

## **University Centre Sparsholt Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25**

### **Introduction and Context**

**Sparsholt College incorporating University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) is a specialist land-based provider situated in Hampshire and comprising 450 acres of specialist industry standard practical teaching facility. A second campus is in Andover (15 miles away) and predominantly delivering A-levels and vocational Further Education.**

Each year the College and University Centre delivers:

- Specialist Vocational Further Education (FE) at Levels 1-3 for approximately 2,600 students
- Higher Education (HE) for 470 students at Levels 4-7

Sparsholt College/UCS has been delivering HE for forty years, currently offering Foundation Degrees, Degrees and Masters qualifications in Animal Studies, Equine, Fishery, Environmental Conservation and Veterinary Science. Higher Apprenticeship delivery will commence in September 2022.

Sparsholt College/UCS is proud of its reputation as a solid and trusted provider of Specialist Land Based Education. The college has been evaluated as providing consistently good quality teaching, with Ofsted rating it as a Good or Outstanding provider over a 20-year period and more recently, UCS was awarded the Teaching Excellence Framework Gold in 2018 for its HE delivery.

UCS offers a differentiated HE experience which is characterised by the wealth of opportunity to develop competency through the application of theoretical knowledge. The wealth of practical resources provides for employability skills and the opportunity for meaningful research and enquiry.

The majority of the UCS delivery is to full-time students with part-time students comprising 5% of the total enrolment.

University Centre Sparsholt has undertaken a full data review, considering each data cut provided by OfS via the data dashboard. In addition, where OfS data has not been available the UCS has relied upon its own data service for additional information, particularly that involving smaller student numbers. This review has been undertaken with the support of College Governors who formed a working group, and a HE Student working group with cross group membership. Both working groups have worked with the College Leadership Team to develop and refine a plan which sets out our planned priorities and actions for the next five years.

This review in 2022 has not adjusted the priority groups that were identified in the original plan as good progress against targets has been made towards increasing participation by students from POLAR4 Q1, IMD Q1 and Q2 groups and increasing the participation of BAME students and students with disability. Excellent progress has been made to ensure that these groups are demonstrating continuation and attainment rates that are comparable with their more advantaged peers and this momentum will continue.

The review will ensure that the emphasis on engagement in schools is refined to meet the priorities outlined by the Director of Fair Access. This will be achieved by adopting an even more robust and measurable approach to improving achievement in schools through the engagement

which is already a key element of this Plans strategy. Named target schools are identified in the original plan and these will continue to be the focus of the revisions. The review will also describe the approach to the introduction of Higher Apprenticeships and alternative modes of study to appeal to a more diverse student population.

### 1.1 HE Participation, Household Income, or Socioeconomic Status Access

**Office for Students Key Performance Measure 1 - Under represented, POLAR4 group**, tells us that in 2017/18 there was a gap of 30.9 percentage points between the most and least represented groups nationally.

In reviewing the dashboard data, over the 5 reporting years the overall population of Q1 18-year olds has been relatively static at 18%, whilst the UCS population has fluctuated from 20% in 2013/14 falling to 15%, 16% and 12% in the following 3 years and returning to match the 18-year-old population at 18% in 2017/18. There has been a static population of Q5 18-year olds (22%-23%) over the 5-year reporting period.

However, the UCS population (with exception of 2014/15 at 20%) consistently exceeds 30% rising to 37% in 2017/18.

Generally, it can be seen that the **population of POLAR4 Q1 18-year olds at UCS is comparable with the overall 18-year-old population (18%) whilst the UCS POLAR4 Q5 population exceeds the overall 18-year-old population**. The proportion of POLAR4 Q1 18-year olds enrolled at UCS has consistently exceeded (between 3-8%) that of all providers. However, from a high of 20% in 2013/14 there has been a decline in Q1 18yr old enrolments to a low of 12% in 2016/17. Subsequently, 2017/18 has seen an increase in Q1 to 18%. During the same period the percentage of Q5 18-year-old participants has risen steadily from 20% in 2014/15 to 37% in 2017/18, exceeding the average for all providers for the first time in 2017/18 by 2.7%. **As a result, the gap between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students at UCS for 18-year old students was 19% in 2017/18.**

The proportion of all students from each quintile for all providers has remained generally static, whilst UCS has a more 'spikey' profile. However, the proportion of all Q1 students at UCS has consistently exceeded the average by 7-10% (except 2014/15 at +2.4%). Similarly, the proportion of all Q2 has exceeded the average by 2-12% (except 2016/17 at -3.7%). The dashboard data shows us that all Q5 students at UCS have also been below the average of all providers (except 2017/18 at +2.7%, which is statistically significant).

**Table 1:** Enrolment by Quintile of POLAR4 for all students at UCS

UCS Enrolments	POLAR4 Quintile	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
% of UG New Entrants	1	12%	18%	14%	17%
% of UG New Entrants	2	19%	20%	14%	12%
% of UG New Entrants	3	16%	12%	13%	15%
% of UG New Entrants	4	25%	22%	25%	21%
% of UG New Entrants	5	27%	25%	31%	33%
% of UG New Entrants	Gap 1-5	15%	7%	17%	16%

However, the gap between the proportion of all **Q1 and all Q5 students at UCS has not been reducing and concerningly, it has been widening in more recent years** (Table 1). The gap in access between Q1 and Q5 students at UCS is considerably smaller than the gap demonstrated by all HE providers but must remain an area of strategic focus to eliminate the gap.

**Priority 1: in line with OfS KPM 1, recruitment of students from POLAR4 Q1 should be key to future strategies.**

- **Reduce gap between POLAR4, Q1 and Q5 for all students.**
- **Reduce gap between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 amongst 18-year olds.**

**Target PTA\_2:** Reduce the POLAR 4 Q1 and Q5 gap amongst all students from 16% to 8%

**Target PTA\_1:** Reduce the POLAR 4 Q1 and Q5 gap amongst 18-year olds from 19% to 9%

### **Review of Students Recruited from Areas with High Levels of Deprivation**

In comparing the recruitment of 18-year-old UCS students living in areas with high levels of deprivation with the 18-year-old population as a whole, 7% of UCS students reside in areas identified as experiencing the highest levels of deprivation (IMD Q1). This compares to 22% of 18-year olds in the general population who live in areas with the highest level of deprivation (Q1). This Q1 multiple deprivation gap between UCS 18-year-old students compared to the general population has remained consistent at 15%, showing that UCS is not recruiting young students from more deprived areas.

When considering deprivation amongst the whole undergraduate student group, the proportion of students residing in areas with the highest levels of deprivation (Q1) has been relatively static at UCS over the last 5 years at 3-6%, whilst proportions of each group at all HE providers is relatively equal at 18-21% per quintile. UCS is more varied with Q1 (3-6%), Q2 (11-16%) and Q3 (11-22%) all much lower than average, whilst Q4 (30%) and Q5 (43%) are considerably higher and for Q1, Q4 and Q5 are statistically different from the 18-year-old population. The gap at UCS for recruitment between students from the most deprived (Q1) and least deprived (Q5) backgrounds is large and has not reduced over the 5-year period and therefore warrants a strategic approach to recruiting students from this group.

UCS is located in Hampshire, 4 miles from Winchester one of the most affluent areas in England and an analysis of local areas' IMD indicates that only pockets of Southampton and Portsmouth are classified as IMD Q1. In Hampshire, only 3% of postcodes fall into IMD Quintile 1, and almost all of those are located in Havant or Gosport – the localities in the county at the furthest distance from the College. There are no IMD Quintile 1 postcodes at all in either Wiltshire or Dorset. The separate Unitary Authorities of Portsmouth and Southampton both have 28% of their postcodes in IMD Quintile 1, mostly located in inner city areas where interest in land-based studies is less prevalent. If Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton are combined as a contiguous area, 8% of the total postcodes are in IMD Quintile 1. As an FE college providing HE, recruitment is predominantly local (77% of first year applications for entry in 2019 reside in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset), consequently interventions with, and recruitment of students from IMD Q1 areas is a considerable challenge. UCS is aware of the significant current gap between Q1 and Q5 of 38% and will focus on reducing this gap, but considers this to be our most ambitious and challenging target in the context of the affluent local area in which it operates and the land-based sector that it

services.

**Priority 2: reducing the recruitment gap between Q1 and Q5 using the full Index of Multiple Deprivation measures.**

**Target PTA\_5:** Reducing the recruitment gap between students residing in the most deprived and least deprived locations from 38% to 25% within 5 years

### **Success Continuation**

The gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 groups and POLAR4 Q3, Q4 and Q5 groups was positive in favour of the more represented students in 2012/13 and 2013/14. However, in 2014/15 and 2015/16 the gap was in favour of the least represented groups. The gap for 2016/17 returned to favour the more represented groups (Q3, Q4, Q5) and support for the least represented groups to remain on their course has been, and will continue to be, a strong focus for Sparsholt.

**Table 2:** Continuation by Quintile of POLAR4 at UCS

<b>POLAR4 Quintile</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
1	91%	96%	91%	93%
2	94%	96%	86%	91%
3	90%	98%	94%	83%
4	94%	97%	91%	94%
5	94%	92%	91%	88%
Diff Q1-Q5	-3%	+4%	-	+5%

UCS data indicates that there is no gap in continuation rates and is in favour of the POLAR4 Q1 group in 2 of the past 4 years (Table 2).

The gap in continuation rates between the most deprived groups (IMD Q1 and Q2) and the least deprived groups (IMD Q3, Q4 and Q5) is consistently 5-10% for each of the 5 reporting years. This is not a statistically significant gap as identified on the data dashboard but the trend is evident that the most deprived groups are most likely to not continue in their HE and this gap links to target 3 where we aim to increase the recruitment of IMD Q1 students.

**Priority 3: UCS does not want its areas of good practice to be counteracted by revised strategic focus and so, to prevent future gaps, we will continue to prioritise and target a focus on continuation for every student, ensuring that every student participates in our academic support programme to maintain this positive outcome.**

**Target PTS\_2:** To eradicate the gap in continuation between IMD Quintiles

### **Attainment**

Although there is no dashboard data available for this characteristic, internal UCS data indicates that POLAR4, Q1 students show a preference (70% 2015/16, 89% 2016/17) for enrolling onto FdSc programmes with the remaining 30% and 11% respectively enrolling to BSc at Level 4. Over the same period an increasing proportion of this group are electing to top-up to BSc demonstrating

the increased propensity of this group to continue with their studies (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Comparison of completion between all UCS students and POLAR4, Q1 students at UCS

Year	% Completion of all students	% Completion of POLAR4 Q1	% POLAR4 Q1 FdSc progressing to BSc
2013/14	68	71	25
2014/15	88	80	45
2015/16	92	93	70
2016/17	80	83	67

Furthermore, the percentage of POLAR4 Q1 students progressing from a FdSc, and completing a BSc is increasing (Table 4), demonstrating that UCS has, in recent years got much better at raising the achievement level of students from the most under represented areas.

**Table 4:** Percentages of attaining students awarded higher degree grades, by POLAR4 Quintile

POLAR4 Quintile	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
POLAR4 Q1	40%	78%	29%
POLAR4 Q2	63%	53%	68%
POLAR4 Q3	33%	73%	64%
POLAR4 Q4	54%	63%	59%
POLAR4 Q5	100%	88%	67%
Q1 to Q5 gap	60%	10%	38%

UCS own data demonstrates that there is a significant gap in attaining higher degree grades (First Class Honours and Upper Second-Class Honours) between POLAR4 Q1 students and POLAR4 Q5 students with a gap of 38% between the Q1 and Q5. UCS has carefully reviewed the data and can observe no gender bias but has observed the data is being skewed a little by higher attainment in Wildlife Ecology, which historically has recruited very few POLAR4 Q1 learners.

**Priority 4: Reduce the sizeable gap in higher level attainment between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5**

Target PTS\_3: Reduce the gap in attainment rate between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 from 38% to 16%. Progression to Employment or Further Study In three of the five years between 2012/13 and 2016/17, the gap between POLAR4 Q3, Q4, Q5 group and POLAR4, Q1, Q2 group has been in favour of the more highly represented group (5-15%) for progression. The under-represented group (Q1, Q2) exceeded the progression rate of the highly represented group (Q3, Q4, Q5) in 2012/13 and 2014/15 (5% and 15% respectively).

There is very limited data available relating to deprivation (IMD) in terms of the onwards progression of HE learners residing in areas of multiple deprivation, due to the very small student numbers in the lower quintiles. When comparing the four lower quintiles as a group with Q5 the gap is relatively small, and comparable with the average of all providers.

**Priority 5: Stabilise the difference between progression rates for under-represented students from POLAR4 by establishing parity between Q1 and Q2 combined and others**

from Q3, Q4 and Q5 combined.

**Target PTP\_1:** To ensure that progression rates to employment or higher-level study for students from POLAR4, Q1 and Q2 are consistently as good, or better, than students from POLAR4, Q3, Q4 and Q5. Currently the gap varies in the reporting years and the aim is to close that gap and ensure consistency in all years so that the gap in progression rates will be eradicated within the 5-year plan.

## **1.2 Black, Asian and minority Ethnic students Access, Success and Attainment**

Data (drawn from UCAS) relating to BAME students has been reviewed but has been suppressed to protect the identity of the individuals. A very small population of BAME students has been enrolled in recent years which is also considerably below the average of the local and regional population.

At the last census in 2011 the BAME population was 5% in Hampshire and 4.3% in Wiltshire. However, there are pockets within these counties with higher BAME populations (Southampton 14.1% and Portsmouth 11.6%) from which UCS has not been successful in recruiting students.

The land-based industry workforce is approximately 4% of the total workforce, of which 99% is white and 69% male (Lantra, 2010). A sector factsheet published in 2013/14 stated the agriculture and fisheries workforce as 354,700, of which 99% were white and 1% BAME. Our recruitment of BAME students to land-based programmes mirrors this challenging trend.

Internal data indicates that continuation rates for BAME students are comparable with the overall UCS student population. There is no data available for attainment of BAME students.

It is the intention of UCS to refine its data collection in future to enable analysis of continuation rates and attainment of BAME students. This will be essential as the percentage of BAME students enrolled increases, and will be in place by September 2020 to enable accurate monitoring.

**Priority 6: For the ethnic diversity of our students to be more representative of the community that UCS serves by targeting BAME students from Portsmouth and Southampton.**

**Target PTA\_7:** To be representative of the local population providing for a minimum of 5% of all students recruited to come from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds.

## **1.3 Mature Students Access**

The gap between young and mature students enrolling at UCS was 26% in 2013/14, reducing to between 10 and 14 percent for the following 3 years and widening again in 2017/18 to 28%. At all times, the UCS proportion of mature learners has exceeded all HE providers by 8-19%, whilst the proportion of young students is comparably lower.

**Priority 7: Continue to outperform the sector in the recruitment of mature students.**

## **Success/Non-continuation**

Continuation rates for all young under-graduates at UCS have been relatively static over the past 5 years; at between 84% to 88% with a decline to 80% in 2016/17. However, young students on first degrees have consistently out-performed young other under-graduates by 5% to 10% in each year. There is virtually no difference between first degree and other under-graduate continuation rates for mature (over 21 students) and in all years the continuation rates of mature students at UCS exceed those of all providers.

There are no statistical differences in continuation rates between young and mature students.

Continuation rates for mature students are equal to or higher than those for young students. Furthermore, in the last 3 years mature students have slightly higher continuation rates than their younger counterparts.

The gap at UCS is consistently lower than that of all providers. Continuation rates for mature students have been consistently strong and, whilst the strategies to support will remain in place, this is not a target area for improvement.

## **Priority 8: Achieve parity of continuation rates between young and mature learners**

### **Attainment**

Rates for young students followed a similar upward trajectory as that achieved in all providers, peaking at 80% in 2016/17. 2017/18 showed a considerable decline to 55%, which is at variance to the national trend. Conversely, the attainment rate for all under-graduate students declined from 85% in 2013/14 to 70% in 2014/15 and a low of 45% in 2015/16. This is as a direct result of the closure of a Garden Design programme that attracted mature, highly motivated students, many of whom already possessed a degree and were consistently high achieving. This is the opposite pattern to that of all providers. However, from 2015/16 to 2017/18 a steady improvement in attainment is evident (to 65%) mirroring, and comparable to, that of all providers.

In 3 of the 5 reporting years a higher proportion of mature students have achieved high attainment, compared with young students. In 2015/16 (30%) and 2016/17 (15%) young students out-performed mature students, but in 2017/18 mature students were more successful (10%). None of these results is statistically significant and as the size of the population is very small, consequently the confidence intervals are extremely high indicating that one student could have a considerable impact on the indicator. As a result, the data has been used to identify trends and limited conclusions can be drawn. However, mature students appear to be performing as well, or better than their young peers. The current strategies used to support attainment of mature students will continue and will not be a target area for improvement.

## **Priority 9: Continue to achieve parity of attainment between young and mature learners. Progression to Employment or Further Study**

Both young and mature students are consistently 15% lower, year on year, than the average of all providers for progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level education. UCS believes this is realistic on the basis that it serves land-based career choices where those industries are less likely to be recognised or classified as highly skilled employment. Analysis of similar land based HE

providers indicates that every one of them has a gap of a similar proportion when compared to all HE providers, supporting the thesis that land based graduates are far less likely to enter employment categorised as highly skilled.

UCS would like to emphasise that there is no measurable difference in the progression outcomes between young and mature students. Therefore, the progression support that is provided for mature students will continue but will not be a strategic focus of the Access and Participation Plan.

**Priority 10: Continue to maintain parity of progression between young and mature learners.**

**1.4 Disabled Students Access**

The dashboard data shows that the proportions of students accessing UCS with disabilities is slightly higher than for all HE providers. In 2017/18, 16% of UCS students declared a disability (a 2% reduction on 2016/17) compared to 14.6% declaring a disability across all HE providers. UCS has an increasing number of applicants declaring a disability in 2016/17 and 2017/18 when compared with the 3 previous years. This is as a result of an improved focus on highlighting the support available and the provision of bursaries to support DSA diagnostic assessments. Cognitive or learning difficulties are the majority of declared disability and at 6% are comparable with the average of all providers. However, UCS is aware that vocational education is attractive to students who may find pure academic study challenging and the number of students in receipt of DSA at the end of Year 1 is higher than at the start of their programme of study.

Mental health declaration as a disability is low (1%) compared to the average (3.5%) but students seeking support for mental health issues is increasing year on year.

**Table 5:** Disability type declared by UCS students

Disability type	% increase 14/15 to 17/18	2017/18 % of disability declarations
Mental Health	200	14
Asperger's / Autism	375	10
Dyslexia	u/c	20
Other Learning Difficulties	750	21
Others	28	35

UCS internal data suggests that declarations of disability have increased by 75% between 2014/15 and 2017/18, with a wide range of disabilities identified (Table 5).

**Priority 11: Facilitate early full disclosure of disability to enable UCS to meet and deliver support needs.**

**Target PTA\_6** Increase participation of students with disability from 16%-23% by 2025.

**Success/Non-Continuation**

There is insufficient data supplied by the dashboard to draw conclusions. However, UCS data shows the



following continuation rates for students with disabilities compared to those with no disability.

**Table 6:** Continuation rates for UCS students with or without disability

<b>Disability</b>		<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Yes	Disability Continuation	93%	92%	67%	92%
No	No Disability Continuation	93%	95%	93%	90%

In 2016/17 there was an uncharacteristic decline in continuation rates for those with a declared disability compared with the 3 other reporting years (Table 6). UCS is determined to ensure consistent parity in continuation.

There is no dashboard data available on continuation for disaggregated disability groups. It is the intention of UCS to refine its data collection in future to enable analysis of continuation rates of students with disability disaggregated by type. This will be in place by September 2020 to enable accurate monitoring.

**Priority 12: To ensure consistent parity of continuation for students with disability compared with students with no disability.**

#### **Attainment**

No dashboard data is available to comment on. In reviewing the data from UCS's own data service (Table 7) it can be seen that UCS previously had a gap in performance between disabled students and students without a disability but that by 2017/18 the gap was negligible at 2% and similar to the National picture detailed below.

**Table 7:** Percentages of attaining students awarded higher degree grades, by LDD

	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Declared LDD	50%	40%	57%
Declared no LDD	66%	72%	59%
Gap	16%	32%	2%

The gap in performance between disabled and non-disabled students was circa 3% for the last 2 years amongst all providers.

There is no dashboard data available on attainment for disaggregated disability groups. It is the intention of UCS to refine its data collection in future to enable analysis of the attainment of students with disability disaggregated by type. This will be in place by September 2020 to enable accurate monitoring.

**Priority 13: To ensure that parity of attainment for students with disability is maintained and does not revert to previous disparity**

#### **Progression to Employment or Further Study**

There is insufficient dashboard data available. However, UCS TEF data from academic year 2016/17 indicates that students with a disability exceeded the progression rate of students without

a declared disability by 0.8%. The same data benchmarked UCS performance against similar providers and found our progression to be 3% better than that of our peers.

There is no dashboard data available on progression for disaggregated disability groups. UCS will continue to benchmark against comparable providers of land based HE.

**Priority 14: To ensure that parity of progression for students with disability is maintained.**

### **1.5 Care Leavers**

#### **Access, Success and Continuation**

No dashboard data is available to draw conclusions from. Nationally, we can see that 0.5% of the under 18 population are currently in Care.

Data (drawn from UCAS) relating to Care Leavers has been reviewed but has been suppressed to protect the identity of the individuals. We believe that the number enrolled at UCS in recent years is currently representative of the population of Care Leavers both locally and nationally and we will continue to work with local authorities to promote and support access to HE.

Having said that, it is apparent that UCS does need to focus attention on the continuation and attainment of care leaver. We are aware that continuation rates for this group of students is considerably below that of their peers and of national continuation rates. Similarly, the attainment of good degrees is lower.

Whilst the sample is too small to make any meaningful conclusion, it does indicate that care leavers are performing less well than their peers and may be more prone to withdrawing from their study and where completing, attaining lower level achievement.

There is no data available to analyse on progression rates of care leavers.

**Priority 15: Monitor care leavers over the next five-year period to better understand the impact on success and continuation.**

**Priority 16: Provide enhanced monitoring to students who have identified themselves as care leavers to prevent early withdrawal and support higher level attainment.**

### **1.6 Intersections of disadvantage Gender and POLAR4 Quintile**

Sparsholt has been successful in recruiting females from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 and consistently exceeds the average of all providers by 8-15%. A small dataset precludes a direct comparison between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5. However, using the Access and Participation dataset denominator and numerator figures, in 2017/18 the gap between POLAR4 Q1, Q2 females (33%) and POLAR4 Q3, Q4, Q5 females (67%) has widened in the past 2 years to 34%. To gain parity between the quintiles (40% Q1, Q2 and 60% Q3,Q4,Q5 overall), the gap should be 20%. Given the preponderance of animal and equine provision which attracts female applicants from well represented backgrounds it will take 10 years to achieve equality of access for POLAR 4 Q1 to Q5.

**Priority 17: Actively target access for POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 females who are disproportionately**

**absent from the UCS community.**

**Target PTA\_4:** Reduce the gap between Q1, Q2 females and Q3,4,5 females from 34% to 25% within a 5- year timescale and reduce the gap to 20% within 10 years which will ensure equality of access across the quintiles and eradicate the representative gap.

## **1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in HE**

### **Children from Military Families**

This under-represented group is recognised by the OfS as a target group to increase access. UCS is situated in an area of the country where there is a prevalence of army bases at Winchester, Middle Wallop, Tidworth, and across Salisbury Plain. The closure of army bases in Germany is resulting in significant growth and development at the bases mentioned above, with large numbers of personnel and their families relocating back to the UK. As part of the government's Army Basing Programme, an additional 4,000 service personnel and their families are due to move to Wiltshire by the end of 2020, with the provision of 1,000 new homes funded by the Ministry of Defence and an additional 1,125 school places.

Whilst children from military families achieve as successfully as their non-military peers at GCSE, their parents are dissatisfied with the support provided in preparation for life post-16 (University of Winchester Report, 2018). This provides an opportunity for UCS to engage with schools and the community, and military families will feature as a target group within the plan.

Currently, UCS does not hold any reliable data on participation of children from military families. UCS has identified the need for the collation and analysis of improved baseline data. In particular, the age, gender and educational attainment profile will be reviewed to effectively target and support this change in the profile of our local community.

### **Priority 18: Target HE access for individuals from Military Families from Winchester, Middle Wallop and Tidworth communities**

#### **Gender**

Whilst it is understood that gender alone is not considered an under-represented group the stark contrast in the male vs female student population at UCS is worthy of self-evaluation to determine whether there are any barriers to participation that need to be addressed in conjunction with other characteristics of under- representation. The overwhelmingly female population (70% 2017/18) may be a barrier to attracting male students to access HE.

#### **Access**

The proportion of females exceeds the average of all providers for the 5 reporting years and has risen to a high of 72% in 2018/19. Consequently, the gap between male and female participation at 40%, is significantly greater than the average. The high proportion of females reflects the industry sectors that the qualifications lead to, predominantly veterinary nursing, equine and animal management. In the year April 2016 to May 2017 97.7% of the registered veterinary nursing workforce was female, whilst overall registrations of vet nurses are rising by more than 8% per year (RCVS Facts, 2017). The National Equestrian Survey (BETA 2015) estimates that 74% of the riding population is female.

UCS is introducing new qualifications in 2019/20 that it believes will make some limited impact in reducing the gender imbalance, but UCS is realistic in its understanding that at this point, it is recruiting in line with the composition of the labour market.

A small dataset precludes a direct comparison between male POLAR4 Q1 and Q5. However, using the Access and Participation dataset denominator and numerator figures, in 2017/18 the gap between POLAR4 Q1, Q2 males (33%) and POLAR4 Q3, Q4, Q5 males (67%) has narrowed in 2 of the past 3 years to 34%. To gain parity between the quintiles (40% Q1, Q2 and 60% Q3,Q4,Q5 overall), the gap should be 20%.

Whilst this is a better trend than the national picture the small proportion of male students distorts the evaluation, but given the land-based provision equality should be achievable within the 5 years of the plan. It is apparent that this should be an area of focus.

### **Priority 19: Actively target access for Q1, Q2 male learners who are disproportionately absent from the UCS community.**

**Target PTA\_3:** Reduce the gap in participation between Q1, Q2 males and Q3,4,5 males from 34% to 20% within the 5 years of the plan (by 2025) and ensure parity across all quintiles.

#### **Success/Non-continuation**

The continuation rates of male and female first degree students at UCS exceed those of other under- graduate students and are on a par with all providers. There is however, an observable difference for males studying foundation degrees compared to first degrees, where continuation is between 10% to 15% better in 2015/16 and 2016/17 respectively.

In 4 of the 5 reporting years, the gender gap in continuation at UCS has been equal to, or in favour of, male students. Whilst the results are not significant the trend is better than the all provider results where there is a consistent gap in continuation in favour of the female population.

#### **Attainment**

The data is very limited but in 2014/15 there was no gap in attainment between male and female students. In 2015/16 there was a 10% gap in favour of female students being more successful, but this trend was reversed in 2017/18 to a 15% gap in favour of male attainments.

All results are not significant, and as the size of the population is very small, consequently the confidence intervals are extremely high, indicating that one student could have a considerable impact on the indicator. As a result, the data has been used to identify trends and limited conclusions can be drawn. However, it appears that whilst there are barriers to male access, once on programme they are as successful, or more successful, than their female peers. This may in part be attributable to the fact that males are disproportionately studying on courses with smaller intakes and hence are studying in smaller class sizes.

#### **Progression**

Whilst the confidence limits are large due to small student numbers and the differences are not statistically significant, the gap between male and female progression has been consistently in favour of males.

Furthermore, the gap between male and female progression consistently exceeds the average of all providers. The actual progression rate for males has been rising between 2012/13 and 2015/16 to exceed that of all providers (71%) but declined to 65% in 2016/17 whilst the average for all providers continued to rise (73%). Female progression rates have been steady at 52-57% and are consistently below the all provider rates (64-73%).

**Priority 20: Review class sizes in Equine and Animal Studies with an aim to supporting the achievement of higher grades and the associated progression of female students.**

**1.8 Schools Engagement**

The covid pandemic limited in person activities that had been planned for delivery in schools but in excess of 500 hours of a range of resources were delivered remotely in 2020/21. It was not possible to effectively evaluate the engagement or impact of these interventions but for 2021/22 formal revision sessions for key GCSE subjects have been reintroduced. Of the 98 students who attended the revision sessions 53 were from POLAR4 Q1,Q2, or IMD Q1,Q2 homes, 80% of these live in both POLAR4 Q1,Q2 and IMD Q1,Q2. This data will be used as baseline data for future interventions.

A mentoring programme introduced in 2019 identified 21 students nominated by their school as at risk of not progressing beyond GCSE. 11 (53%) came from IMD/POLAR4 Q1,Q2 homes and following mentoring 14 moved onto college after school, 1 entered an apprenticeship, 3 moved into full-time employment and 1 gaining part-time employment. Of the 53% from APP target areas 45% went onto college, 9% to apprenticeship, 27% to employment with an unknown destination for 18%. Of the 47% from more advantaged backgrounds 90% moved onto college after school demonstrating that the mentoring should focus on supporting at risk school pupils from APP target areas to continue in their education after school to improve their chance of entering higher education. This model will be utilized to develop a mentoring programme in 2022-2024 using this data as the baseline.

A schools STEM event was held for the first time in 2019 to inspire engagement with STEM in Year 8 and 9 school pupils and demonstrate the extent of STEM that is utilised in the land-based industries. This had to be cancelled in 2020 and 2021 but was delivered again in 2022 with 574 Year 8 and Year 9 attendees from 6 target schools (9 target schools invited to attend).

**Priority 21: Introduce measurable activities in target schools to improve achievement**

**1.9 Alternative Higher Education offer**

At the time of writing the initial Access and Participation Plan the HE offer from Sparsholt was limited to conventional FdSc, BSc and MSc programmes delivered on campus, predominantly on a full-time basis. One Level 6 top-up and two MSc programmes are offered on a part-time basis but still require an element of campus based learning. There is an aspiration to deliver some of the current offer as a distance learning mode which requires development of resources. The enforced remote teaching during the pandemic has resulted in investment in technology that supports distance learning but this still requires the development of more supporting resources to provide a good student experience.

The development of Higher Apprenticeship frameworks associated with specialist land-based delivery has been slower than some subject areas but these are now becoming available and will

be the focus of the revisions of this plan.

Short credit bearing HE programmes have not been previously offered but will be introduced over the time period covered by the revisions with a focus on providing skills for those in employment. The vocational nature of the offer at Sparsholt lends itself very effectively to meeting employer skills needs.

**Priority 22: Introduce a range of alternative HE provision to attract a more diverse range of students.**

### **Conclusion of Self-Assessment**

**In undertaking this review, we have reached the following conclusions regarding student Access to UCS:**

- POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1 student recruitment will be the highest priority in the UCS future strategy and action plan. Specifically, UCS will work to reduce the gaps in POLAR4 and IMD between Q1 and Q5 for all HE students. UCS have further identified an intersection of disadvantage which requires UCS to specially target access for POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 males who are disproportionately absent from the student community.
- UCS intends to focus its efforts to encourage more ethnic diversity of our student population, making it more representative of the community that the college serves.
- UCS will seek to boost access by disabled applicants by promoting its inclusivity.
- Emerging changes to the UCS local residential composition, because of the Army Basing project directs UCS towards the targeting of HE access for individuals from Military Families.
- UCS will continue to outperform the sector in the recruitment of mature students although would not seek to undertake additional focus in this regard.
- Current engagement with schools is consistent and covers priority areas. It appears to be being effective in increasing participation in HE but there is a need to focus on improving achievement and measuring that improvement, whilst evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions provided.
- Sparsholt does not currently offer a diverse range of mode of study. This will be addressed to ensure that students from a range of backgrounds and ages can access suitable higher education to develop appropriate skills for employment and meet the needs of both local and national industries that we serve.

**In undertaking this review, we have reached the following conclusions regarding where UCS must focus activity to support improved Success. In particular, we will:**

- Reduce the sizeable gap in higher level attainment between POLAR4 Q1 and POLAR4 Q5
- Reduce the gap in continuation between IMD Q1, Q2 and students from Q3, Q4, and Q5 groups.
- Maintain parity of continuation and attainment rates between young and mature learners by continuing with retention and achievement strategies.
- Ensure consistent parity of continuation for students with disability compared with students with no disability
- Ensure that parity of attainment for students with disability is maintained and does not

revert to the previous disparity.

- Provide enhanced monitoring to students who have identified themselves as Care Leavers to prevent early withdrawal and support high level attainment.

**In undertaking this review, we have reached the following conclusions regarding where UCS needs to focus Progression activity. In particular, we will:**

- Maintain a focus on progression, where every student from our target groups participates in a progression review to maintain positive outcomes.
- Stabilise the difference between progression rates for under-represented students from POLAR4 by establishing parity between Q1 and Q2 combined and others from Q3, Q4 and Q5 combined.
- Maintain parity of progression between young and mature learners, and between students with a disability and no disability.

## **2. UCS Strategic aims and objectives:**

- Increase access for under-represented groups, particularly students from POLAR4 Q1, IMD Q1, with disability and from black, Asian and ethnic minorities, with a particular emphasis on males in those target groups, through review and diversification of the programme offer and delivery.
- Develop strategic relationships to raise attainment of GCSE and specialist vocational skills in local schools through regular and focussed support
- Raise aspiration for entry to HE through the provision of a regular and sustained range of STEM activities and events to engage the local community and schools.
- Support continuation, success and progression through maintaining and further developing the current strategies utilised during curriculum delivery to eliminate the gaps.
- Review and refine data collection, analysis and evaluation to improve understanding of the student cohort and drive the development of appropriate support for attainment and progression.
- Actively engage the student population in the delivery of Access and Participation interventions and utilise their feedback to evaluate and shape future targets.
- Support improved achievement in target schools by providing mentoring, GCSE revision and introduction of new Level 2 qualification delivered and supported by Sparsholt staff.
- Introduce and deliver Higher Apprenticeship programmes
- Design, validate and deliver short HE courses that provided specific employability skills.
- Investigate the opportunity to collaborate with the Open University to develop HE short course and distance learning programmes through the £10 million fund allocated by the OfS.

### **2.1 Target groups**

**The following groups will be targeted at the Access stage of the lifecycle;**

- Students from POLAR4, Q1 and IMD, Q1 and Q2 with a particular emphasis on males in these under-represented groups

- Students with disability.
- Students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.
- Students from military families.
- School pupils from target schools
- Employees looking to upskill through the apprenticeship frameworks
- Mature and employed students looking for specific HE skills through short course delivery

**The following groups will be targeted at the Success stage of the lifecycle;**

- Students from POLAR4, Q1 and IMD, Q1 and Q2.
- Students with disability.
- Students who are care leavers.

**The following groups will be targeted at the Progression stage of the lifecycle;**

- Students from POLAR4, Q1 and IMD, Q1 and Q2.
- Students with disability
- Students who are care leavers.

## **2.2 Aims and objectives Access:**

**Aim 1:** To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from POLAR4 Q1.

**Measurable Objective:** In setting the target, UCS are starting from a strong base where POLAR4 Q1 recruitment is consistently better than the sector. However, in recent years the gap has not reduced. Consequently, UCS is challenging itself to further reduce this gap. The gap for the all student population is currently **16% and the objective is to reduce this gap to 8% within 5 years and eradicate the gap within 10 years.** (Priority 1 PTA\_2)

*PTA\_2 For academic year 2021/22 the gap was 2%*

**Measurable Objective:** The gap between Q1 and Q5 is currently **19% for 18-year olds and the objective is to reduce this gap to 9% within a 5-year timescale and eradicate the gap within 10 years** (Priority 1 PTA\_1)

*PTA\_1 For academic year 2021/22 the gap was 4%*

**Measurable Objective:** The gap between Q1, Q2 females and Q3,4,5 females (which currently mirrors the sector average) will be **reduced from 34% to 25% within a 5-year timescale and parity across the quintiles will be achieved within 10 years** to eradicate the representative gap.(Priority 17 PTA\_4)

*PTA\_4 For academic year 2021/22 the gap was 5%*

**Measurable Objective:** UCS plans to place an emphasis on males in this under-represented group and to **reduce the gap in participation between Q1, Q2 males and Q3,4,5 males from 34% to 20% within 5 years. This will effectively eradicate the representative gap** and ensure equality of access across each quintile within the timescale of the plan.(Priority 19 PTA\_3).



*PTA\_3 For academic year 2021/22 the gap was 59%*

**Aim 2:** To reduce the gap in participation in HE between students from IMD Q1 and IMD Q5

**Measurable Objective:** UCS will set a target to **reduce the gap between Q1 and Q5 from 38% to 25% in the 5 years to 2024/25 and eradicate the gap within 20 years** (Priority 2 PTA\_5).

UCS considers this to be its most ambitious and challenging target in the context of the affluent local area in which it operates and the land-based sector that it services.

*PTA\_5 For academic year 2021/22 the gap was 21%*

**Aim 3:** To increase the participation of students in HE with disability

**Measurable Objective:** Increase the participation of students with **disability from 16% to 23% in 5 years**. (Priority 11 PTA\_6)

*PTA\_6 For academic year 2021/22 the participation of students with disability was 35%*

**Aim 4:** To increase participation in HE of BAME students.

**Measurable Objective:** To **increase participation of BAME students from 0% (last reporting year) to 5% by 2024/25 years**. This target is in line with the composition of the local population and given the local demographic and the industry that UCS programmes serve, is very ambitious. (Priority 6 PTA\_7)

*PTA\_7 For academic year 2021/22 the participation of BAME students was 3%*

**Aim 5:** To increase the participation of students from military families.

**Measurable Objective:** Review data collection to set a base line for participation in 2020/21. Currently, UCS staff estimate the baseline to be 3% and based on this, the target will be to **increase participation by 2 percentage points of the new entrants' cohort per annum up to 2024/25**. (Priority 18).

**Success:**

**Aim 6:** To ensure that continuation rates for students from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas are consistently as good or better than those students from Q3, Q4, Q5 groups

**Measurable Objective:** from a baseline of 5%, **the gap in continuation will be eradicated within the 5- year plan**. (PTS\_2)

*PTS\_2 For academic year 2021/22 the continuation gap was eradicated***Aim 7:** To ensure that continuation rates for students with disability are consistently as good or better than those students not from these groups.

**Measurable Objective:** From a baseline of 26%, **the gap in continuation rates will be eradicated within the 5-year plan** to provide for consistency of outcome. (Priority 12 PTS\_1)

*PTS\_1 For academic year 2021/22 the continuation gap was eradicated*

**Aim 8:** Ensure that continuation rates for students who are Care Leavers are consistently as good or better than those students not from these groups (no data currently held).

**Measurable Objective:** **Establish the baseline and timeline for eradication by 2021** and identify the milestones to be achieved within the 5 years of the plan. (Priority 16)

**Aim 9:** Ensure that the gap in attainment rate between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 is eradicated.

**Measurable Objective: Reduce the attainment gap from 38% to 18% within the 5-year plan and set a trajectory to eliminate the gap within 10 years.** (Priority 4 PTS\_3)

*PTS\_3 For academic year 2021/22 the data is not yet available*

**Progression:**

**Aim 10:** Ensure that progression rates to employment or higher-level study for students from POLAR4, Q1 and Q2 are consistently as good, or better than those students from POLAR4, Q3, Q4 and Q5. (Priority 5) **Measurable Objectives:** Currently the gap varies in the reporting years and the aim is to **close the gap and ensure consistency in all years** so that the gap in progression rates (10% in favour of the highly represented groups 2016/17) will be **eradicated within the 5-year plan.** (PTP\_1)

*PTP\_1 For academic year 2021/22 the data is not yet available*

**Revisions for 2023/24**

**Aim 11:** Improve achievement rates at Level 2 in named target schools (Priority 21)

**Measurable Objectives:** Identify baseline data for achievement at grade 4 or better in 3 target schools (Harroway POLAR4 Q2, Winton IMD Q2 and The Stonehenge School POLAR4 Q2 and situated in military environment) for GCSE outcomes in English, Maths and Science and provide revision support to improve achievement at Grade 4 or better to an improvement from 2022 baseline

**Aim 12: Introduce the Higher Education Early Insight Programme to named target schools**

**Measurable Objective:** 50 school pupils in Year 10 from the following schools, Harroway (POLAR4 Q2), Winton (IMD Q2), The Stonehenge School (POLAR4 Q2 and situated in military environment), Cantell (situated in area of diverse ethnic population), Woodlands Community College (POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1) and Portsmouth Academy (POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1) will be introduced to the concept of studying at HE through the delivery and supervision of the AQA Level 2 Higher Project over two years. This will provide a qualification in addition to their GCSEs.

**Aim 13: Introduce Higher Apprenticeships to the UCS offer**

**Measurable Objective:** Increase the Higher Apprenticeship offer from one in 2022/23 to three in 2023/24 and five by 2024/25.

**Aim 14: Design, validate and introduce HE short courses to the UCS offer**

**Measurable Objective:** Increase the HE Short course offer from zero in 2022/23 to eight in 2023/24 to provide employability skills based on employer needs.

**3. Strategic measures**

<b>Aim 1</b>	<b>To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from POLAR4 Q1</b>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer early commitment to FE bursary awards to students who enrol at Sparsholt College to raise aspiration for continuing in education – in place and ongoing.</li> <li>Offer GCSE English, maths and science improvement/revision sessions</li> </ul>

	<p><i>delivered by A-level teachers in the above target schools to improve success rates, increase FE participation rates and eligibility for HE – in place and ongoing.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Provide a programme of academic mentoring, enhanced careers guidance and where appropriate funding support to improve participation – ongoing.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Identify all internal FE learners from POLAR4 Q1 postcodes and offer study support with a focus on progression to Level 3, Year 2. Then, enhanced careers guidance and access to UCS bursaries for continuation to HE, done in conjunction with NCOP SUN collaborative project – to be fully implemented in 2019/20.</i></li> <li><i>• Provide STEM event on campus for target schools to promote opportunities in the land-based technology sector and associated HE, pilot event completed in June 2019, to be refined and repeated annually.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Work with targeted Andover Secondary schools to identify students from POLAR4 Q1 backgrounds to prevent early withdrawal from education, - to commence in 2019/20 and be in full implementation on an annual basis by 2020/21.</i></li> <li><i>• Target access activity in Cantell, Woodlands, Forest Park, Portsmouth Academy and Castle View Academy Secondary Schools to improve participation by identifying students in these schools who have an interest in a career in Land Based Studies, - to commence in 2019/20 and be in full implementation on an annual basis by 2021/22.</i></li> <li><i>• Annual curriculum plan review informed by school feedback to ensure that HE offer meets local need and in doing so provides for increased continuation to HE.</i></li> <li><i>• Produce materials to be sent directly to L3 POLAR4 Q1 learners at the start of year 1 and</i></li> <li><i>• year 2 (of their FE studies) with an enhanced careers guidance, academic support and bursary offer to increase participation rates through early and enhanced awareness of opportunities and removal of financial barriers, - to be developed in academic year 2019/20 and distributed at the start of academic year 2020/21.</i></li> <li><i>• -Provide residential school (funded) to increase awareness of opportunities of education</i></li> <li><i>• options and Land Based Industries, - pilot to be developed for summer 2020, review and further development for 2021 and annually thereafter</i></li> </ul>
<b>Aim 2</b>	<b>To reduce the gap in participation in HE between students from IMD Q1 and IMD Q5</b>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Provide a programme of academic mentoring, enhanced careers guidance and where appropriate funding support to provide to improve participation - ongoing.</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer early commitment to FE bursary awards to students who enrol at Sparsholt College to raise aspiration for continuing in education – ongoing.</li> <li>• Offer GCSE English, maths and science improvement/revision sessions delivered by A-level teachers in the above target schools to improve success rates, increase FE participation rates and eligibility for HE – ongoing.</li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all internal FE learners from IMD 4 Q1 postcodes and offer study support with a focus on progression to Level 3, Year 2. Then provide enhanced careers guidance and access to UCS bursaries for continuation to HE done in conjunction with NCOP SUN collaborative project, - to be fully implemented in 2019/20.</li> <li>• Provide STEM event on campus for target schools to promote opportunities in the land-based technology sector and associated HE -. pilot event completed in June 2019, to be refined and repeated annually.</li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with targeted Andover Secondary schools to identify students from IMD Q1 backgrounds to prevent early withdrawal from education, - to commence in 2019/20 and be in full implementation on an annual basis by 2020/21.</li> <li>• Target access activity in Cantell, Woodlands, Forest Park, Portsmouth Academy and Castle View Academy Secondary Schools, to improve participation by identifying students in these schools who have an interest in a career in Land Based Studies, - to commence in 2019/20 and be in full implementation on an annual basis by 2021/22.</li> <li>• Annual curriculum plan review informed by school feedback to meets local need and in doing so provides for increased continuation to HE.</li> <li>• Produce materials to be sent directly to L3 IMDQ1 learners at the start of year 1 and year 2 (of their FE studies) with an enhanced careers guidance, academic support and bursary offer to increase participation rates through early and enhanced awareness of opportunities and removal of financial barriers, - to be developed in academic year 2019/20 and distributed at the start of academic year 2020/21.</li> <li>• -Provide residential school (funded) to increase awareness of education options and Land</li> <li>• Based careers, - pilot to be developed for summer 2020, review and further development for 2021and annually thereafter.</li> </ul>
<b>Aim 3</b>	<b>To increase the participation of students in HE with disability</b>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bursary funding to meet the cost of diagnostic assessments to support DSA application – ongoing.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <p><i>-Provide familiarisation events for applicants with disability to ensure access needs can be met and reduce concerns relating to commencing study in HE, - commenced in 2019 and ongoing.</i></p> <p><i>Gain early full disclosure of disability to enable UCS to meet and deliver support needs by introducing inhouse registration system post academic offer to capture applicants who purposely decide not to advise of disability on the UCAS application form to provide for early support and improvements in success – to be fully implemented during student registration for academic year 2019/20.</i></p> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Identify all internal FE learners with disability and offer study support, enhanced careers guidance and access to college bursaries for diagnostic assessment to facilitate application for DSA support to facilitate improved participation in HE – collate dataset and data collection during 2019/20 to enable appropriate interventions prior to start of 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Identify role models with disability to promote opportunities within the Land Based industries to improve access and participation, - identification and profiles developed in 2019/20 for</i></li> <li>• <i>promotion in 2021.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Aim 4</b>	<b>To increase participation of students from a BAME background</b>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Offer GCSE English, maths and science improvement/revision sessions delivered by A-level teachers in the above target schools increase FE participation rates and eligibility for HE – ongoing.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Provide STEM event on campus for target schools to promote opportunities in the land-based technology sector and associated HE – pilot event completed in June 2019, to be refined and repeated annually.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Target access activity in Cantell, Woodlands, Forest Park, Portsmouth Academy and Castle View Academy Secondary Schools, to improve participation by identifying students in these schools who may wish to consider Land Based studies, - to commence in 2019/20 and be in full implementation on an annual basis by 2021/22.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Work with LANDEX to provide materials for BAME communities which promote access and participation by demonstrating the career opportunities available in Land Based Industries, - development in 2019/20 for publication and circulation in 2021.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Identify BAME role models to promote the opportunities available within the land-based sector to raise aspiration and promote access and participation, - identification and profiles developed in 2019/20 for promotion in 2021.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Aim 5</b>	<b>To increase the participation of students from military families</b>

<p><b>Activity and input to targets</b></p>	<p><b><i>This is a new area of focus for UCS and as a result all planned activities and interventions are new to the Plan to increase access from military families. Some current strategies that are already in place to promote access for other under- represented groups can be adopted with immediate effect as a particular focus on schools that serve military areas.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>In development measures (underway)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Provide a programme of academic mentoring, enhanced careers guidance and where appropriate funding support to promote participation, - to be implemented for enrolments from 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Target access activity in Avon Valley College, The Stonehenge School and The Wellington Academy to provide awareness of career and education opportunities in Land Based industries, - to be implemented in 2019/20 and ongoing thereafter.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Offer early commitment to FE bursary awards to students from military families who enrol at Sparsholt College to raise aspiration for continuing in education, - for enrolment from 2020/21 and ongoing.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Identify all internal FE learners from military families and offer study support, enhanced careers guidance and access to UCS bursaries for continuation to HE, done in conjunction with NCOP SUN collaborative project commencing 2019/20.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Offer GCSE English, maths and science, - improvement/revision sessions delivered by A- level teachers in the above target schools increase FE participation rates and eligibility for HE. Targeted schools to be identified, and included in the current programme of support in 2019/20 and ongoing.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Produce materials to be sent directly to L3 learners from military families at the start of year 1 and year 2 (of their FE studies) with an enhanced careers guidance, academic support and bursary offer, to increase participation rates through early and enhanced awareness of</i></li> <li>• <i>opportunities and removal of financial barriers, - to be developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Provide residential school (funded) to increase awareness of opportunities of education options and Land Based Industries - . pilot to be developed for summer 2020, review and further development for 2021and annually thereafter</i></li> <li>• <i>-Provide land-based campus event for military families to increase awareness of career and education opportunities in the land-based industries, plan in 2019/20 to be held in 2021 and annually thereafter.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Research and benchmark the profile of military families in UCS's catchment counties to establish a baseline of participation and effectively target future access activities, to be completed in 2019/20 for use in future years.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 6</b></p>	<p><b>To ensure that continuation rates for students from IMD Q1 and Q2 areas are consistently as good or better than those students from Q3, Q4, Q5 groups.</b></p>
<p><b>Activity</b></p>	<p><b><i>Existing measures (established)</i></b></p>

<p><b>and input to targets</b></p>	<p><i>This is a newly identified area for improvement so there are no existing measures currently in place, however strategies that are already being utilised to support other under-represented groups can be put in place with immediate effect.</i></p> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <p><i>Increase the level of academic supervision for students who are from IMD Q1 and Q2 by</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>providing 6 performance monitoring reviews during each academic year to support improved continuation and participation, to be introduced in academic year 2019/20.</i></li> <li>• <i>In development measures (new)</i></li> <li>• <i>In house data service to produce annual lists to identify all enrolled students from IMD Q1 and, then develop enhanced progression planning service to provide personalised support, financial bursaries and careers guidance to improve continuation rates. Development of data collection on 2019/20 with additional academic interventions introduced in 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Devise literature to be given to IMD Q1 and Q2 students which identifies the ongoing financial, academic and emotional support available during their studies at UCS to support and enable continuation - to be developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Establish: a Good Practice Approach for both student attendance, and student withdrawal to provide for a more robust and standardised approach; a consistent approach to maintain engaged participation and to challenge withdrawals whilst seeking to establish appropriate support to facilitate improved continuation, - to be developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Develop a HE Community Hub and improve the sense of belonging within the HE community. This would include Wellbeing support and Mental Health support and improve success and continuation. This has building and staffing resource implications,- to be in place and operational by 2021/22</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 7</b></p>	<p><b>To ensure that continuation rates for students with disability are consistently as good or better than for those students not from these groups.</b></p>
<p><b>Activity and input to targets</b></p>	<p><b>Existing measures (existing)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Provide Autistic Spectrum Condition training to Academic staff to provide for improved pedagogical strategies and assessment design to enhance the experience for students with ASC disability and to improve continuation, complete and ongoing updates.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Increase opportunities to share teaching strategies and good practice with specialist study support staff embedded within teaching team to enhance the experience for students with disability and improve continuation, - complete and ongoing.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Increase the level of academic supervision for learners with a declared disability by providing performance monitoring reviews during each academic year to improve continuation, - to be introduced in academic year 2019/20.</i></li> </ul>

	<p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Establish: a Good Practice Approach for both student attendance, and student withdrawal to</i></li> <li>• <i>provide for a more robust and standardised approach; a consistent approach to maintain</i></li> <li>• <i>engaged participation and to challenge withdrawals whilst seeking to establish appropriate</i></li> <li>• <i>support to facilitate improved continuation, - to be developed in 2019/20 for full</i></li> <li>• <i>implementation on 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Provide enhanced careers guidance facility for all HE Learners with a declared disability to</i></li> <li>• <i>raise aspiration for opportunities within the industry and improve continuation - to be</i></li> <li>• <i>developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21.</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Increase resource availability of bespoke Mental Health counselling and mentoring to enhance the experience for students with disability and improve continuation. This has building and staffing resource implications,- to be in place and operational by 2021/22</i></li> <li>• <i>-Develop a HE Community Hub and improve the sense of belonging within the HE community. This would include Wellbeing support and Mental Health support provided in a confidential and secure environment to enhance the experience for students with disability</i></li> <li>• <i>and improve continuation. This has building and staffing resource implications,- to be in place and operational by 2021/22</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 8</b></p>	<p><b>Ensure that continuation rates for students who are Care Leavers are consistently as good or better than for those students not from these groups.</b></p>
<p><b>Activity and input to targets</b></p>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b>  <i>This is a newly identified area for improvement so there are no existing measures currently in place, however strategies that are already being utilised to support other under-represented groups can be put in place with immediate effect</i></p> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Increase the level of academic supervision for students who are Care Leavers by providing performance monitoring reviews during each academic year to improve success and continuation – to be introduced in academic year 2019/20.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Make accommodation available all year round for adult Care Leavers who may not have alternative accommodation during the holiday periods. This will enable adult Care Leavers to access consistent accommodation and improve continuation,- to be introduced in academic year 2019/20.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-In house data service to produce annual lists to identify all enrolled students who are care leavers, then develop enhanced progression planning service to provide personalised support, residential bursaries and careers guidance to improve continuation. Development of data collection on 2019/20 with additional academic interventions introduced in 2020/21.</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Devise literature to be given to Care Leavers and their Social workers which identifies the ongoing financial, academic and emotional support available during their studies at UCS to promote access to HE to improve continuation, - to be developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Establish: a Good Practice Approach for both student attendance, and student withdrawal to provide for a more robust and standardised approach; a consistent approach to maintain engaged participation and to challenge withdrawals whilst seeking to establish appropriate support to facilitate improved continuation, - to be developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Develop a HE Community Hub and improve the sense of belonging within the HE community. This would include Wellbeing and Mental Health support which would serve to improve success and continuation. This has building and staffing resource implications,- to be in place and operational by 2021/22</i></li> </ul>
<b>Aim 9</b>	<b>Ensure that the gap in attainment rate between POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 is eradicated.</b>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Step-up to HE is a current initiative to develop academic skills for all students which has been successful in recent years. A more focussed approach for POLAR4 Q1 students will be integrated – see below.</i></li> <li>• <i>Study coaches are an integral part of success at UCS for all students, a more focussed approach for POLAR4 Q1 students will be integrated – see below.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b>  <i>This is a newly identified area for improvement for UCS so strategies and interventions will be developed in the forthcoming academic year</i></p> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-In house data service to produce annual lists to identify all enrolled students who are from POLAR4 Q1, then develop enhanced academic support to include workshops and individual tutorial support to increase attainment. - Development of data collection on 2019/20 with additional academic interventions introduced in 2020/21.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Increase use of Study Coaches for peer mentoring and academic support for students from POLAR4 Q1 to support increased attainment. This will require additional training and resources for the Study coaches, - to be developed in 2019/20 for implementation in 2020/21 and refined in following years.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Deliver revision and exam preparation sessions to support students from POLAR4 Q1 to improve grades and increase attainment, - to be implemented in 2019/20 and refined in 2021 onwards</i></li> <li>• <i>-Increase academic tutorials in Year 3 for POLAR4 Q1 students to improve grades, - to be implemented in 2019/20 and refined in 2021 onwards.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Establish a Good Practice Approach for monitoring student attendance to</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>provide for a more robust and standardised approach to maintain engaged participation and support attainment to be developed in 2019/20 for full implementation on 2020/21</i></p>
<b>Aim 10</b>	<p><b>Ensure that progression rates to employment or higher-level study for students from POLAR4, Q1, Q2 are consistently as good, or better than those students from POLAR4, Q3, 4, 5</b></p>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Increase networking opportunities through industry led research and engagement to improve employment prospects and contribute to progression – ongoing.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Review and refresh work placement units to ensure content is industry-led. This will provide for improved progression to employment. – in place and effective for academic year 2019/20</i></li> <li>• <i>-Review assessment structure to ensure industry relevance to improve employment prospects and contribute to progression. – in place and effective for academic year 2019/20</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Develop industry mentoring which will provide role models and employability skills to improve the opportunity to progress. – pilot scheme in place for aquaculture students for academic year 2019/20, - to be rolled out across all programmes between 2020 and 2022.</i></li> <li>• <i>Deliver Industry conferences to showcase career opportunities and skills required for progression- pilot conference in planning for 2020, - to be developed across subject areas between 2021 and 2023</i></li> <li>• <i>-Provide for early identification of POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 students who are capable of achieving higher-level attainment and provide enhanced careers guidance to enable progression to higher-level study.- data collection to start in academic year 2019/20 with interventions developed during 2020 and 2021.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Aim 11</b>	<p>Improve achievement rates at Level 2 in named target schools</p>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Target schools identified and relationships established</i></li> <li>• <i>GCSE revision sessions in place</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Mentoring programme for ‘at-risk’ year 10 and 11 pupils -set baseline data for ongoing evaluation</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Establish working relationships with target schools where engagement is limited.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Introduce and commence Higher Education Early Insight project to 80 Year 10 pupils from target schools in academic year 2022/23. This AQA Level 2 qualification will be delivered in person to introduce the project</i></li> </ul>

<p><b>Aim 12</b></p>	<p><i>and support pupils in selecting and starting their research topic. Supervision and support for writing up the report will be delivered remotely by the academic teaching team across both campuses. The objective is to provide a ‘taster’ of studying in an HE style and increasing the qualifications achieved by the pupils.</i></p> <p><b>Introduce the Higher Education Early Insight Programme to named target schools</b></p>
<p><b>Activity and input to targets</b></p>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Target schools identified and relationships established</i></li> <li>• <i>Annual STEM event to introduce the Higher Education Early Insight Programme</i></li> </ul> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Development of teaching resources to accompany launch of Higher Education Early Insight Programme at start of academic year 2022/23</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Establish working relationships with target schools where engagement is limited.</i></li> <li>• <i>-Introduce and commence Higher Education Early Insight project to 50 Year 10 pupils from target schools in academic year 2022/23. This AQA Level 2 qualification will be delivered in person to introduce the project and support pupils in selecting and starting their research topic. Supervision and support for writing up the report will be delivered remotely by the academic teaching team across both campuses. The objective is to provide a ‘taster’ of studying in an HE style and increasing the qualifications achieved by the pupils.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Aim 13</b></p>	<p><b>Introduce Higher Apprenticeships to the UCS offer</b></p>
<p><b>Activity and input to targets</b></p>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <p><i>Countryside Range Higher Apprenticeship offered to employers with adequate indicating that the first cohort will commence in September 2022.</i></p> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Development of teaching resources to delivery of Countryside Ranger Apprenticeship for delivery in academic year 2022/23</i></li> <li>• <i>Staff member appointed to deliver apprenticeship knowledge and work based assessment.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>-Review of alternative current apprenticeship frameworks suitable for delivery within UCS expertise</i></li> <li>• <i>-Two additional apprenticeship frameworks to be added to UCS portfolio per year for next three years.</i></li> </ul>

<b>Aim 14</b>	<b>Design, validate and introduce HE short courses to the UCS offer</b>
<b>Activity and input to targets</b>	<p><b>Existing measures (established)</b></p> <p><b>New and in place measures (underway)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -12 Level 4 modules identified as potential short courses for delivery of key employability skills</li> <li>• -Contact made with the Open University to identify potential collaboration on short course delivery through the OfS £10 million fund</li> </ul> <p><b>In development measures (new)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Validation of HE short courses during academic year 2022/23</li> </ul> <p>HE short course delivery to commence in academic year 2023/24</p>
<p>Tables</p> <p>Aims 1-10</p> <p>Evidence Informing all Aims and Activities</p>	<p>We have reviewed the distribution of POLAR4 Q1 postcodes, IMD Q1 postcodes, the distribution of BAME young people in Southampton and Portsmouth and schools that have expanded their provision to accommodate the influx of children from military families, to identify our target schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -Local HE provision is failing to provide progression opportunity to HE in the Andover Area.</li> <li>• -GCSE outcome data had informed our target schools in the Andover area and comprise those performing less well in the achievement of higher grades.</li> <li>• -A trial in 2018/19 of GCSE revision classes in local schools has increased progression/FE application numbers in Maths by 10%. In August 2019 we will monitor if there is a corresponding improvement in success/higher grades and specifically reviewing the IMD Q1 and POLAR4 Q1 success.</li> </ul> <p>Enhanced careers guidance (NCOP funded) providing individualised progression plans resulted in increased progression from Level 3 Animal Management to HE by 125% in 2016/17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• -Trial STEM event in 2018/19 for year 10 introduced students including IMD Q1 and Q2 and POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 students to the college to engage in participatory activities who are otherwise less likely to be aware of the opportunities afforded by the organisation.</li> <li>• -A review of the background of our FE population has identified students from our target groups to prioritise academic support, careers guidance and mentoring, and bursary provision.</li> <li>• -Our review of the ethnic background has identified three elements (lack of BAME in the national labour market, lack of BAME in the local labour market and lack of BAME in the current student population). All serve as the baseline against which we will measure our BAME participation targets through the use of role models, promotional materials and campus events.</li> <li>• -Qualitative data collected from the 2019 STEM event will be used to measure awareness of skills requirements within the land-based sector. Information gathered will be used to inform the structure and content of future campus based and residential events.</li> </ul>

### 3.1 Whole provider Strategic Approach

University Centre Sparsholt is a national provider of specialist HE in the applied science of land and the environment, which excels in 'research into practice' at the level of Foundation, Honours and Masters Degrees. UCS provides vocational education which offers an alternative approach to learning compared to conventional academic routes. Inclusivity is embedded into recruitment, delivery and progression throughout the organisation from teaching and assessment through to academic support, wellbeing and all the business support team services of admissions, IT, marketing, residential, finance and premises.

Regular training and CPD occur on an annual cycle in order to develop staff's understanding of inclusivity, minority groups and safeguarding. Core to UCS strategy is outstanding teaching and support, high quality provision within an environment that embeds personalised guidance and support, which enables learners to develop their knowledge, skills, success and progression.

Theory of Change - Equality, Diversity and Wellbeing committees consisting of staff from throughout the organisation meet regularly to review our Equality and Diversity Indicator Measures (EDIMS). This information is used to gain understanding of the organisation and to provide the benchmark from which change must be achieved. Much in the same way as this self-evaluation process works, these groups identify areas of concern relating to student groups with protected characteristics and from under- represented groups. To ensure focus is maintained and to further develop the participation, achievement and progression of the target under-represented groups the Access & Participation Plan will be shared with these committees for additional oversight and reported against. The focus of this group has been on obtaining the best possible outcome for UCS students once they are part of our community which is why we believe the UCS self-evaluation on balance, shows more need to target access activities than success and continuation measures. The UCS theory of change has been and will continue to be a process of establishing benchmark, debating the environment in which it operated, negotiating over-arching targets, establishing inputs, monitoring inputs, modifying inputs, evaluating outcomes and then repeating the cycle. UCS employs the staff who are essential to provide for the success of this plan. Schools liaison, counsellors, student support, careers guidance advisors and academic mentors will be individually targeted towards the interventions needed to deliver this plan.

#### Alignment with other strategies

Existing Strategy	Link to OFS Self Evaluation and Action Plan
Equality & Diversity Indicators Measurement	The targets identified in this plan will be added to the existing College/UCS EDIMs
HE Student Engagement Policy	This outlines how students can be involved and empowered in the process of shaping their learning experience and will ensure their participation in oversight and monitoring of the Plan
HE Strategy 2016-2020 (to be updated for 2021-25)	This defines the strategic direction of the offer and anticipated student population and will be updated to include the targets set within the Plan

HE Quality Enhancement Policy	This ensures that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning resources are provided for students and that any barriers to accessing learning are removed.
Curriculum Delivery & Quality Improvement Plan	Curriculum offer, and methods of assessment will be informed by the findings of the action plan delivery
HE Scholarly Activity Policy	This outlines the expectations on HE teaching staff to maintain and update their knowledge and industry relevant experience to inform their pedagogy to ensure outstanding teaching supports all students to succeed and progress.

Increasing numbers of students are now in receipt of Educational Health Care Plans which are applicable until the age of 25. Full adoption of the recommended measures and adjustments to learning are incorporated to ensure inclusion for these students. As a result, the college and UCS are well placed and very experienced in working with students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds.

## Financial Support

**Statement of Level of Funding-** UCS plans to spend between £50,000-£63,500pa each year of this five- year plan providing financial support to individuals from our priority target groups. Early initial success in increasing recruitment from target Access groups led to a corresponding increase in applications and eligibility for Bursary and hardship funding resulting in excess of £60,000 provided in 2020/21 and £80,000 in 2021/22. With over 25% of the student population in receipt of financial support, the Financial Support Fund has now been increased from £50,000 in 2020-21 to £91,000 in 2024-25.

**Eligibility Criteria-** The College has a bursary policy which currently makes provision for monies for HE students based on the level of family income. In 2019/20 UCS will switch to providing bursary to those HE students with a **residual income of less than £25,000 utilising SFE declarations**. We have chosen to offer financial support to lower income families primarily due to our location and the subsequent financial burden that this puts on the learner and their family. As a Land Based College operating in a remote access area, it is usually costly for students to travel to UCS, costing between £500-£1,300 per annum. For those who live too far away to travel, costs of residency run at £4,500-£6,000 per annum. These costs are prohibitive for many students, particularly those in most of our target groups. Furthermore, we have monitored success rates of those residing on site and those who travel each day and have consistently achieved higher continuation rates by at least 5% with those students who live on site. We would reassess our students on an annual basis to ensure that they still meet the residual income criteria and also meet our attendance and progress criteria.

	Amount	Eligibility	Assessment of need	Evidence
Bursary	£750	Household income	Annual	Improved continuation
Scholarship	£200 - £3,500	POLAR4 Q1, IMD Q1, BAME, Care Leavers, children from military families	Annual	Improved performance identified by those in accommodation
Diagnostic assessment for disability support	£250 - £500	Identification of need	On demand	Improved continuation rates for students with disability
Hardship	£200	Demonstration of need preventing attendance or full participation	As required	Direct correlation between attendance and achievement observable in our annual success rates.

In addition, we will invite Further Education Scholarship nomination from the Headteachers in target schools where students meet our priority targets. Initial bursary would be paid from a separate Further Education Bursary pot and would lead to guaranteed higher-level bursaries on entry to our HE programmes. Our early commitment to our priority group via schools sets out our longer-term commitment to providing ongoing financial support where they progress to Higher Education at UCS.

### 3.2 Student consultation

To encourage student volunteers to come forward, UCS colleagues commenced the Access and Participation review with an all staff briefing (so that they were equipped to answer student questions), followed by presentations to tutor groups involving over 300 students. These small groups of 15-25 were encouraged to discuss each element of the APP and contribute suggestions and proposals for inclusion within the plan. They were encouraged to share any barriers that they or their peers had experienced in terms of access to education, participation in education or that they have experienced during the entirety of their formal education. Students were asked to self-nominate to serve as the UCS Access and Participation working group which eventually comprised 5 students who felt able to commit the required time at this more challenging point in their academic year. The students considered how they wished to inform the plan and elected not to generate a separate submission but instead (given the time constraints) opted to form a working group to debate and negotiate their key priorities and use these to inform the development of the plan. They then reviewed and made further inputs to the various iterations of this submission to ensure that their views were appropriately represented. The focus group consisted of 3 female and 2 male students, 2 of whom declared a learning disability and 2 of whom declared a mental health disability. 3 of the students are from POLAR4, Q1 with the remaining 2 from POLAR4, Q4 addresses. This group of students provided for a range of under-represented groups and intersections of under-representation and were involved in the production and review of the plan. Additionally, one of the students on the focus group is a Student governor and has therefore been involved in the Governors working group also convened for the APP development and submission.

The focus group contributed to the self-evaluation and subsequently agreed that the self-evaluation was an accurate review of the current student population. In very brief summary, their proposals for inclusion within the strategy were:

- Targeted promotion of land-based courses and career options in more urban areas to improve understanding of the opportunities.
- A dedicated STEM event for BAME students from local schools and colleges.
- Bespoke campus-based events to engage military families in land-based courses and careers.
- The development of a student community hub to improve the sense of belonging.
- More dedicated resource to support positive mental health within the UCS community.

The students concluded that UCS would be challenged to increase BAME participation in land-based programmes. They believed that the college has a role to play in challenging the racial stereotypes which lead to the low-level participation in land-based study.

UCS will convene a student Access and Participation Working Group (of a minimum of 5 students who will meet three times a year) and who will assist us to form an annual delivery plan, review performance against the plan and modify our action plan where needed to ensure targets are met.

The Access and Participation Student Working Group has discussed the contents of the plan and progress against targets. The students were complimentary of the support provided to a range of under-represented student groups and concluded that the emphasis going forward should be on supporting applicants and students with Care Experienced backgrounds. Current work includes updating dedicated information on the website and developing relationships with key workers and school careers advisors.

### 3.3 Evaluation strategy

#### Mechanisms that Influence Practice to Secure Continuous Improvement

<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Activity to Enable the Outcomes of Evaluation to Influence Practice</b>
Student A&P Working Group	Annual data review and annual plan evaluation and a further twice-yearly shaping exercise to influence the evolving plan and investment priorities
Governors-Full Board	Annual data review, annual plan evaluations with review and approval of future years action plan
Governors Working Group	Twice-yearly shaping exercises which review progress against delivery of activities and influences priorities of future years' action plans.
College Wellbeing, Equality and Diversity Committee	Provide progress update against Equality and Diversity Impact Measures detailed in this report, and seek feedback from operational staff members to inform and refine future activity



Management Team Working Group	<p>Monthly project plan review and forward planning.</p> <p>Monthly Dataset.</p> <p>Monthly reconciliation of financial support for target groups.</p> <p>November report for Governors summarising previous year's impact.</p> <p>July report for Governors setting following year action plan based upon OFS self-evaluation impact tool and local knowledge of the impact of the individual activities undertaken.</p> <p>Review of progress against activities reported by designated priority leads.</p>
Designated Priority Leads	To take project lead on individual designated priority, providing summary of progress to Management Team Working Group

### Ensuring Work is Evidence Informed

The College has nominated three senior managers to undertake a desk-based review for the entire HE cohort each year, the results of which will be shared with the College Strategic Leadership Team, governors, HE teaching staff and student representatives. An additional post will be created within the MIS team to collate data and evaluate the impact of the strategies implemented which will feed into the reporting process. Each strategy described in Section 3 will be allocated to team managers for development and implementation so that they can produce individual action plans for each strategy with clear timeframes, staff responsibility and actions required. This will ensure accountability and reporting deadlines are met.

Access and Participation Plan implementation and progress will become a standing item at the monthly HE Strategy Group meeting at which time actions will be put in place if progress is insufficient. Overall, the Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal HE will take responsibility for monitoring the plan, directing remedial action plans if required and for sharing progress against the targets with the Governing body. The results will be discussed at the CPD Day for HE staff and will inform actions to be included in the annual programme reports. This might include adjustment to assessment methods, delivery strategies and programme structure. Currently, UCS data collection is underdeveloped in some priority areas such as Care Leavers and Military Families and has some gaps in collection of information regarding disability. In order to address these issues, UCS colleagues will ask students to validate previously held data in priority categories, and request information not already captured or held. The UCS Data Protection Officer will speak directly to the students to explain the need for this information, and reassure in terms of data confidentiality, security and usage – especially in terms of the fear of repercussions of disclosure for continued participation.

UCS monitors continuation and attainment in respect of priority characteristics and for financial support beneficiaries, and this will be enhanced to enable monitoring on an individual basis. A Management Team Working group will be established to measure all aspects of investment impact and discuss all results with UCS staff on a regular diarised basis throughout the year, to ensure that staff from all aspects of HE activity are actively involved in ensuring targets are met. Anonymised results will be shared externally with target schools, the SUN network, local authority and county council children's services and Landex. UCS anticipate the Landex sharing events to be most beneficial in sharing of good practice to identify activities that have led to successful outcomes.

## **Plan to Evaluate Impact of Aims and Objectives**

To self-assess our approach to evaluation of Access and Participation, we have completed the OfS Evaluation Self- Assessment Tool. This provided the following information which will be used to inform our evaluation strategy;

Strategic context 17/24 – advanced. The support for evaluation is well developed with the involvement of all stakeholders from students, through teaching staff, strategic leadership group and to governors. The major areas for development are the coherent maintenance of evaluation activities, the commitment from all staff for robust data collection and the creation of opportunities for robust reflection as a culture across the institution. It is anticipated that these activities will develop during the lifetime of this plan.

Programme Design 15 / 18 – emerging. The design of access and participation programmes is still an emerging theme. As an FE college delivering HE UCS has always had a strong focus on widening participation and providing high levels of academic support whilst on programme. The analysis of our performance to date has made us aware that we need to be more focussed and targeted in our approach. This self-evaluation has confirmed this and identifies that the programmes need to be more specific to achieve the objectives and that the evaluation of the activities needs to be specified at the outset. This will become an integral part of the planning throughout the plan. We plan for this to become an advanced aspect of our Access and Participation delivery and evaluation by 2021/22.

Evaluation Design 4/6 – emerging. As stated above the evaluation needs to be more specific, this will address the issues relating to clarity of intended audience and the specification of roles, responsibilities and resources. We plan for this to become an advanced aspect of our Access and Participation delivery and evaluation by 2021/22

Evaluation Implementation 14/ 20 – emerging. This is a lower score and reflects the work that needs to be done to clarify the programme and evaluation design. The strategies within the plan refer to the need to improve the stratification of data collection and refine its use. This will facilitate improved evaluation, inform the methodology to monitor outcomes and in turn clarify the resource and budgetary requirements of an effective evaluation process. We plan for this to become an advanced aspect of our Access and Participation delivery and evaluation by 2022/23

Learning from evaluation 14/ 22 – emerging. This is the area that requires most development to ensure continuous improvement, identification of areas of impact and opportunities to share good practice across the sector. We plan for this to become an advanced aspect of our Access and Participation delivery and evaluation by 2022/23.

We anticipate that by the end of the timespan of this plan, we will be advanced in all aspects of reflection and our self-evaluation strategy.

The UCS annual evaluation will focus upon two key pieces of work. In October each year the Sparsholt Director of Information and Funding will produce a paper for the College/UCS Equality and Diversity and Wellbeing Committee. This will report progress towards meeting each of the aims detailed in our self- evaluation, providing clarity and ownership of the achievement of planned targets, and providing for any remedial actions that need to be undertaken to keep UCS on target to achieve the plan. In seeking to demonstrate the impact of UCS actions, the report

will provide detail of the impact of individual interventions where they can be directly attributed. The Vice Principal HE will produce an annual evaluation detailing the individual actions that UCS has taken against each of the planned aims. This report will be presented to the full Board of Governors in July and to our student working group in October each year, providing for the highest possible level of accountability.

### **3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan**

Sections 3.3 above describes how UCS will report the summary of cumulative annual progress against the delivery plan and the impact that has been made against our targeted outcomes. Overall responsibility for monitoring the plan will rest with the Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal HE.

To reliably record UCS inputs and in turn the impact of those inputs, UCS will develop an internal monitoring form which will be used to record the individual interventions which have a contribution towards the annual delivery plan.

The UCS Access and Participation management team will assign an owner to each access and participation aim and the subsequent targets against it. The monitoring officer will be responsible for the capturing and cataloguing of the individual action thought to contribute to the plan and where possible capturing the actual impact of the intervention towards the plan.

The current review has highlighted the elements that have not yet been developed. Much of this is as a result of the pandemic limiting in person contact, in particular the introduction of a residential summer school for target schools. This will be a priority for introduction in 2022/23 and will align with the focus on consolidated engagement with specific target schools. The pandemic additionally limited the opportunity to develop a bespoke residential support package for Care Experienced which will be developed and introduced during 2022/23.

However the pro-active approach to schools engagement prior to, and during the pandemic period has resulted in strong progress against all but one of the Access targets. Investment in bespoke support for students from target groups has removed the gaps in continuation rates for the groups who previously were not experiencing the same level of success as their more advantaged peers.

The establishment of baseline data for achievement in schools will be essential to successful achievement of the proposed revisions and contribute to raising attainment in schools.

Annual review of achievement in the target schools will confirm whether the interventions are being successful. Pupil surveys will be used to identify areas of good practice that can be shared across teaching teams as well as feedback from the schools to review and develop the revision sessions, mentoring and Early Insight project.

The predicted investment in Access activities was under-spent in 2020-21 by £25,000 which was due in part to the difficulty in providing in person activities during the pandemic restrictions. The new aims outlined in the revisions to this plan will be funded by the shortfall in Access expenditure.

#### **4. Provision of information to students**

UCS produces an annual fees and bursary policy which clearly sets out the fees our students will be charged for the duration of their course and information on fees and financial support that they are entitled to, to support prospective and current students, prior to them starting their course and for the duration of their course. During the period of this plan College Internal Auditors have confirmed that UCS is operating in line with Consumer Marketing requirements, and in consequence provided the Board of Governors with a substantial assurance rating thus ensuring that programme and fee information is overt in its promotional materials and on the UCS website.

## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

## Inflationary statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	All subjects other than Veterinary Nursing	£9,250
Foundation degree	Veterinary Nursing	£6,600
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£4,950
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£4,625
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Investment summary**

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

## Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

**Table 4a - Investment summary (£)**

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£155,000.00	£158,391.00	£160,845.00	£164,318.00	£176,566.00
Access (pre-16)	£46,500.00	£47,518.00	£48,253.00	£49,295.00	£52,970.00
Access (post-16)	£85,250.00	£87,115.00	£88,465.00	£90,375.00	£97,111.00
Access (adults and the community)	£23,250.00	£23,758.00	£24,127.00	£24,648.00	£26,485.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£50,000.00	£51,750.00	£53,500.00	£58,000.00	£63,500.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£12,000.00	£12,250.00	£12,500.00	£13,000.00	£14,250.00

**Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)**

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£842,475.00	£864,425.00	£882,895.00	£919,875.00	£994,745.00
<b>Access investment</b>	18.4%	18.3%	18.2%	17.9%	17.7%
<b>Financial support</b>	5.9%	6.0%	6.1%	6.3%	6.4%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	25.8%	25.7%	25.7%	25.6%	25.6%



**Table 2a - Access**

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_1	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Reduce the % gap in entry rates between POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 young students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	19%	17%	14%	11%	10%	9%	The milestones decrease through the 5 years of the plan, our focus is on reducing the gap between the groups. This target is not collaborative but will be achieved in collaboration with the target schools identified in the Plan and the Progression Mentor provided through the NCOP SUN project. To eradicate the gap within 10 years, the milestones will achieve more than half during the lifetime of this plan. The increasing demographic of young people from 2020 will result in bigger gains being made in the first half of the plan reducing as progress is made
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_2	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Reduce the % gap in entry rates between POLAR4 quintile 5: quintile 1 all students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	16%	15%	12%	10%	9%	8%	The milestones decrease through the 5 years of the plan, our focus is on reducing the gap between the groups. This target is not collaborative but will be achieved in collaboration with the target schools identified in the Plan and the Progression Mentor provided through the NCOP SUN project. To eradicate the gap within 10 years, the milestones will achieve more than half during the lifetime of this plan. Progress will be more rapid during the first half of the plan and will slow as the gap reduces.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_3	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Reduce the % gap in entry rates between POLAR4 quintile 3,4,5 male: quintile 1,2 male students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	34%	30%	27%	24%	22%	20%	The yearly milestones are decreasing throughout the 5 years of the plan because our focus is on reducing the gap between the specified student groups. The final target is a 20% gap because this target is to achieve overall recruitment of 40% male Q1,Q2 and 60% male Q3,Q4,Q5.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_4	Low Participation Neighbourhood (LPN)	Reduce the % gap in entry rates between POLAR4 quintile 3,4,5 female: quintile 1,2 female students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	34%	32%	29%	27%	26%	25%	The yearly milestones are decreasing throughout the 5 years of the plan because our focus is on reducing the gap between the specified student groups. The final target is a 20% gap because this target is to achieve overall recruitment of 40% female Q1,Q2 and 60% female Q3,Q4,Q5.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_5	Socio-economic	Reduce the % gap in entry rates between IMD quintile 5 and IMD quintile 1 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	38%	36%	33%	30%	27%	25%	The yearly milestones are decreasing throughout the 5 years of the plan because our focus is on reducing the gap between the specified student groups. This target is not collaborative but will be achieved in collaboration with the target schools (based in areas of IMD Q1) identified in the Plan and in conjunction with the Progression Mentor provided through the NCOP SUN project.
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_6	Disabled	Increase the % participation in HE of students with disability	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	16%	19%	20%	21%	22%	23%	
To reduce the gap in participation in HE for students from underrepresented groups	PTA_7	Ethnicity	Increase the % participation in HE of students from BAME	No	The access and participation dataset	2017-18	0%	1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	This target is not collaborative but will be achieved in collaboration with the target schools identified in the Plan.
	PTA_8												

**Table 2b - Success**

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Description	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones					Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
								2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	





**Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees**

\*course type not listed

**Inflationary statement:**

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we intend to increase fees each year using the RPI-X

**Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree	All subjects other than Veterinary Nursing	£9,250
Foundation degree	Veterinary Nursing	£6,600
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND		£4,950
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£4,625
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

**Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants**

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

# Targets and investment plan 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: Sparsholt College

Provider UKPRN: 10006050

## Investment summary

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Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£50,000.00	£51,750.00	£53,500.00	£58,000.00	£63,500.00
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£12,000.00	£12,250.00	£12,500.00	£13,000.00	£14,250.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
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<b>Financial support</b>	5.9%	6.0%	6.1%	6.3%	6.4%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	25.8%	25.7%	25.7%	25.6%	25.6%



