

## Pearson College Limited

UKPRN: 10042570

### 2019-20 Access and Participation Plan

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Pearson College London (“PCL”) is a young alternative provider of higher education with a unique character. We are an autonomous, not-for-profit, legal entity within the Pearson PLC group and the first higher education institution to be established within a global FTSE 100 company. Our strong commitment to widening access and participation is reflected in the Access and Participation Statements which we have published in connection with the Teaching Excellence Framework. As an alternative provider with specific course designation, we were not required to have an Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access and we are pleased now to be able to set out our strategy for ensuring all students from all backgrounds have equal opportunity to enter, succeed in and progress from higher education.

1.2 We are a young institution: we opened our doors to a group of twenty students in September 2012. Since then we have grown steadily and our student population now includes over 780 undergraduates in our two Schools:

- **Pearson Business School**, which has a suite of undergraduate programmes in Business and Management, Accounting and Law, including two integrated Masters programmes
- **Escape Studios** which delivers programmes in Visual Effects (“VFX”), Game Art and Animation. Escape runs professional short courses, Masters degrees, and a suite of undergraduate degrees (including integrated Masters) which commenced in September 2016.

1.3 Industry engagement and collaboration with employers are at the heart of our identity and embedded in our programmes, curriculum and student experience. We have been at the forefront of the development of degree apprenticeships and commenced delivery of the Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship in September 2016. We currently have 86 learners on apprenticeship programmes with 15 different employers. In 2017 we established our Centre for Industry Engagement as a hub for collaboration between higher education and employers which promotes exploration, debate and research around issues at the interface of higher education and the world of employment.

1.4 Our admissions procedure reflects our commitment to opening up educational opportunity to applicants from non-traditional backgrounds, in particular those who have potential but may not have already achieved academic success at school. For all our undergraduate programmes, we have an admissions procedure which does not rely solely on UCAS tariff points but looks at each candidate’s aptitude, commitment and potential to succeed.

1.5 All applicants are invited to an Admissions Workshop at which they participate in a number of activities relevant to the programme to which they have applied. For example, in Pearson Business School, applicants complete two objective tests: the Core Abilities Assessment of numerical, verbal and abstract reasoning and the Watson Glaser appraisal of critical thinking. In addition, they participate in an interview and group activity and produce a short piece of written work which, in combination, are designed to test a set of core competencies. Offers are made on the basis of the combined scores from these activities, regardless of actual or predicted UCAS tariff.

## 2.0 Assessment of current performance

2.1 We are a new, small College and our data collection systems and requirements have developed during our six years of operation. The amount of data available is limited by the fact that only a small number of students have completed their learning journeys with us (at the time of writing this plan, just over 100 of our undergraduate degree students have graduated). This fact has a particular impact on our data for success and progression to employment. Our small student population also limits our ability to carry out meaningful analysis of intersectional data.

2.2 As we have grown, our subject and curriculum mix has also radically changed. This, again, has an impact on data analysis to the extent that historical comparisons are not helpful and we are not yet in a position to judge whether our performance in access and participation has changed over the years. We have, however, compared our performance to the sector generally using appropriate benchmarks where available.

2.3 We have improved our data collection and analysis functionality considerably since 2015, when we introduced SITS Vision. This has enabled us to import data directly into the College database from UCAS, for entrants from 2016/17 onwards, which provides us with additional information on the backgrounds of our students (in particular, POLAR scores).

2.4 However, our entry data is affected by a high proportion of students who apply to us directly rather than via UCAS, including our degree apprentices. Around 50% of our 2017/18 entrants did not apply via UCAS. Less information about the characteristics and background of direct entry candidates is collected at application stage. This affects, in particular, characteristics which are not mandated for the HESA AP Student Record, such as care leaver status or parental occupation. It also has an impact on our ability to analyse POLAR scores for our latest intake of students, as a high proportion is unknown. We are reviewing our data collection processes, as part of this Plan.

### Access

2.4 We have analysed our most recent admissions data and our entire current student population, in order to assess our performance in relation to students from under-represented groups accessing our programmes. We have compared our latest student intake (2017/18) and our current student population as a whole with data in the HESA Table HE Student Enrolment by Personal Characteristics<sup>i</sup>, using the latest published data (2016/17), for full time students on first degrees in England.

2.5 Around 11.3% of our latest student intake (academic year 2017/18) and 12% of our current student population self-declared as having one or more disability, which is just below the average in the HESA table (13%). Like most HEIs based in London, the proportion of our students who are BAME is higher than the national average and the general population. We currently have a total of 40% BAME students in our undergraduate student population, which compares with 27% for first degree enrolments in England as a whole and 32% for the Black and Asian population for Greater London (according to the 2011 census). An analysis by London Higher based on 2015/16 HESA data found that the BAME population of London HEIs was 47%<sup>ii</sup>.

2.6 Our mature student population (21 and over) is relatively low, comprising 24% in our latest intake, compared with 35% of students on full time first degrees in England generally. We have very few students with experience of care: fewer than 5 students in our latest intake identified themselves as care leavers. As care leaver status is not a mandated field for the HESA AP Student

Record, we have not, to date, collected this information in a systematic way so it is possible that this population is under-recorded.

2.7 To compare our performance in relation to attracting students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (“LPNs”), we have used the HESA Experimental Statistics UK Performance Indicators 2016/17<sup>iii</sup>, which includes our own data. Around 4% of our students come from neighbourhoods defined as quintile 1 in POLAR 3. This is lower than our national and location adjusted benchmarks (11% and 7% respectively), albeit the difference with the latter is not flagged by HESA as statistically significant.

2.8 The male/female balance of PCL is unusual in that 57% of our undergraduates are male. This disparity is entirely accounted for by Escape Studios, which runs three undergraduate programme in computer-based art and design. Such programmes generally attract more boys than girls and we have compared our data with other institutions and our proportion of females is somewhat higher than elsewhere. This is especially true in relation to the Games programme: 29.5% of our intake in 2017 were female, while the national figure (sourced from UCAS end of cycle data for 2017/18 entrants) is 14.1%. The profile of our female entrants to Escape Studios is very similar to the males in terms of ethnicity, disability, age and POLAR scores. There are some minor differences but, bearing in mind the small numbers (just 24 female entrants in 2017/18), these are not statistically significant.

### Success

2.9 We have three years’ complete data on degree completion and classification, representing 100 completing undergraduates. The cohorts have changed during those three years, both with respect to the numbers graduating and the mix of programmes. The numbers increased from 14 in 2014/15 to 56 in 2016/17, with each cohort comprising a different combination of graduates of a Top-up, one year degree; a two-year accelerated degree and (in 2016/17 only) our first graduates of our 3 year degree in Business and Management.

2.10 As might be expected, the data is very variable and no firm conclusions about possible differential attainment by under-represented groups can be drawn. For example, it is pleasing to see that 90% of students with a disability achieved Good Honours (First or Upper Second), but, given that this represents just 9 out of 10 students, we will continue to monitor this metric. BAME students have performed somewhat better than white students: 82% of BAME students gained Good Honours, compared with 79% of white students. Again, with such a small data set and a rapidly changing profile of programmes, we do not draw any firm conclusions, but will continue to monitor this metric.

2.11 The attainment of mature students (aged 21 or over on entry) is somewhat better than younger students: 81% of mature students achieved Good Honours, compared with 77% of younger students. We are not able to carry out an analysis of these cohorts by POLAR score, as we did not receive data from UCAS on these students.

2.12 Data on year 1 to year 2 progression from 2016/17 shows a gap of 20 percentage points between students with disabilities and those without, with the former being less likely to pass first time. Although this data also needs to be treated with caution as it relates to one year only, it is a large enough gap to warrant some action. See sections 4.12 to 4.15 below for further consideration of this issue. Our analysis does not reveal any attainment gaps with respect to progression for other under-represented groups (save for care leavers, dealt with separately below).

2.13 Our retention rates have changed and indeed improved over the past three years. Our most recent figures, for 2017/18 entrants, shows an overall retention rate towards the end of the academic

year (May 2018) of 93.6%. Detailed analysis by student characteristics does not reveal any significant gaps for specific under-represented groups: BAME students have a somewhat better rate than white students (96% compared with 92%), disabled students are comparable to non-disabled (92%/94%), and the retention rates of younger and mature students are almost identical at 93.5% and 93.8%. Our students from POLAR Quintile 1, however, have a slightly lower retention rate than the average (88.5%). As mentioned above, our POLAR score data is the least robust, owing to a high number of unknowns and a very small number of students, but we will continue to monitor this group.

2.14 The retention data for the 201718 entrants shows a considerably improved position when compared with an analysis of students who started in 201516. Of the latter cohort, the withdrawal rate among BAME students has been higher than white students (29.3% compared with 16.3%); disabled students have withdrawn at a higher rate than non-disabled (33.3% compared with 21.8%); and mature students have also been more likely to withdraw than younger students (35.5% compared with 19%). For reasons explained elsewhere, we cannot analyse this data set by POLAR score. We believe that this improvement results from a combination of changes to the profiles of programmes and modes delivered by the College and development and implementation of our retention strategy.

2.15 We have separately analysed the journey of students identifying as care leavers who have enrolled since our data collection was systematised in 2014. There are fewer than ten students in this category, so it is not possible to publish details of this analysis, save to say that we will be introducing measures to improve the success rate of care leavers (see sections 4.12 to 4.15 below).

#### Progression to employment

2.16 We have even less data on our students' progression to employment. We completed our first DLHE survey in 2017 and are proud that 100% of our graduates in academic year 201516 had progressed to employment or further study. Therefore, there was no discernible attainment gap between different groups but, equally, the numbers were small.

2.17 Our graduates are also very successful at obtaining highly skilled employment: 77.4% of those with jobs were in highly skilled posts. Students from under-represented groups did better than this average: 87.5% of BAME students, 100% of disabled students and 81% of mature students were in highly skilled employment.

2.18 Although not published at the date of writing this Plan, we have completed our DLHE survey of 201617 graduates, which shows 94.8% in work or further study 81% of whom are in highly skilled jobs. This data set is slightly larger than our first DLHE but, nevertheless, is still only based on 66 students. We have analysed this data to ascertain whether there are any attainment gaps and found that, again, 100% of disabled students have obtained highly skilled employment. Mature students are doing less well (78.3%), and there is a greater gap with respect to BAME students (53.8%). Given the small numbers, it is too soon to conclude that this represents a trend but, given the large gap and the fact that it is well established that BAME students find it harder to find graduate-level jobs generally, we will be monitoring this metric closely and, if the gap is still evident after the next destinations survey, introduce measures to correct it.

#### Initial conclusions

2.19 Much of our analysis is necessarily tentative, owing to the small numbers and variable data, as discussed above. Nevertheless, we are able to reach initial conclusions to inform the development of this Plan. The data on access indicates that we should focus our resources on applicants from low participation neighbourhoods, care leavers and mature students. Although the data on the success

of students from under-represented groups is somewhat limited, there is enough evidence of a gap between students with disabilities and those without in relation to first time pass rates to warrant action to reverse this. There is also sufficient evidence of lower retention and success among care leavers to invest in measures for additional support for this small group of students. We are also concerned about the recent evidence of an attainment gap for BAME graduates in relation to highly skilled employment.

2.20 We appear to be better able to recruit girls to computer-based programmes than the sector generally and will be investigating the reasons for this and whether there are any inter-sectional implications.

### 3.0 Ambition and strategy

3.1 As a College, we have been, from the outset, committed to widening participation and equality and diversity. Our goal is to reflect the diversity of the community in London and to provide opportunities and promote successful outcomes for all students from all backgrounds. Our culture is inclusive and our strategic approach is embedded throughout the organisation. Our approach to admissions was designed, from the outset, to admit students on the basis of potential rather than only on the basis of academic performance to date. Our teaching and learning strategy has always had inclusivity at its core.

3.2 The new registration system with the Office for Students gives us an opportunity to progress to the next phase of our work on access and participation using the potential availability of additional funds to target investment towards those initiatives which will have the most significant impact on access, success and progression of students from under-represented groups. We have a whole-College approach to the development and implementation of our Access and Participation (“A&P”) Plan, involving both staff and students throughout. This Plan has been developed by our A&P Working Party, which is chaired by a Deputy Vice-Principal and has committed members from amongst the teaching staff in both academic schools and all relevant departments of professional staff, including Talent Development, Student Services, Student Support, Student Recruitment and Finance. There has been wide consultation throughout the College regarding the Plan and it has been agreed by the Governing Body and Executive Team. We will consolidate the whole-College approach by instituting a programme of training for all student-facing staff, so that there is widespread understanding of the Plan and of the particular needs of these groups of students.

3.3 Students have also been involved in the preparation of the Plan, through their representatives on our governance committees and consultation with the Staff Student Liaison Committee. We will ensure that students participate actively in the implementation of the measures through various means, such as focus groups to refine the details and appointments as student outreach ambassadors. Students from the under-represented groups will be consulted about the implementation and further development of the plan, as described in section 4 in relation to the measures we intend to introduce.

3.4 Our strategy is based on the evidential analysis carried out in Section 2 above, and continuing development of this Plan will be based on further and deeper analysis as more data becomes available. We are at an early stage of the growth and development of the College, so we expect that our targets and focus may change as we track the progress of our students throughout their learning journey with us and beyond. Building additional capacity to enable us to track progress, establish more granular data and develop more sophisticated analytical tools for evaluation of our measures is an essential part of our strategy, so that we can refine measures in future years and ensure that they are effective.

3.5 Over the next few years, as we grow and more students complete their studies with us and enter employment, we will learn more about whether there are differential attainment levels between groups of students with different characteristics or backgrounds. At the same time, we will be building a College infrastructure to provide leadership and resources for our work on Access and Participation, which will enable us to evaluate our Plan, refine our targets, conduct research on what has worked (and not worked) elsewhere and develop collaborative relationships with employers and others. We will also develop more robust baselines for our student body for example, by analysing both current and past year groups to establish a statistically significant cohort.

3.6 This plan relates to 2019/20 and the investment will be made during that academic year. During 2018/19, we will be undertaking development and preparatory work which, where relevant, is described in the next section. This includes the creation of a new post of Access and Participation manager to oversee this work. Our policy with respect to fee increases has always been not to increase the tuition fees of current students, so the additional fee income will only relate to new students. This affects the investment available (see Section 5 below) so, in formulating our measures we also considered how best to introduce them in a phased manner over the five year period. Our targets reflect this phased approach, as it will take some years before the measures have a significant impact on the metrics. We also anticipate that our future Access and Participation Plans will include bolder targets and a more extensive range of measures, reflecting both the availability of more sophisticated and granular data and higher levels of investment.

3.7 Our strategy is based on a portfolio of short and long term measures which reflect our priorities and enables us to combine activities which have some immediate impact, for example, on support for our existing cohorts of students with disabilities, with longer term projects aimed at more fundamental long-term change.

3.8 We will collect data on student use of our services e.g. Talent Development, Student Support, so that we can analyse these against student characteristics and see whether these services are equally accessed by different groups. We will refine our use of information such as attendance records, learner analytics from the Online Learning Environment (“OLE”), assessment results and applications for extensions and extenuating circumstances to improve our intelligence about differential engagement and early indications of students facing problems.

3.9 Based on the evidence analysed in Section 2, we will prioritise those activities which are directed towards improving our performance in relation to the following:

- Access by economically disadvantaged students, using POLAR Quintile 1 and/or other measures such as parental occupation, household income or free school meals
- Access by care leavers
- Success of students with disabilities and care leavers.

3.10 We are concerned about the attainment gap between BAME and white students in relation to progressing to highly skilled employment, shown in our latest DLHE survey. However, this result is very different from the first year (where BAME students did better on this metric) and the sample number is small. We do not therefore propose to introduce any specific measures or targets in relation to this yet, as it is too early to establish any trends, but will wait for another year’s data. Instead our Talent Development service will collect data on the use of their services which can be analysed and tracked against student characteristics. This will put us in a good position in future years to develop suitable measures in the event that future progression data confirms this finding or reveals any other attainment gap or issues to be addressed.

3.11 A relatively high proportion of our undergraduate population is on a degree apprenticeship programme and we expect this proportion to increase in future years. Apprenticeships are intended to represent an alternative route into higher education for learners who might otherwise not wish to attend university or have missed an opportunity for higher education at an earlier stage of their education and thus to be a vehicle for widening access. However, our current data suggests that our apprentice students have a similar profile to our student population as a whole. For example, a similar proportion of apprentices come from POLAR Q1 as our general student population at around 4%. We will therefore be reviewing our work with employers and our recruitment strategy to make a concerted effort to seek out learners from low participation neighbourhoods and/or low income families, care leavers and mature students. Our work on this is at an early stage and we expect to have a strategy in place for implementation in 2020/21.

3.12 We have given consideration to the position of mature students in the College. We have a relatively low proportion of mature students and are aware that this is probably, at least to an extent, a result of the nature of our offering which is predominantly based upon face to face, full time programmes. Given the budgetary limitations for 2019/20 and the entrenched nature of this issue, we have postponed development of further measures aimed at mature students to a future plan, to allow time for some detailed research into the types of measures which have been found to be effective elsewhere in the sector, together with consultation with our current mature students.

3.13 Our data shows that we have been relatively successful at attracting female students to the computer-based programmes in Escape Studios. We will investigate the reasons for this success and develop a suite of activities to improve the male/female balance still further with a particular focus on the inter-section between gender and other characteristics. These activities will also focus on schemes to ensure that our female students have the support they need to succeed on the programme and progress to graduate jobs in this male-dominated field.

3.14 We will collect evidence on the effectiveness of the measures and use a tool such as HEAT to assist with evaluating them while, at the same time, we continue to monitor our performance using relevant benchmarks, Heidi Plus and other sector-wide data sources. The Plan will be monitored by the Governing Body, to whom regular reports will be made, including an annual monitoring report which will be prepared in anticipation of the Plan for 2020-21. The individual measures included in this Plan will be monitored on an operational level by the appropriate governance committee, depending on the nature of the measure.

3.15 This Plan has been drawn up with reference to our Equality and Diversity policy so that it coordinates with the College's work on Equality and Diversity in general. Additional resources will be targeted in response to evidence of gaps in performance relating to students from different backgrounds or with particular characteristics, in particular those groups identified as under-represented in Higher Education generally, in order to address existing inequalities. During academic year 2018/19 we will be carrying out preparatory work for the implementation of this Plan in 2019/20 and, as part of this preparation, will carry out an equality impact assessment by the end of July 2019. As the Plan is implemented, we will be evaluating the measures introduced (as described elsewhere in this Plan), and further equality impact assessments will be undertaken with the evaluation.



## 4.0 Access, student success and progression measures

4.1 We will create a new post of A&P manager to lead on our work in this area and oversee the implementation of this Plan and develop future plans.

### Access measures

4.2 We will introduce a series of measures aimed at improving access by students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and/or lower income families and care leavers. We intend to include those described below, although the precise measures may vary as we evaluate our activities.

4.3 **New post of access officer in Student Recruitment team:** The post-holder to work closely with the A&P manager, exclusively focussed on access initiatives for under-represented groups. In the first instance, the post-holder will concentrate on additional measures targeted at applicants who are care leavers or from low income groups and/or low participation neighbourhoods

4.4 **Saturday Clubs:** These are Clubs aimed at 13-16 year olds and their objective is to raise aspiration and attainment. We run these in collaboration with the National Saturday Club<sup>iv</sup>. They run for 30 weeks a year and, during 2017/18 we have run an Art and Design Club for computer graphics. We will review recruitment to this Club and, in 2019/20 target it more specifically at children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds as evidenced by criteria such as POLAR Q1 or free school meals and care leavers. We will evaluate it and, if successful in reaching these under-represented groups and improving the knowledge and skills of the students, we will expand its operation and introduce a second Club for a business-related subject in 2020/21. Students who attend will be surveyed at the outset to provide a baseline assessment of their knowledge of computer graphics. At the conclusion of the programme, they produce a piece of work for submission to the National Saturday Club Summer Show. This work will be assessed by staff against attainment criteria, in order to evaluate the progression of the students' skills and knowledge.

4.5 **Travel Grants:** Our policy is to invite all applicants to an Admissions Workshop, so that we can assess their potential, rather than relying purely on predicted or actual tariffs. We recognise that this may create a barrier to applicants from lower income households, in particular those from outside London, and propose therefore to offer travel grants for applicants who fulfil certain criteria. The criteria will include care leavers, POLAR Q1 or free school meals but more detailed criteria will be developed in time for advertisement prior to the recruitment cycle starting in September 2019. We will monitor the numbers of applicants applying for the travel grants and survey applicants (including those who apply for a travel grant and those who do not) to evaluate whether the existence of the travel grants had an impact on applications and attendance at admissions workshops. We have included this measure under "Hardship Fund" in Table 6a.

4.6 **Outreach for care leavers:** We will develop and launch a specific series of measures aimed at encouraging successful applications from more candidates with experience of care. During 2019/20, this activity will focus on planning and information gathering and the specific activities will be limited, reflecting the budget available and the need to build up expertise in this area in the Student Recruitment team. Development of the strategy will be informed by consultation with our current students and, if possible, former students, who have had experience of care. During this developmental period, we will also consider in detail the most appropriate methods of evaluation of these initiatives. We intend to have a specific strategy relating to outreach for care leavers for implementation in 2021/22, although some limited measures will be introduced in 2020/21, for example:



- Appointment of a student ambassador to specialise in outreach to care leavers (preferably a student with experience of care)
- Collaboration with neighbouring local authorities and virtual schools

4.7 **Review admissions workshop:** We will review our Admissions Workshops to identify any unintended barriers to applicants from under-represented groups, with a particular emphasis on students with disabilities and those from low income families and/or low participation neighbourhoods. This will include a comparison of accepting and non-accepting students to ascertain whether students from particular groups are less likely to attend Admissions Workshops or receive or accept offers. In this review, we will also consider our successes, for example, the relatively good representation of female applicants on our Games programmes, so that we also consolidate our good practice. The review will take into account the views of current students, obtained through focus groups or individual consultations, with particular reference to obtaining the views of students who are members of the targeted groups. The review will also be based on evidence of the effectiveness of the objective tests which we use in our Admissions Workshops, as measured by correlation with degree outcome. Any revisions indicated by the review will come into effect by 2019/20 admissions cycle and will be evaluated by continuing to collect and analyse evidence of degree outcomes and by increased proportion of successful applicants who are disabled or from low income families and/or low participation neighbourhoods.

4.8 **Apprenticeships:** Our business development team will work with the A&P manager and the access officer, in order to collaborate with employers to promote apprenticeship recruitment to under-represented groups, in particular applicants from POLAR Q1, care leavers and mature candidates. As well as discussing with employers, current apprentices will also be consulted. A strategy will be developed in time for implementation in the 2020/21 recruitment cycle. Its success will be evaluated by reference to the targets set for increasing access by the target groups.

4.9 **Outreach for younger age groups:** This is a longer term goal as we will not have the resources to invest in initiatives with primary age students during the early years of this Plan. However, a strategy for younger age groups will be developed for implementation in future years and we aim to have this in place by 2020/21.

4.10 **Fee waivers:** For students commencing their studies in 2019/20, our tuition fee will be £9000 per annum. However, we will offer all these applicants who attend an Admissions Workshop a fee waiver of £1000 per annum bringing the actual fee down to £8000 per annum. We have apportioned a proportion of these fee waivers to students in one or more of the following categories:

- those from POLAR Quintile 1 or Quintile 2
- those with household residual incomes up to £25,000
- care leavers

4.11 **Laptop fund:** Students in our Business School require a laptop or tablet computer to be able to access the online library and the online learning environment and to prepare and submit assessments. We recognise that this may be a barrier to students from low income families and care leavers and propose to have funds available for eligible students. This measure relates to both access and support, as applicants may be discouraged from applying to Pearson College if they do not have a suitable device and, if they join one of our programmes without a suitable device, they are unable to participate properly. We will evaluate this measure by monitoring the number of

successful applicants and surveying those students who take advantage of the scheme. This is also one of the measures which, among others, may enable us to achieve an increase in proportion of students from low income families and care leavers. The laptop grants will be available to students from families with residual income below £25,000, students with Disabled Student Allowance, care leavers and students from POLAR Quintile 1. The scheme will apply to all students whether full time or part time, including apprentices.

#### Success measures

4.12 We will introduce a series of measures aimed at improving the success of students with disabilities and care leavers. We intend to include those described below, although the precise measures may vary as we evaluate our activities. The measures set out in paragraph 4.13 to 4.15, or similar measures, will be introduced during academic year 2019/20 and evaluated with a view to modifying them, or introducing new measures, in the light of experience and the availability of additional data about the retention, progression and attainment of students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, care leavers, students with disabilities or from different ethnicities and mature students.

4.13 **Study skills/mentoring support:** We will appoint a study skills tutor with a remit to work exclusively with students from under-represented groups, in particular students with disabilities, care leavers and students from low income families. This tutor will develop a programme of activities in consultation with students, for example targeted study skills support or employability related workshops, as well as acting as a specialist mentor and trainer for other staff.

4.14 **Targeted pre-induction session:** Students with certain disabilities, in particular social communication disorders, are known to benefit from specific preparation for new environments. We propose to introduce a special orientation session for students with the aim of familiarising them with the new environment. This session may include, for example, activities to promote confidence building, study skills, how to prepare for classes, how to deal with working in groups, introduction to specialist staff and specific guidance to the services available to them. We will consult our current students with social communication disorders on the content of the pre-induction session.

4.15 **Personal tutors:** All Pearson College students are allocated a personal tutor. Specialist training will be given to those personal tutors who have care leavers or students with disabilities among their personal tutees, and these personal tutors will be expected to work closely with the A&P manager and the student support team.

4.16 **Evaluation:** We will evaluate the measures set out in paragraph 4.13 to 4.15 through a combination of self-evaluation by tutors and other staff and questionnaires or qualitative feedback sessions from students who attend. Retention, progression and attainment data is monitored by our Admissions, Progression, Retention and Attainment Committee ("APRAC") which reviews data, broken down by student characteristics, on a regular basis. Success of these measures will be assessed by the milestones and targets set in relation to progression of students with disabilities (Target 16b\_07). In future years, if our data indicates gaps in relation to success of other under-represented groups, further targets will be set.

#### Progression

4.17 **Data collection in Talent Development:** Our Talent Development team will develop their record-keeping to ensure that there is a detailed account of students accessing activities including one-to-ones, workshops and internships, so that these can be analysed to assess use of the service

by under-represented groups. This data will then be used, in combination with destinations data, as it becomes available, to inform future plans.

**4.18 Progression to highly skilled employment:** In the light of our 2016/17 DLHE survey indicating a possible gap between BAME students and white students with respect to obtaining highly skilled employment, we will monitor this metric carefully and, if this is confirmed in the next set of destinations data, set out measures in a future plan and set appropriate targets in close the gap. The data collected (see 4.17) will help us to focus appropriate measures.

#### Combined

**4.19 Training:** We will develop a training programme to raise awareness among all student-facing staff of the issues faced by students from under-represented groups and of this Plan and related policies.

**4.20 Data collection and evaluation:** We will subscribe to HEAT or a similar facility and improve our strategy for data collection at both application and enrolment with a view to including additional non-statutory information, such as care leaver status and parental occupation. We will ensure that data is recorded on the implementation of the measures in this plan, so that they can be properly evaluated. We also subscribe to HEBBS in order to obtain more comprehensive data on the socioeconomic background of our students.

**4.21 Student progression tracking:** We will develop and improve our monitoring of the progression of current students from under-represented groups, including, for example, consistent analysis by student characteristic of withdrawal reports, attendance records, OLE user analytics, applications for extenuating circumstances and extensions and module assessment results. This data will be used by the study skills tutor, student support team and academic staff to provide additional support where students are identified as at risk.

**4.22 Measurement of success:** Throughout this section of our Plan, we have indicated a number of methods of evaluation of the measures which we will introduce to improve the access, success and progression of students from those groups which are under-represented in Higher Education generally, with particular reference to those groups which we know are under-represented in Pearson College. These evaluation methods include self-evaluation by staff and surveys, focus groups and interviews with students. Where possible, numerical targets have been devised and included in Table 8 of our Resource Plan. However, given that we only have limited base line data, we are not always able to set a numerical target. We expect that to change over time, as more students progress through the College, and our targets will become more specific as more information becomes available.

## 5.0 Investment

**5.1** Our decisions about the amount of investment we intend to make in access and participation measures have been based on current information and government policy on fees and fee increases and may be subject to change. We intend to allocate 18% of our additional fee income to measures targeted at under-represented groups overall.

**5.2** The amount of money available to us is modest when compared with larger, more established HEIs, amounting to around £291,892 in 2019/20 but is appropriate to our size. Our policy of not increasing fees for continuing students, means that the additional income available to us is limited in 2019/20 to new students. However, we expect the fund available for investment in access

and participation to increase markedly year-on-year, until it stabilises in 2022/23. Our future Access and Participation Plans are therefore likely to have significantly higher levels of investment.

5.3 Given our limited funds, especially in the early years of our Access and Participation Plans, we need to target the investment carefully and have chosen measures which reflect our student body and where we believe the investment can make the most difference.

5.4 Division of investment between financial support, access, success and progression in 2019/20 is shown below. In future years, we expect this balance to change with more investment set aside for financial support, as more budget becomes available, and more focus on progression, as we gather more data about the destinations of our graduates.

Financial support	50%	£145,592
Access	26%	£77,185
Success	16%	£45,270
Progression	8%	£23,845

Expressing this as a percentage of the total higher fee income the investment is as follows:

Access investment (as % HFI)	4.8
Success investment (as % HFI)	2.8
Progression investment (as % HFI)	1.5
Investment in financial support (as % HFI)	9.0
Access investment in £	77,185
Success investment	45,270
Progression investment	23,845
Investment in financial support	145,592
Total investment	291,892

## 6.0 Provision of information to students

6.1 We currently have a Fees and Funding section for every programme which we advertise on our website, which sets out all the likely costs of that programme and is compliant with CMA guidelines. It includes a statement of our policy of not imposing fee increases for continuing students. We also have a section on the website setting out the position regarding fee waivers and student loans. There are links in every programme page to the information about fee waivers and student loans.

6.2 We are developing our Hardship Fund to explicitly assist students from low-income backgrounds and care leavers, in particular to supply them with the funds to purchase a laptop or tablet to assist with their studies and travel grants for applicants to attend Admissions Workshops. Our information about the Hardship Fund will include information about the nature and timing of payments from the Hardship Fund, the criteria and process for application.

6.3 Once approved by the Office for Students, this A&P plan will be posted on our website, alongside other general information for students and applicants.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he> [last accessed 12.6.18]

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.londonhigher.ac.uk/ceo-blog/student-numbers-in-london/> [accessed 12.6.18]

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/27-03-2018/experimental-uk-performance-indicators Table T1](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/27-03-2018/experimental-uk-performance-indicators-Table-T1) [last accessed 12.6.18]

<sup>iv</sup> <https://saturday-club.org/>

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

No inflation has been applied to course fees at this time.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	First Degree - Returning	£6,165
First degree	First Degree - New	£9,000
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise 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		*
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		*

**Table 8a** - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16a_01	Access	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase the proportion of entrants from POLAR Q1	No	2017-18	4.69% of entrants are from Q1 in POLAR 3, compared with 11.4% national and 7.4% location adjusted benchmark	5%	6.5%	6.5%	7%	7.5%	Our new measures to tackle this target will commence in earnest during the applications cycle starting September 2019.
T16a_02	Success	Care-leavers	Other statistic - Care-leavers (please give details in the next column)	Increase the retention and progression rate (year 1 to year 2) for care leavers	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	See Description column	50%	55%	55%	60%	65%	Based on data for all care leavers since we started collecting data systematically (2014), 50% of care leavers progressed successfully from year one to year two. We will seek to increase this figure. It should be noted that the numbers are small.
T16a_03	Progression	Ethnicity	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Monitor progression of BAME students to highly skilled employment and target interventions where necessary including specific talent development programmes for this groups.	No	2016-17	53.8% of BAME students progressed to highly skilled employment as opposed to 81% of all Pearson College students.	Analyse the data to see if this represents a trend and develop targeted interventions if the data shows a need.	Continue to analyse the data and implement targeted interventions.	Continue to analyse the data and implement targeted interventions.	Preparation of strategy on basis of a sufficient number of years and volume of data.	Implement the strategy.	Due to being a young institution we have only 2 years of data for this and the number of students in the data set is very small. Our first year showed no gap in progression of students from under-represented groups however our second year showed a gap of progression of BAME students to highly skilled employment (58%) as against 81% overall. We will analyse the data annually to see if this represents a trend and target interventions accordingly. Moving to a comprehensive strategy once we have sufficient years and volume of data.



**Table 8b** - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
T16b_01	Access	Attainment raising	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Saturday Club for 13-16 year olds for Art and Design and Business	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	One Saturday Club	One Saturday Clubs attended by 20 participants from under-represented groups	One Saturday Clubs attended by 20 participants from under-represented groups	Two Saturday Clubs each attended by 20 participants from under-represented groups	Two Saturday Clubs each attended by 20 participants from under-represented groups	Two Saturday Clubs each attended by 20 participants from under-represented groups	Add a Business Saturday Club in 2020/21.
T16b_02	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Develop a strategy for outreach to younger age groups including primary	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	No activity with primary at present	0	Preparation of strategy	Strategy agreed and in place	Strategy agreed and in place	Strategy agreed and in place	This is a new area of activity and we expect therefore to revise targets and make them more specific and ambitious in future years.
T16b_03	Access	Care-leavers	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Develop a strategy for outreach to care leavers to improve entry to higher education by this group	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Preparation of strategy	Strategy agreed and in place	Strategy agreed and in place	Strategy agreed and in place	This is a new area of activity and we expect therefore to revise targets and make them more specific and ambitious in future years.
T16b_04	Multiple	Multiple	Mission targets	Appoint a new Manager for Access and Participation and develop the strategy for a whole College approach	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Preparation of strategy	Strategy agreed and in place	Strategy agreed and in place	Strategy agreed and in place	Development of the A&P strategy will inform measures and targets for future plans.
T16b_05	Multiple	Multiple	Contextual data	Improve data collection of non-statutory data at enrolment and develop a data analysis strategy, including subscription to HEAT or development of similar facility	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Subscribe to HEAT and HEBBS or develop/subscribe to similar facilities	Subscribe to HEAT and HEBBS or develop/subscribe to similar facilities	Subscribe to HEAT and HEBBS or develop/subscribe to similar facilities	Subscribe to HEAT and HEBBS or develop/subscribe to similar facilities	HEAT or similar facility to be used to evaluate targets and measures and inform future plans. HEBBS to provide data on socioeconomic status of students and assist with developing fee waiver/bursary strategy
T16b_06	Success	Multiple	Operational targets	Develop and implement a training programme for academic and student services staff to support implementation of the access and participation plan and improve knowledge and skill of staff regarding the needs of under-represented groups	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	See description column	0	50% of relevant staff to attend at least one training session	90% of relevant staff to attend at least one training session	90% of relevant staff to attend at least one training session	90% of relevant staff to attend at least one training session	
T16b_07	Multiple	Multiple	Contextual data	Improve contemporaneous tracking of students from under-represented groups in order to monitor progress and target interventions where necessary, including attendance, OLE learner analytics, applications for extensions etc. Appoint new study skills tutor	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Preparation of systems. Appointment of part time study skills support tutor	Implementation of tracking system	Implementation of tracking system	Implementation of tracking system	Systems for monitoring and tracking progression in students are in place but not currently sufficiently refined to target those with specific characteristics. The tracking system to be monitored and implemented by new study skills support tutor

T16b_08	Access	Attainment raising	Other (please give details in Description column)	Increase the computer graphics knowledge and skills of attendees at Saturday Clubs (13 to 16 year olds)	Yes	2018-19	See Commentary column	At least 70% of those attending the Saturday Club will produce a piece of work at the end of the programme which gains a mark of 40% on assessment by tutors	At least 70% of those attending the Saturday Club will produce a piece of work at the end of the programme which gains a mark of 40% on assessment by tutors	At least 70% of those attending the Saturday Club will produce a piece of work at the end of the programme which gains a mark of 40% on assessment by tutors	At least 70% of those attending the Saturday Club will produce a piece of work at the end of the programme which gains a mark of 40% on assessment by tutors	At least 70% of those attending the Saturday Club will produce a piece of work at the end of the programme which gains a mark of 40% on assessment by tutors	School students attending our Saturday Clubs will be surveyed at the start of the Club to assess their knowledge of computer graphics and specifically of the software being taught. On past experience we expect the majority of attendees to have negligible or no knowledge of the software. Work produced at the end will be assessed against criteria which will be individualised to measure the attainment of the students from each individual baseline. Saturday Clubs are run in collaboration with the National Saturday Club.
T16b_09	Success	Multiple	Other (please give details in Description column)	Establish a programme of specific support sessions for care leavers and students with disabilities to improve retention and success, for example additional pre-sessional orientation and on-programme study skills	No	2017-18	See Commentary column	0	At least 4 sessions organised and attended by at least 50% of students in target groups	At least 4 sessions organised and attended by at least 50% of students in target groups	At least 4 sessions organised and attended by at least 50% of students in target groups	At least 4 sessions organised and attended by at least 50% of students in target groups	Our absolute numbers of students in both these groups are small and the data on success is very limited, albeit this limited data does indicate that both groups perform less well than students without these characteristics. These factors make it impossible to set meaningful numerical outcome targets at present. In future years, we expect these targets to develop as more data becomes available.
T16b_10	Access	Multiple	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Appoint a new Access Officer with exclusive focus on outreach activities for under-represented groups	No	2017-18	0	0	Post-holder in place	Post-holder in place	Post-holder in place	Post-holder in place	