turn informs the University's approach and objectives in equality, diversity and inclusion. Within learning and teaching, the University's key objective is the development of inclusive practice informed by the University's overall strategic aim of ensuring that University provides for students an inclusive learning community.

The University and the Students' Union work together actively to promote good outcomes for all. This work is overseen by the Access and Participation Group which meets monthly and reports to the University's Education Committee and ultimately Senate and Council. This group is led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and includes representation from the Students' Union, Directorate for Student Success, Strategic Planning & Change, Academic Schools, and Outreach & Recruitment. The Group is responsible for the development and monitoring of the University's Access and Participation plan.

During 2017/18, the Group reviewed the University's widening participation strategy. It analysed all available data to construct a clear demographic profile of the student population at Bucks, and the outcomes of their student journey. It was intended that during 2018/19, further evaluation would take place at a more granular level, and there would be a stronger move towards developing evidence-based strategic interventions.

An underpinning strategic aim relating to the organisational effectiveness of the University was to establish a stronger culture and practice of data usage across the institution. The University planned to embed the use of data and business intelligence to enable a more evidence-led approach. This would inform decisions about resources and investment, to ensure focus on interventions showing greatest impact, and to personalise the package of support provided to each student.

Overall, the University's data indicated that we need to target a significant amount of our access and participation work on reducing the attainment and retention gaps for BAME students, and in particular BAME male students. The key objectives of the plan were:

- to ensure that the University's UCAS offer rates remain closely aligned to UCAS annual average offer rates for sex, ethnicity and participation of local neighbourhoods [Access].
- to ensure that by 2021 all attainment gaps are effectively eliminated (this was defined as <5pp gap). [Success].
- to ensure that by 2021, gaps in students' transition rates into highly skilled employment have been effectively eliminated [Progression].

--Access:

Our data showed that although Bucks did not face significant challenges to its ability to provide access to higher education for most groups, it was important to ensure this was maintained.

We were keen to increase the representation of disabled students at the University. Building on our record of student success and progression for disabled students, we aimed to enhance our access work to reach out to disabled applicants ensuring they are fully informed about the high-quality support offered by the University and further encouraged to apply to Bucks.

As a University with a regional focus, and a significant mature population, we were concerned by the decline in participation by mature students though encouraged by our ability to attract this important demographic segment. We intended to look at how we could offer more support to our mature students.

We committed to developing our strategy to ensure greater equality of access to more marginalised groups. We committed to pursue maintain high levels of equality in relation to access for all groups but also to adopt a new and ambitious focus on groups where equality may be harder to achieve, specifically: military families; Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman & Boaters (GRTSB) communities; and young carers.

- GRTSB communities face unique challenges. In order to impact a local, yet evident, improvement in these areas, we planned to utilise existing relationships, and draw upon the expertise of Bucks staff already working with GRTSB communities. Rather than introducing a new programme of activity for this group, we would make better connections between existing projects and people, linking this work more clearly to our widening participation strategy and enabling better impact assessment.

- We planned to develop our outreach activity to focus on the needs of children of military families. A focus on this group would draw on our relevant course portfolio and research expertise in military and security themes, as well as our existing offer of distance learning and flexible entry.

- Understanding the challenges care leavers face, we offer additional support them, extending from prior to application stage through to graduation and beyond. This includes additional assistance with applications, accommodation, financial advice, access to mentors, and special activities designed for care leavers. This existing offer for care leavers lent itself well to meeting these challenges faced by young carers and it was our intention to develop the existing package for care leavers and extend and adapt it for this group.

Building on existing successes, we would continue with initiatives to support outreach in primary and secondary education and intended to develop our use of the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT). There would be a focus on POLAR Q1 areas and initiatives to reach out to white, working class males.

The University had recently introduced an additional foundation year for all undergraduate provision, enabling students to enter higher education that would otherwise be prevented by entry tariff or perhaps discouraged by a lack of confidence or pre-requisite academic study skills. This offered students the opportunity to; improve academic skills, positioning them well for progression to level 4; gain subject knowledge; and build a sense of community through mentoring, coaching and personal tutoring. The aim was to enable students to make the right choice of degree course and so enhance chances of future success and progression.

The University sought also to extend opportunities to enter higher education by its extensive development of apprenticeships, enabling those who favour this form of work-based learning to achieve higher and degree level qualifications and supporting mature learners' entry into higher education.

--Success:

We aimed to address attainment gaps by pursuing a series of strategic objectives to reduce and eliminate retention gaps; reduce and eliminate the BAME attainment gap; nurture an academic community to which all students feel they belong; and increase social, cultural and economic capital.

The University would focus interventions across the student lifecycle. This would identify groups with the highest levels of attrition, and bring together actions to address their needs and inform future strategy which already had a focus on effective personal tutoring for all students; welcome, induction and transition experience; ensuring accurate attendance monitoring and actions to promote attendance and maximal student return from breaks; supporting, and guiding students when they are at risk of not submitting assessments.

Our aim was to continuously enhance and develop this work to include interventions that positively impact on all student groups. As well as using data to identify at risk groups and implement planned programmes of intervention, the University would develop a structured communications plan to encourage students to re-engage, and regular case studies and reports on retention and achievement to school management teams; deliver support through multiple channels with clear communications mechanisms and ensure all students groups,

such as mature students, commuting students, or BAME students, are better represented in the University's work

In some pockets of provision, the outcomes of male students, BAME students, and especially BAME male students were a cause for concern and represented a challenge to Bucks. A key ambition is to reduce and eliminate these gaps by 2021, focusing especially on the progression rates of BAME male students. We aimed also to focus on the good honours rate, specifically examining those subject areas which demonstrate the most significant and consistent attainment gaps. We intended to develop our understanding of these disparities and draw on best practice across the sector to reduce and eliminate them, including: identifying reasons for BAME attainment differentials by further interrogating institutional data at subject, course and module level; working with BAME student representatives; using internal and sector research as an evidence basis; and ensuring widening participation indicators are fully reflected in School improvement plans.

The University's new Education Strategy was to develop the University's curriculum to challenge and support our students to engage, to persist and to succeed, in their academic studies. It would be enquiry-led and relevant to all students, reflect diversity, use the students' experiences, offer resources which resonate, and promote greater integration of BAME groups. We would give students the skills to operate in international and cross-cultural contexts and embed BAME experiences into the curriculum and pedagogical practice to the benefit of all, recognising the need and the potential to positively improve not only the experience of BAME students but all students. This would be complemented by student support systems designed to meet the needs of all students, and especially BAME male students.

It was understood that was critical to nurture an academic community to which all students felt they belong. We sought to develop more meaningful relationships between staff and students, amongst students, and between those who comes from different backgrounds and communities. The University would also:

- support the initiatives of the BME Students' Network and increase support for our BAME student representatives, ambassadors and societies.
- refocus induction arrangements to include: developing resilience; engendering belonging; and developing academic and life skills.
- help mature students develop a sense of belonging to the Bucks learning community by developing a deeper understanding of how and when they wish to engage with extracurricular activities.
- build on our work with the National Disability Arts Collection & Archive (NDACA) seeking to find new opportunities to integrate the disability arts movement into learning & teaching and making firm links into our curriculum.
- ensure all staff undertake enhanced training and development in relation to unconscious bias and stereotypes.

--Financial Support:

Evidence suggested that targeted financial assistance had impacted positively in facilitating access and supporting retention, engagement and hence academic and employment success. We intended to further analyse evidence of what works with which students in which contexts, to ensure the return on this investment in financial support was maximised. We committed to refocus our bursary support to target those most in need of financial assistance and target resources where they are most likely to have impact. We would enhance support for those disabled students who are not eligible for DSA funding, building on existing support from our disability, mental health and learning development teams.

We committed to redefine the beneficiary criteria for the Bucks hardship fund to provide extra financial help to more students and to build on our successful laptop loan initiative to provide more equipment to help students. We would also further develop our award-winning 'reuse project' designed to assist students with recycled homeware throughout their time at Bucks, and student foodbank which is supported by local businesses.

--Progression:

The University's strategic objectives are to further increase the opportunities for all its students to enter highly skilled employment. We will continue to analyse employability data to understand the complex interactions between demographic factors and subject choice in influencing employment outcomes, particularly for our younger students.

We intended:

- to revise, and prioritise the implementation of the University's Placement Learning Policy which will embed a universal offer of high quality work related learning experiences for all students on all programmes.
- drive our careers service to work directly with academic teams to refine course materials, including embedding content, links and connections in support of all students in accessing their chosen career sector.
- design and implement programmes to help students develop their sense of career orientation, and enhance their understanding of how they can be more successful in their career and job decision-making
- improve employability with entrepreneur 'dragon's den' style competitions, which encourage students to learn about starting a new business and developing successful business plans.
- expand our Erasmus programme to support students' employability.
- develop and refocus the work of the Careers Service to support all students, especially those students where data show most support is needed and develop a more consistent approach to engaging level 5 and 6 students in career planning.

We also aimed to improve our monitoring of the range of services provided by the Student Opportunities and Careers team in order to better map the take-up, and impact, of different offers on different groups of students. This would enable more targeted support.

Since the submission of our five-year plan, our student population has increased and this has resulted in some significant changes to our demographic composition, which in turn has had an impact on student outcomes relative to the targets we originally set for the institution.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by Buckinghamshire New University 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 Buckinghamshire New University'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)	Qualifiers for full support against England baseline data, entrants	2015-16	36%	40%	41%	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16a_02 (Access)	Qualification on entry - HEFCE derived statistic for risk weighting against England baseline data, entrants	2015-16	1.25	1.27	1.28	Other	2019-20	1.54	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Students declaring a disability	2014-15	11%	12%	12%	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16a_04 (Access)	Participation of under-represented groups in higher education	2013-14	41.5%	42.5%	43%	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16a_05 (Student success)	Non-continuation of all full-time degree entrants	2014-15	8.9%	8.4	8.2	Percentage	2018-19	14.6	No progress
T16a_06 (Progression)	Graduate employment progression	2014-15	57%	68%	70%	Percentage	2017-18	64.3	Limited progress
T16a_07 (Access)	Participation of under-represented groups within higher education	2014-15	11.7%	12.3%	12.5%	Percentage	2019-20	10.7	No progress
T16a_08 (Student success)	White Working Class Male - Full-time students achieving a higher (1st or 2.1) degree outcome.	2014-15	36%	45%	47%	Percentage	2019-20	65.1	Expected progress
T16a_09 (Success)	Eliminate gap between White and BAME good honours	2017-18	15.9%	12%	9%	Percentage	2019-20	10.7	Limited progress
T16a_10 (Success)	Eliminate gap between White and BAME male retention	2017-18	5.7%	<5%	<5%	Percentage	2019-20	0.4	Expected progress

T16a_11 (Progression)	Eliminate gap between White and BAME male graduate employment/ further study	2017-18	4.4%	<5%	<5%	Percentage	2017-18	8.16	Limited progress
T16a_12 (Success)	Eliminate gap between White and BAME male progression	2017-18	14.6%	10%	<5%	Percentage	2019-20	14.7	No 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)	Long-term Outreach Target. Percentage of Bucks New Outreach eligible Partnerships which have progressed into HE	2014-15	36%	42%	44%	Percentage	2019-20	48.8	Expected progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Percentage of Study Higher targets schools engaged with by the partnership	2015-16	63%	80%	83%	Percentage	2019-20	44	No progress
T16b_03 (Access)	To support access to Bucks New Uni and HE more broadly, we will increase our strategic partnerships with schools and colleges, providing an increased and more structured, holistic, support package, with the aim of raising aspirations and easing transition into HE. This will be reported on annually using internal data.	2015-16	10	25 (+150%)	35 (+250%)	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		No progress
T16b_04 (Access)	Bucks are the lead NCOP partner for this project. The project is aimed at using football as an activity that engages white working class boys in thinking about future options. They will be encouraged to think about career opportunities relating to football, sport in general and beyond that to a wider range of options that might have a strong sporting component (such as in the leisure industry).	2016-17	10%	13%	14% (Project ends in Dec 2018 - target if extended)	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Limited progress
T16b_05 (Access)	POLAR3 (Quintiles 1 and 2) progression to HE (to be evaluated via HEAT, based on students who have progressed to HE after at least one interaction / engagement with Bucks outreach)	2016-17	21%	21.5%	22%	Percentage	2019-20	41.76	Expected progress
T16b_06 (Access)	Attainment raising project with Cressex Community School	2017-18	not available	Upward trajectory in grade assessments of cohort of 30	Upward trajectory in grade assessments of cohort of 30	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		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	£324,047.00	£1,043,000.00	222%
Financial Support	£1,185,000.00	£1,911,000.00	61%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected Buckinghamshire New University 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_05	<p>Continuing to utilise Civitas Illume, we aim to send out a weekly update which provides information on the % of students that are at risk of dropping out as well as sending a list of these students to relevant parties. This information will better enable the University to work towards the target set.</p> <p>We are engaging with Civitas on 'Courses', an analytics software which looks at module outcomes and is able to determine the likelihood of a student graduating or continuing based on how previous students did with the same module mark. With this information we can support students at risk and help them to target key modules which are important to their course.</p> <p>Continue to work with sub-contractual partners to ensure that they are monitoring continuation and planning interventions.</p>
T16a_06	Continue our current approach.

T16a_07	<p>Work towards engaging military families in HE has not progressed as hoped due to the closure of schools.</p> <p>We are currently recruiting student ambassadors with relevant experience to support with planning and delivery of this project. The project will run from end of April /May - July 2021, incorporating 3x one-hour virtual workshops and hopefully one on-campus event at Bucks New University in July. Initially the project will be for a small cohort of Year 10 students from Carterton Community College, Burford and Faringdon with the hope of expanding this to other areas.</p>
T16a_09	<p>We are engaging with Civitas on 'Courses', an analytics software which looks at module outcomes and is able to determine the likelihood of a student graduating or continuing based on how previous students did with the same module mark. With this information we can support students at risk and help them to target key modules which are important to their course.</p> <p>Continue to work with sub-contractual partners to ensure that they are monitoring attainments and planning events to support this.</p>
T16a_11	Continue our current approach.
T16a_12	<p>As part of the Curriculum 23 programme, the University is working towards an inclusive curriculum where all students will thrive.</p> <p>We are also developing a Peer Assisted Learning scheme at Bucks and reviewing the personal tutor policy to provide a personal academic tutor code of conduct and ensure that all students are in a secure learning environment.</p>
T16b_02	Having learned from the pandemic we will offer a broader, more versatile range of activities in future.
T16b_03	We will meet with target schools during our planning period to build sustained activity into the new academic year.
T16b_04	No further action will be taken.
T16b_06	Look to offer some attainment raising activities for students at Cressex.

5. Confirmation

Buckinghamshire New University 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	
Buckinghamshire New University 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	Nick Braisby
Position	Vice Chancellor

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

Buckinghamshire New University's commentary where progress against targets was less than expected.

Target reference number: T16a_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>The University has implemented the Civitas Illume learning analytics system to enable it to proactively identify the risk factors identified with non-continuation and to target intervention at individual student-level. Students that are identified to have a low chance of continuing are contacted with support. We have made sure to target those most in need of bursary and financial support, analysing the demographics of students that we gave this support to so that we can look back at our approach and re-adjust as necessary. By providing this financial support, we ensure that all students are more able to complete their degree and improve their graduate employment prospects.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>We have increased our planned financial support efforts as a result of Covid-19 with the aim of easing the financial burden on students and enabling them to continue their studies. We have also administered the additional government financial support for the same purpose. A survey of students receiving the Bucks Emergency Allowance (which enables students to pay bills, purchase equipment and textbooks, and cover travel costs), found that 96% of the 186 students surveyed considered the support to be important or extremely important for them to continue with their studies.</p> <p>Further to this, young students particularly benefited from two rent reductions in halls accommodation. The first reduction in April 2020 released students from rent contracts if they had moved back home, or gave a 75% reduction to those still living in halls. In December 2020 a second 100% rent reduction was given until the end of February to any student living in halls with the aim of lessening the financial burden on these students.</p> <p>In response to Covid-19 we offered various additional financial support packages to further support students to complete their degrees, including rent reductions, money to spend on bills and equipment, and a technology fund. The technology fund in particular is likely to have supported students beyond their degree as they will be better prepared to interview in an online environment.</p> <p>One challenge facing the University has been an operating model which includes sub-contractual partners who operate across different contextual landscapes. The University is actively engaging with sub-contractual partners at 'keeping in touch events', annual reviews, and board meetings to ensure that they are monitoring continuation and planning interventions where they identify risk factors.</p>

Target reference number: T16a_06
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>The career service has restructured to become Student Opportunities & Career Success, to refocus on measures which improve progression into graduate level employment, including:</p>

- promoting opportunities that impact on career success, e.g. study abroad, internships and employer engagement;
- bringing high profile employers into the University, e.g. Enterprise, Ernest & Young;
- moving students out of “employment” into highly-skilled employment with the focus on career success.

The team have worked with Schools and provided support, advice and guidance to implement industry liaison boards, targeted employer events, and the detailed analysis of graduate outcomes data.

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

Further to this, we have given our students work experience in a period when these opportunities are particularly scarce. The Bucks Graduate Internship Programme was introduced during lockdown, with six interns joining the University having recently graduated from Bucks.

The Bucks Mentoring Programme was also introduced this year and 40 mentors, some of which are former Bucks students, were appointed from a range of industries. This scheme is open to students in any year of their course and gives an opportunity to be mentored by an industry professional and to build up CV experience. This programme takes mentors from industry who work alongside our students.

Placement Plus, our employability initiative has been embedded in the curriculum framework and is being rolled out across the University to include all levels and all courses.

Target reference number: T16a_07

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

The planned outreach activities have been significantly affected by the pandemic. We have worked to provide online, pre-recorded or delivery in person when the team could attend schools. Study Higher delivered 15 activities online and in classroom during the pandemic, 37% of students were in POLAR4 Q1 and 24% in Q2. The activities have reached the intended students, therefore, if not in the intended delivery method.

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

Significant work has been carried out towards promoting Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater communities in higher education. Following on from a September 2019 Roundtable on GTRSB students into Higher Education and subsequent consultation with stakeholders, the ‘Pledge of Good Practice’ has been collaboratively developed, which engages with multiple streams of evidence on best practice in supporting GTRSB students. Pledge membership and support is managed by the University for the sector. This work has managed to continue despite the pandemic but the ability to directly engage in community outreach has been severely restricted and there are concerns that the potential for bias with the move towards teacher awarded grades will exacerbate existing inequalities. We have awarded 3 full GTRSB bursaries from Sept 2020.

Target reference number: T16a_09
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>Curriculum interventions have been put in place to support students. These include new induction and welcome activities and 'strive and thrive' events and lectures to help students better integrate into the programmes at an early stage. These took place online in September 2020 and February 2021 and will continue to take place in a hybrid approach in the future. These events are targeted at all students but with the aim of creating an inclusive environment which encourages success.</p> <p>Attainment data has been processed and presented so that it is readily available to staff in all schools. School enhancement review meetings for each school have used this data to raise issues of awarding gaps. Discussions took place on how to improve these gaps alongside sharing good practice.</p>
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
<p>A series of Practical Recipes for Student Success workshops have taken place to support students in academic and English Language skills. This helps to address an issue raised in School Enhancement Review meetings that students (particularly those completing a foundation year) still struggle with these aspects and need additional support. This will help them throughout their University career until graduation.</p> <p>Additional support has been given to our nursing cohorts (95% mature; 68% Black or Asian; 50% IMDQ1&2) who have been required to support the pandemic as part of their placements.</p> <p>One challenge facing the University has been an operating model which includes sub-contractual partners who operate across different contextual landscapes. The University is actively engaging with sub-contractual partners at 'keeping in touch events' and board meetings to ensure that they are monitoring continuation and planning interventions where they identify risk factors.</p>

Target reference number: T16a_11
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
<p>The career service has restructured to become Student Opportunities & Career Success, to refocus on measures which improve progression into graduate level employment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- promoting opportunities that impact on career success, e.g. study abroad, internships and employer engagement;- bringing high profile employers into the University, e.g. Enterprise, Ernest & Young;- moving students out of "employment" into highly-skilled employment with the focus on career success. <p>The team have worked with Schools and provided support, advice and guidance to implement industry liaison boards, targeted employer events, and the detailed analysis of graduate outcomes data.</p> <p>The scheme to focus on English for Academic purposes (EAP) will have also benefited</p>

students in their search for jobs. This is specifically targeted at students where English is not their first language.

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

Further to this, we have given our students work experience in a period when these opportunities are particularly scarce. The Bucks Graduate Internship Programme was introduced during lockdown, with six interns joining the University having recently graduated from Bucks.

The Bucks Mentoring Programme was also introduced this year and 40 mentors, some of which are former Bucks students, were appointed from a range of industries. This scheme is open to students in any year of their course and gives an opportunity to be mentored by an industry professional and to build up CV experience. This programme takes mentors from industry who work alongside our students.

Target reference number: T16a_12

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

We aimed to identify and examine subject areas where significant and consistent gaps were present using data and to work with BAME student representatives to resolve these issues within the subject areas. We have now implemented our business intelligence programme which is able to identify problem areas, and have discussed these as part of the school enhancement review meetings which involved student representation. We continue to look into internal and sector research to improve these areas, including the implementation of a decolonised curriculum.

We have launched an English for Academic purposes (EAP) scheme to support students where English is not their first language. This aims to improve both continuation and progression among these students.

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

A series of Practical Recipes for Student Success workshops have taken place to support students in academic and English Language skills. This helps to address an issue raised in School Enhancement Review meetings that students (particularly those completing a foundation year) still struggle with these aspects and need additional support.

One challenge facing the University has been an operating model which includes sub-contractual partners who operate across different contextual landscapes. The University is actively engaging with sub-contractual partners at 'keeping in touch events', annual reviews, and board meetings to ensure that they are monitoring continuation and planning interventions where they identify risk factors. It should be noted that the awarding gap for BNU taught provision is on track to making expected progress ref our five-year targets.

Target reference number: T16b_02

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

Despite the impact of Covid-19, 15 Study Higher target schools have been supported this year through a combination of online and in-person class sessions.

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

Additional steps were taken with respect to diversifying the ways activities could be delivered and reducing reliance on our immersive, mobile simulation technology which cannot be used during social distancing periods. New activities were developed to bridge the gap and ensure students could engage with core topics in a safe way

Target reference number: T16b_03

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

Progression agreements have been discontinued with schools and colleges in favour of a target list. The target lists selects WP schools on the basis of their student population needs. Targets schools receive sustained support to promote the benefits of HE and bridge the gap for disadvantaged students through a broad range of program and bespoke activities

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

Sustained intervention is still a priority with target schools. These targets are still selected on the basis of school population needs and activity is provided. Progression agreements are a lengthy and bureaucratic measure. The focus is on impact and outcomes rather than numerical outputs such as numbers of agreements.

Target reference number: T16b_04

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

Going for Goals has been discontinued. The project ran for a period but was not well attended. On reflection the decision was made to support a broader group of students as the team supported many white boys during group activities. 49% of students were White British and 43% were male.

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

No further action has been taken.

Target reference number: T16b_06

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

This project has not continued but we have a strong ongoing relationship with this school and have hosted activities, including International Women's Day events and Futures Days. 78 Cressex students engaged with BNU. Attainment8 scores have dropped by 1.1% but the school is slightly above the average for English state funded schools. Students achieving

grade 4 and above in English and Maths reduced by 6 percentage points, however it is in line with the national average for state funded schools.

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

No additional steps have been taken.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

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

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	<p>IMD will be used as a proxy for this metric as we do not collect household income data. IMD is based on a number of factors to determine the deprivation of an area that a student is coming from, income and employment are the largest weighting in this metric (45%) so it is an appropriate replacement. It is recognised that IMD displays how deprived an area is and not the individual but this is the best fit available for these purposes.</p> <p>In 2016/17 the University recruited 38.38% of its students from IMD 1 and 2. This has increased over time, jumping to 46.15% in 2018/19 and reaching 47.74% in 2019/20. The university has achieved its target to attract students from lower income backgrounds given this large increase in IMD 1 and 2 students over the time period.</p> <p>We're going to continue our efforts to attract students from low income backgrounds in the future as this forms part of the University strategy.</p>
T16a_02	Full time student premium (main allocation) weighting of at risk students.
T16a_03	Per original commentary, this was no longer a key target in 2019-20 but was reinstated as a target in the five-year plan.
T16a_04	<p>NS-SEC is no longer used as a metric by HESA. IMD is used by the University as an alternative metric, and is appropriate to be used as such because it looks at a combination of income, employment and education for the people living in these areas (makes up 58.5% of the metric). It's recognised that this can't be directly mapped onto the individual but it is seen as an appropriate proxy.</p> <p>The University had 34.3% of its young, FT, undergraduate entrants in IMD quintiles 1 and 2 in 2019/20. This is compared to 32.8% in 2018/19, 37.2% in 2017/18, and 34.2% in 2016/17.</p> <p>This represents a stable and slightly increasing proportion of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds as targeted.</p> <p>The University will continue to target these entrants as part of its strategy.</p> <p>The OfS Access & Participation dashboard shows access for all FT UG students (not just young ones) and shows a more continuous upwards trend. 42.6% of our entrants were in IMD 1 or 2 in 2019/20, compared to 41.7% in 2018/19, 41.1% in 2017/18 and 40.7% in 2016/17.</p>
T16a_05	
T16a_06	Note use of Graduate Outcomes data source for students graduating in 17/18 so not directly comparable to benchmark which used DLHE data.

T16a_07	Note POLAR3 and POLAR4 not directly comparable. BNU also has a high proportion of mature students who are not caught by this metric. Note commentary above re IMD metric.
T16a_08	Note POLAR3 and POLAR4 not directly comparable. The baseline for the same metric in 2014/15 using POLAR4 is 52%, therefore good progress still made.
T16a_09	
T16a_10	
T16a_11	Note that the statistic looks at % in highly skilled employment using Graduate Outcomes data for students graduating in 17/18. Not directly comparable to the benchmark as this used DLHE data. It is possible therefore that our self-assessment is not reflective of the real situation and therefore limited progress.
T16a_12	This target was amended in our five-year plan based on better data.
T16b_01	Comparison year shown is 2018/19 as information is not yet available for 2019/20. This was not available for selection in the dropdown.
T16b_02	
T16b_03	Progression agreements discontinued
T16b_04	Going for goals discontinued
T16b_05	<p>Comparison year shown is 2018/19 as information is not yet available for 2019/20. This was not available for selection in the dropdown.</p> <p>The metric has progressed from POLAR3 to POLAR4. To increase the numbers of students from Q1 and Q2 progressing to HE, the Study Higher team has focused their work on Uni-Connect target schools. 41% students lived in Uni-Connect target wards, 37% in Q1, 24% in Q2 and just over 60% in Q1 & Q2, compared to 20% in Q4-5.</p> <p>Investment in the Study Higher team and growth of activities have been an additional action taken to reach the aims</p> <p>Continue with a focus on this area, however, resource may be limited by the reduction in funding to Uni-Connect partnership</p>
T16b_06	Cressex Attainment Raising discontinued.