

2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

This impact report summarises the progress made by Sparsholt 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

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

Further Education Colleges are by their very nature inclusive and have a well-established track record of successfully engaging with all communities and enabling individuals to overcome structural disadvantages and obstacles to achieving their full potential. The University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) strategy for participation and ambition for growth aligns directly with stated government policy to increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering higher education.

The ambition and strategy of UCS to widen participation and ensure the success and progression of students who are disadvantaged has been re-cast to provide fresh stimulus and impact at all educational levels. The strategy necessarily outlines distinct strands to engage primary schools to promote STEM, secondary schools to raise awareness of careers in applied science and tertiary providers to improve outcomes and support transition to higher level study. The strategy includes targets to support access, success and progression from specified target groups.

UCS will focus its resources in those areas where there is the highest likelihood of achieving the greatest impact which is to prioritise the increase in participation, success and progression of underrepresented groups from low household income and/or low socioeconomic status (within Quintiles 1 and 2), students with disabilities, mature students and, as a new initiative, working with military families.

Beneath the umbrella of priority groups of students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, the following sub-groups have previously been identified through the OFFA agreement as the focus of UCS's activity and thus specific targets are set to increase participation from these groups:

- Families and individuals with low incomes, with a focus on white males;
- Mature students returning to study with non-traditional entry qualifications, including military families;
- Those entering Higher Education from vocational routes, rather than the traditional A level route;
- Students with disabilities.

UCS has developed a deeper understanding of all stages of the student journey, which is in turn crystallising a new and more systematic and detailed approach to:

- engaging and recruiting with underrepresented groups
- supporting those who are recruited, particularly in their first year of study

- ensuring positive outcomes in terms of higher-level study or moving into desirable employment opportunities, principally within the specialist land and environment sector.

To date, given UCS's unique curriculum offer in Hampshire, the primary focus of participation has been on those who are already studying within the specialist land-based sector, many of whom also fall within the government's priority groups. UCS's ambition is to build upon its success in training individuals for niche careers, which it does by providing highly tailored services that are appropriate to and designed for those from predominantly vocational backgrounds. Understanding the needs and aspirations of its community is the lynchpin to underwrite successful course and progression outcomes.

2. Self-assessment of targets

The tables that follow provide a self-assessment by Sparsholt 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 Sparsholt 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 (Other/Multiple stages)	Improve the baseline proportion of financially disadvantaged students receiving full or partial state support, participating in our higher education courses (Source: College Data)	2013-14	46%	50%	50%	Percentage	2019-20	28.6	No progress
T16a_02 (Access)	Improve the baseline proportion of higher education students from disadvantaged areas (Source: College Data)	2013-14	8.3%	12%	13%	Percentage	2019-20	19.9	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Access)	Improve the baseline proportion of higher education students age 25+ (Source: UCAS Data)	2013-14	26%	30%	30%	Percentage	2019-20	9.2	No progress
T16a_04 (Access)	Improve the baseline proportion of students with physical and/or learning disability in higher education courses (Source: UCAS Data)	2013-14	9.3%	14%	15%	Percentage	2019-20	31.5	Expected progress
T16a_05 (Student success)	Achieve in-year Year 1 retention for students within the target groups (Source: College Data)	2013-14	74.0%	87.5%	90.0%	Percentage	2019-20	89.2	Limited progress
T16a_06 (Student success)	Improve attendance rates of students from the target groups (Source: College Data)	2013-14	90%	92.0%	92.5%	Percentage	2019-20	83.8	No progress
T16a_07 (Student success)	Meet the College targets, set out in its Single Equality Scheme, to close the gaps in retention for groups of students with either disabilities or learning difficulties	2013-14	8%	2%	2%	Percentage	2019-20	0.9	Expected progress

T16a_08 (Access)	Increase the proportion of young level 3 land-based students from POLAR3 quintile 1 and 2 who progress to full-time HE	2015-16	20%	24%	26%	Percentage	2019-20	39.4	Expected progress
T16a_09 (Progression)	Increase the proportion of students from POLAR3 quintile 1 and 2 who progress from Foundation Degree to BSc Top-Up	2015-16	61%	63%	64%	Percentage	2019-20	71.4	Expected progress
T16a_10 (Success)	Decrease the proportion of young full-time students from POLAR3 quintile 1 and 2 who are no longer in HE after 1 year	2016-17	42%	20%	20%	Percentage	2019-20	11.9	Expected progress
T16a_11 (Access)	Increase the numbers of young full-time entrants from POLAR3 quintile 1 and 2 neighbourhoods	2016-17	19	25	26	Headcount	2019-20	60	Expected progress
T16a_12 (Access)	Increase the numbers of young full-time male entrants from POLAR3 quintile 1 and 2 neighbourhoods	2016-17	4	8	9	Headcount	2019-20	12	Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

No data was returned for this section in Sparsholt College's 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

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	£142,000.00	£146,755.00	3%
Financial Support	£123,000.00	£54,905.60	-55%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected Sparsholt 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_01	Targeted interventions and activities to increase recruitment from POLAR 4 Q1,Q2 and IMD Q1, Q2 areas. Targeted allocation of financial support to students in these groups.
T16a_03	The Access to HE programme is increasing in recruitment year on year with associated Information, Advice and Guidance on entry to Higher Education. Mature students will continue to be supported through dedicated tutorials and the acquisition of academic skills to ensure their success on programme.
T16a_05	Additional bursary funding to support target groups, a dedicated HE Wellbeing coordinator and the introduction of a HE Progress coach

T16a_06	<p>Attendance is intrinsically linked to success. This focus is reflected in the 2020/21 - 2024/25 targets to ensure that continuation rates for students from IMD Q1 and Q2 have continuation rates that equal those of their less disadvantaged peers. The recruitment of a Student Progress coach will be completed for academic year 2021 to provide additional targeted support for students from under-represented areas with a focus on improving attendance. The MIS system will flag students from under-represented groups to enable appropriate support to be prioritised for those students. A data dashboard system is being introduced that will provide quick summaries of the attendance for a range of student groups and will enable monitoring of individuals who are at-risk of withdrawing or not achieving with low attendance.</p>
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5. Confirmation

Sparsholt 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	
Sparsholt 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	Julie Milburn
Position	Principal and CEO

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

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

Target reference number: T16a_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
This target was set when OFFA was originally introduced using a definition of disadvantage which is clumsy and no longer relevant in the current environment. This target has been replaced with more sophisticated and refined targets relating to POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 recruitment coupled with the intersection of male:female within those groups, and a target relating to increasing recruitment of IMD Q1 and Q2 students.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
No, this target has been superseded by new targets in the 2020/21 - 2024/25 APP. The original target was based on the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) and therefore the baseline method of calculation no longer exists. The % reported in column T is calculated from the % of students claiming bursary funding who are from Q1 and Q2 of the IMD Income measure, but this bears no relation to the original baseline data %.

Target reference number: T16a_03
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
This target was set when OFFA was originally introduced and is no longer relevant in the current environment. Detailed self-analysis of OfS data during the preparation of the 2020/21- 2024/25 APP concluded that recruitment, continuation and success for mature students was adequate and did not constitute a target group for specific focus.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
No, this target has been superseded by new targets in the 2020/21 - 2024/25 APP

Target reference number: T16a_05
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The % in-year retention in 2019/20 is a reduction from the previous year when it exceeded 90%. These target group students have reported more difficulties experienced during the Covid pandemic, although there has been an increase in retention rate from 87.0% in 2018/19 to 89.2% in 2019/20. The retention rate of the non-target group was 6% higher at 95.1%, but the gap between the two groups' retention rates closed by 1%.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?

The introduction of specialist technology that allows students to access live teaching sessions either in class or remotely has improved attendance in 2020/21 and provided options for students to engage whilst not being on campus. Furthermore the technology includes lecture capture which facilitates access to taught sessions at a time that suits the student. This is indicating an improvement in in-year retention for 2020/21

Target reference number: T16a_06

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

This target was set when OFFA was first introduced and is now incorporated into continuation and success targets which are more specific to target groups within the 2020/21 - 2024/25 APP

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

A dedicated HE Wellbeing practitioner has been actively supporting students. Previously the Wellbeing team reacted to referrals but the HE Wellbeing coordinator is proactive in her approach to providing support to students.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

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

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	Current indications for 2020/21 academic year are that recruitment of students from both POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1 meets or exceeds the target to close the gap between Q1 and Q5. The % of students in receipt of financial support has increased with a consequent increase in the sum allocated.
T16a_02	
T16a_03	Current indications for 2020/21 academic year are that recruitment of mature students has increased to 22%
T16a_04	
T16a_05	The 2020/21- 2024/25 APP has specific targets relating to continuation rates for students with disability and students from IMD Q1 and Q2 as identified as target groups following the self-assessment. Data for 2019/20 shows that the difference in continuation rates between students with disability compared to students with no disability had reduced to 2% whilst the difference in continuation rates for students from IMD Q1 and Q2 compared to IMD Q3,4,5 was 6% which is reflective of the figure reported in this historic target. For academic year 2020/21 the differences (at 31.12.20) are 2.5% and +0.5% indicating that good progress is now being made in supporting the revised target group students.
T16a_06	The target setting in relation to attendance was misleading with inadequate register completion and monitoring, resulting in erroneous reporting and unrealistic targets as a consequence. New register and attendance software has been introduced that provides accurate attendance and associated weekly monitoring of individual students. The introduction of specialist technology that allows students to access live teaching sessions either in class or remotely has aided an improvement in attendance in 2020/21 and provided options for students to engage whilst not being on campus. In combination these factors have contributed to an increase in attendance for the current academic year to 87% at end March 2021.
T16a_07	
T16a_08	
T16a_09	
T16a_10	
T16a_11	
T16a_12	