



2019-20 access and participation plan monitoring

Provider impact report

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

1. Ambition and strategy

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

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 with the 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan is to target dedicated investment towards 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. There has been wide consultation on the plan across the College and it has been approved by Academic Board and Governing Body.

As a young institution, we will focus, over the next few years, on 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. 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.

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. In 2019/20, 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.

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. The individual measures included in this Plan will be monitored on an operational level by appropriate governance committees, including regular monitoring from the Governing Body through annual reporting.

Our 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 underrepresented in Higher Education generally, in order to address existing inequalities. As the Plan is implemented, we will be evaluating the measures introduced, and equality impact assessments will be undertaken with the evaluation.

Implementation of the College’s Access and Participation Plan is monitored by the Access and Participation Working Group and the Review and Enhancement Committee, and is overseen by the Governing Body.

2. Self-assessment of targets

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

Please note the tables contain only a summary of target milestones approved in 2019-20 access and participation plans. Full information can be found in **Table 8a – statistical targets and milestones** and **Table 8b – Other milestones and targets** of Pearson College Limited’s 2019-20 [access and participation plan](#).

Any optional commentary provided against the targets is given in [Annex B](#).

Statistical targets and milestones

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16a_01 (Access)	Increase the proportion of entrants from POLAR Q1	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%	Percentage	2019-20	6.1	Limited progress
T16a_02 (Success)	Increase the retention and progression rate (year 1 to year 2) for care leavers	Other (please give details in Description column)	See Description column	50%	55%	Percentage	2019-20	100	Expected progress
T16a_03 (Progression)	Monitor progression of BAME students to highly skilled employment and target interventions where necessary including specific talent development programmes for this groups.	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.	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress

Other milestones and targets

Reference Number (lifecycle stage)	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	2018-19 milestone	2019-20 milestone	Units of target	Comparison year	Actual performance in comparison year	Target self-assessment
T16b_01 (Access)	Saturday Club for 13-16 year olds for Art and Design and Business	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	Headcount	2019-20	16	Limited progress
T16b_02 (Access)	Develop a strategy for outreach to younger age groups including primary	Other (please give details in Description column)	No activity with primary at present	0	Preparation of strategy	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_03 (Access)	Develop a strategy for outreach to care leavers to improve entry to higher education by this group	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Preparation of strategy	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress
T16b_04 (Multiple)	Appoint a new Manager for Access and Participation and develop the strategy for a whole College approach	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Preparation of strategy	N/A (see description / commentary)	2018-19		Expected progress
T16b_05 (Multiple)	Improve data collection of non-statutory data at enrolment and develop a data analysis strategy, including subscription to HEAT or development of similar facility	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Subscribe to HEAT and HEBBS or develop/subscribe to similar facilities	N/A (see description / commentary)	2018-19		Expected progress
T16b_06 (Success)	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	Other (please give details in Description column)	See description column	0	50% of relevant staff to attend at least one training session	Percentage	2018-19	70	Expected progress

T16b_07 (Multiple)	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	Other (please give details in Description column)	See commentary column	0	Preparation of systems. Appointment of part time study skills support tutor	N/A (see description / commentary)	2018-19		Expected progress
T16b_08 (Access)	Increase the computer graphics knowledge and skills of attendees at Saturday Clubs (13 to 16 year olds)	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	Percentage	2019-20	100	Limited progress
T16b_09 (Success)	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	2017-18	See Commentary column	0	At least 4 sessions organised and attended by at least 50% of students in target groups	Percentage	2018-19	12.5	Limited progress
T16b_10 (Access)	Appoint a new Access Officer with exclusive focus on outreach activities for under-represented groups	2017-18	0	0	Post-holder in place	N/A (see description / commentary)	2019-20		Expected progress

3. Investment commitments

3.1. Access and participation investment for the last audited year

Please note that some differences in predicted vs actual spend may be due to reporting differences between academic and financial years.

Financial year	2019-20		
	Predicted spend (£)	Actual spend (£)	Difference (ppt)
Access investment	£77,185.00	£137,000.00	77%
Financial Support	£145,591.66	£121,000.00	-17%

4. Action plan

Where progress was less than expected Pearson College Limited has made the following commitments to increase the rate of progress against their targets.

Reference Number	Steps that will be taken in the future to make expected progress against target
T16a_01	<p>As part of our preparation for our 2020-24 APP, we have planned outreach work targeted at students from Quintile 1 areas which address students in Key Stage 5, in addition to our existing activity focussed on Students in Key Stages 3 and 4. We hope this more sustained contact with students from Quintile 1 areas will drive increased recruitment from these groups. This outreach offering is spread across both Schools and will accept its first cohort of participants in 2020-21.</p> <p>We have also instituted a digital marketing campaign aimed explicitly at offer-holders from POLAR Quintile 1 areas advertising our extensive support offering, and hope that this will encourage more Quintile 1 students to choose to study with us.</p>

T16b_01	<p>We have adopted a markedly different recruitment approach for the 2020-21 cycle.</p> <p>We now have access to the HEAT service, meaning we are able to target specific schools based on the number of their students who are from a Q1 ward. While this has proved challenging in the context of extended school closures, we have seen some applicants through this route.</p> <p>We have targeted Q1 wards through mail door-drops; in the first phase of recruitment we targeted 4000 postcodes, which also lead to Q1 applicants.</p> <p>We have asked external organisations with pre-existing ties to underrepresented students to advertise our opportunities for us. This has resulted in steady progress; as of early February 2021, 33% of the applicant field across all outreach streams were from underrepresented backgrounds.</p>
T16b_08	<p>In anticipation of the possible need to run interventions entirely online in 2020-21, we designed our skills evaluation to take place through baseline and progress surveys to ensure we could assess progress even if students were not able to use the full range of software available through in-person teaching.</p>
T16b_09	<p>We have introduced several new ways of reaching students in our target groups to encourage them to seek support. All students from target groups are added onto a specific group on our OLE at the start of the year where engagement opportunities are advertised. Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Ambassadors have been appointed who work in a liaison and co-design role with both students and staff to spread awareness of the support available. We are also designing new communications campaigns which will advise applicants from target groups about the support they can access before they begin studying with us, in order to build a sense of community and familiarity with the key staff members involved and normalise the process of seeking help. This has started to have positive effects on engagement, with 50% of new care leavers engaging in pre-induction support and greater engagement with employability support when on-course.</p>

5. Confirmation

Pearson College Limited confirms that:

Student engagement	
Have you worked with your students to help them complete the access and participation plan monitoring student submission?	
Yes	
Have you engaged with your student body in the design, evaluation, and monitoring of the plan?	
Yes	
Verification and sign off	
Pearson College Limited has confirmed that the information included in this impact report is accurate, that it has been compiled in line with OfS guidance, and that it is being submitted on behalf of the governing body of the provider.	
Yes	
Accountable officer sign off	
Name	Dr Roxanne Stockwell
Position	Principal, Pearson College London

Annex A: Commentary on progress against targets

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

Target reference number: T16a_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
When considering young, full-time, first degree entrants from POLAR3 Quintile 1, we have made significant progress towards our target, but have not met it, falling 0.4% short. It should be noted that due to small sample sizes, we would only have had to admit two more students within this category to exceed our target.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
The outreach activity we delivered in 2019-20 was aimed at Key Stages 3 and 4, and as such we were not in a position to rapidly diversify our activity to reach students who would be admitted in the 2019-20 admissions cycle. We undertook ad hoc outreach events when able to, for instance with London Higher, which focussed on POLAR Q1 students. We have subsequently built the Uni Connect consortia into our marketing strategy for our outreach work in 2020-21.

Target reference number: T16b_01
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
The attendance component of this target was affected by Covid-19. Please refer to the Monitoring Return for details. Before lockdown restrictions were imposed, an average of 16 students were attending each session, close to target numbers. Of the 25 individual students who attended at least once, 7 (28%) came from underrepresented backgrounds (POLAR Q1, IMD Q1, free school meals recipients or care leavers). We have identified this as an area for improvement for 2020-21.
Have you taken any additional steps other than that detailed in the plan to reach the selected milestone?
To ensure the attendance of students from underrepresented groups, we contacted seven virtual schools in London to advertise the Saturday Club, and targeted recruitment efforts towards schools near Q1 wards. During the recruitment phase, we did not have institutional access to HEAT, which meant targeted schools with high Q1 populations (as opposed to geographical proximity) was not possible. While students from the schools we targeted did attend the Saturday Club, most of them were not from Q1 wards.

Target reference number: T16b_08
How have you met the commitments in your plan related to this target?
This target was affected by Covid-19. Please see the Monitoring Return for further details. Because we were not able to complete all the technical skills teaching we had planned for the

Saturday Club, and students had therefore not reached the expected level of proficiency with the software in question, we elected not to assess students' work formally so as not to discourage them.

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

Instead of a formal assessment, we conducted an attitudinal survey which asked students about their views of their skills.

100% of students who completed the course after lockdown restrictions were imposed agreed that 'My passion for this subject has increased'; 'I'm better at communicating my ideas'; 'I've developed my practical skills for this subject'; and 'I'm better at crafting and improving my work'.

Target reference number: T16b_09

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

We have had limited success in attracting students with disabilities and care leavers to participate in pre-induction support activities. Although we organised pre-sessional activities for eligible students, no student elected to attend these sessions in 2019/20.

Study skills support was accessed by 132 individual students, of whom 25.8% had a disability against a College population of 14.7% of students with declared disability/ learning difficulty. In line with our 2020-24 Access and Participation Plan, Black students, students from POLAR3 Q1 wards, and care leavers were also offered this support. 43.9% of students accessing study skills support fell into at least one target group. So in terms of study support, we have very nearly met our target. It should be noted that this work is additional to that conducted by the Student Support Administration Manager, who in 2019-20 supported 70 individual students with disabilities and additional learning needs.

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

As this was our first year of delivering this activity, we decided not to vary it from the strategies set out in our Access and Participation Plan in order to establish a baseline engagement level to work from. Using the experience of 2019-20's delivery, we have extended our approach in 2020-21.

Annex B: Optional commentary on targets

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

Reference Number	Optional commentary
T16a_01	When mature students (21 and over at the point of admission) are included in the analysis, we comfortably exceed our target, with students in this category reaching 8% of our enrolling population. These additional students are primarily studying for Degree Apprenticeships.
T16a_02	
T16a_03	<p>We have tracked the graduate destinations of students from our 2018 and 2019 graduating cohorts and coded their employment status using the ONS Occupation Coding Tool. Where it has not been possible to ascertain a student's employment status, they have been excluded from the analysis.</p> <p>The analysis reveals that in the 2018 cohort 54.2% of BAME students (n=24) were in highly skilled employment or further study six months after graduating, compared to 69.3% of all Pearson College students (n=75). In the 2019 graduating cohort, 62.5% of BAME students (n=40) were in highly skilled employment or further study six months after graduating, compared to 74.5% of all Pearson College students (n=137).</p> <p>We have implemented several targeted interventions over the course of 2019-20, including piloting an employability skills programme (Future Leaders), appointing the Study Skills Tutor, exploring the possibility of offering internships targeted towards BAME students, and making laptop loans available to students from particular BAME ethnic groups to assist them in completing their academic work.</p>
T16b_01	The figure entered in column T reflects the average number of students attending sessions prior to lockdown restrictions.
T16b_02	The strategy has been written and is currently progressing through the College's governing committees for approval.
T16b_03	The strategy has been written and approved, and is being implemented.
T16b_04	The Access and Participation Manager was appointed in July 2019.
T16b_05	The College subscribed to HEAT and the Bursary Administration Service (formerly HEBSS) in 2019-20; the systems are being used in delivery of the 2020-24 APP.

T16b_06	<p>1. Training in 2019-20 focussed on introducing the Access and Participation Plan, and supporting disabled students, delivered by the Access and Participation Manager. 2. Training on care experienced students, delivered by Become, the external charity. 3. Training on students with social and communication disorders, delivered by Kings College London. 4. Mental health awareness training for tutors and student services delivered by the mental health counsellor. 5. Mental Health First-Aid training for tutors in Escape delivered by ScreenSkills, an external creative arts organisation. approximately 70% of relevant staff attended relevant training in support of our A&P initiatives in 2019/20.</p>
T16b_07	<p>A part-time Study Skills Tutor was appointed in Autumn 2019. In preparation for our 2020/21 Plan, we have since hired a full-time, permanent position working exclusively with access and participation target students in Autumn 2020. The first study skills tutor has also joined us full-time, so the College now employs 2 full-time study skills tutors, one of whom is dedicated solely to students in our access and participation categories.</p> <p>Subscription to HEAT has allowed engagement with both access and participation interventions (study skills support and the Future Leaders programme) to be tracked more systematically and effectively, as well as providing other teams from the College who interact with students an easy, reliable way to record their work. As data accumulates in the HEAT database, this will also make the analysis of this engagement by the access and participation team easier. Similarly, subscribing to the Bursary Administration Service has provided the College with much more granular detail about the socioeconomic background of our student body, revealing significantly higher levels of low-income students than we previously thought present. College-wide KPIs in terms of admission, retention and attainment are now tracked in terms of access and participation target groups as well as the general student population, and these figures are reviewed at senior College committees. Applications for appeals, and malpractice cases are now all analysed according to access and participation target groups; again, as this data accumulates, we will analyse it and identify any emerging areas of concern or improvement. Planning work has also begun on more sophisticated data tools to track student attendance and performance, including creating an interface for the easy tracking of students whose attainment has begun to cause concern which will be kept updated with live data.</p>
T16b_08	<p>The figure entered in column T reflects the percentage of students who completed the course who agreed with evaluation statements reflecting an improvement in their technical skills and subject engagement.</p>
T16b_09	<p>The figure entered in column T reflects the percentage of disabled students and care experienced students at the College who opted to receive study skills support.</p>
T16b_10	<p>The Access and Participation Officer was appointed in February 2020. We have opted to have the role focus on access and participation initiatives full time rather than sitting within the Recruitment team.</p>