

Norwich University of the Arts

Access agreement for 2016-17

1. Context

- 1.1 Norwich University of the Arts has continued to experience a strong demand for its courses as a recognition of the quality of work undertaken by its staff and students. The University remains committed to fair access, equality of opportunity for applicants and support for all of its students, particularly those applicants attracted from groups under-represented in Higher Education (HE).
- 1.2 The University continues to demonstrate and evidence a good record of performance in widening participation and fair access over the past decade. The University has grown and now has in excess of 1,800 undergraduate, taught postgraduate and postgraduate research students that comprise its learning community. Students continue to be drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds and educational experiences. During the preceding 5 years the University has consistently met or exceeded the relevant national benchmarks for the recruitment of students from under-represented groups in HE (percentage from state schools, Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN's), and National Statistics Socio-economic Classification 4-7(NS-SEC 4-7)).
- 1.3 The University has performed well against sector benchmarks for retention of students over the past years, meeting or exceeding most of the sector benchmarks for each group. The University is far from complacent in evaluating its performance against these benchmarks and continues to monitor these closely to ensure that recruitment and retention activities are targeted effectively and appropriately. The challenges to fair access in the current economic and demographic climate for UK Higher Education are not insignificant, and strenuous efforts are made by the University to mitigate, as far as practicable, the wider contextual risks to social inclusion, participation and success in HE.
- 1.4 In noting our comparative success against national and location-adjusted sector benchmarks, the University considers that predicting the medium to long-term impacts of increased fee levels and student borrowing with any degree of accuracy remains challenging. The complexity of anticipating the future participation or engagement of applicants from the most debt-averse sectors of society and groups historically under-represented in HE is further complicated by the introduction of alternatives to HE and the offer of private providers within an increasingly fragmented sector. Whilst we closely monitor data and trends from past years, it remains unclear whether early 'blips' in information will emerge as longer term trends to predictor applicant and student behaviours. The University is using available information gathered from a range of sources regarding entry, achievement and retention data to promote the use of **Evidence and evaluation** in concentrating available resources on the most effective, proven and measurable indicators of impact and success. Evidence so far is beginning to clearly indicate and reinforce the

view that outreach activities are highly and potentially the most effective means of promoting fair access to HE and eliciting applications for prospective entrants from under-represented groups.

- 1.5 The University collaborates wherever possible with other organisations; Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Schools and other public and private sector partners in order to maximise the beneficial impacts of work and reduce duplication of effort. The University has continued its engagement with other HEI partners through participation in the 'Move on up', 'Fly' and the 'Eyes on the Prize' initiative in collaboration with other regional providers. The University is also part of the Suffolk and Norfolk Collaborative Network (comprising the University of East Anglia (UEA), University Campus Suffolk (UCS), Norwich University of the Arts (NUA), City College Norwich and regional HE providers (UCS Centres for HE, Easton and Otley College, and College of West Anglia)) to reach out to every school in the region, ensure best practice and facilitate collaborative working aimed at increasing engagement of schools in the east.
- 1.6 Collaborative working for NUA involves collaboration with national as well as regional partners who are specialist providers within the HE sector. We continue to be an active member of the National Arts Learning Network (NALN) now incorporated as part of UKADIA (the UK Arts and Design Institutions Association) and have recently signed up to a new UKADIA project targeted at WP students. The University also works with other partners such as the Museums Service, Arts Council and a commercial television company in terms of taking its HE offer to (primarily) mature learners within workplace environments. The University is optimistic that this work will reach out to target groups who currently have little or no contact (or aspiration) with UK HE.
- 1.7 As described elsewhere, a number of our outreach activities are collaboratively driven; these include the Schools & Colleges Day (4.3.5), the provision and maintenance of Progression Agreements with feeder institutions (4.3.5), and 'Taster' sessions for prospective mature applicants with no prior HE experience (4.3.8). We are keen to further strengthen our collaborative work and have included targets to increase the number of Progression Agreements over the forthcoming period, as well as enhancing links with schools and engaging potentially a greater range and volume of WP applicants via taster sessions.
- 1.8 Based on the University's current entry profiles, and premised on our history of success in Widening Participation (WP), we continue our planning on the basis that the greatest potential impact of the revised fee regime will be on prospective young entrants to HE from SEC groups 4 - 7 potential applicants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and mature applicants with more established life and financial commitments and constraints. On the basis of previous experience, the University is concentrating its outreach and retention initiatives on those activities that are most likely to mitigate emerging impacts of the change in HE fee structure. These activities focus on supporting the participation and continuity of study for under-represented groups in HE, this

in the face of ongoing economic uncertainty both within and beyond the HE sector.

- 1.9 The University's approach to the OFFA/Access Agreement and to its strategy for widening participation continues to weigh the imperatives of delivering effective outreach and robust retention in support of the continued success of our students. The quality and breadth of the University's course offer, its level of fee, and the targets and milestones for widening participation for 2015-16 onwards are, we believe, aspirational and challenging.
- 1.10 The University recognises that there is no single definition of widening participation, for the purposes of our OFFA/Access Agreement and its accompanying milestones and targets. The term 'WP' is used with reference to engaging target groups that have been identified as under-represented in UK Higher Education and in keeping with our proposed actions to ensure the success of such groups and individuals when they embark on a course of Higher Education through to its completion. This pluralistic approach to WP is emblematic of the University's commitment in terms of both finance and resources, to supporting and promoting fair access to its specialist courses in arts, design and media.

2. Fair Admissions

- 2.1 Admissions procedures at the University are designed to offer equal access to all applicants. The University works closely with SPA (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions) to ensure currency of admissions practice and to facilitate professional updating with regard to its admissions processes. The University also continues to engage with UCAS, GuildHE (Admissions Network), and CHEAD to enhance its admissions procedures in keeping with current and emerging best practice in the sector. Revisions to entry profiles, published information, and procedures for assessing the needs of applicants with disabilities fully engage with SPA guidance and advice.
- 2.2 In common with the majority of art, design and media HE providers, applicants are invited to interview and their potential is assessed on the quality of their portfolio of creative work. Applicants access information on the application and interview process, portfolio preparation and other services provided by the University through the on-line Applicant Portal. The University has continued to improve the information delivered through this portal which we believe enhances the experience of applicants enabling them to make arrangements for interviews online, at their convenience. This assists applicants from all backgrounds in simplifying the application and entry process and providing contact information for further queries. Feedback from applicants collated from the 2013/14 admissions round indicated that 96% of respondents agreed that the Applicant Portal was easy to use and 97% agreed that the information was clear and useful to them. Feedback collected from 2014-15 applicants recorded similar satisfaction levels of 95% and 95% respectively while initial feedback from applicants for 2015-16 has indicated slightly higher satisfaction levels of 97% for both the ease of access to the portal and the usefulness of the information provided.

- 2.3 The University has in place specific provision for applicants who declare a disability; an initial offer is made on the basis of the academic judgment of the interview panel, and support needs are further assessed by the Disability Support Group to ensure that the University can meet students' individual requirements and facilitate reasonable adjustment where appropriate. The Applicant Portal contains information on how to access disability support for the interview and an explanation of the application process.
- 2.4 The University continues to maintain and extend its Progression Agreements with FE colleges, schools and academies, employing the principles and protocols developed by lifelong learning networks such as the National Arts Learning Network. We maintain our active engagement in the National Arts Learning Network, as an integral part of the UK Art and Design Institutions Association (UKADIA), who continue to help disseminate good practice within the sector.

3. Fees

3.1 Tuition fees for new entrants from 2016-17

The University will charge £9,000 per annum to new entrants for its undergraduate courses in 2016-17, including those entering onto Year 0 of a 4 year degree.

Fees will rise in future years by no more than inflation and within permitted parameters from Her Majesty's Government.

The same fee level will be set for all undergraduate courses offered by the University.

4. Expenditure on access, retention and progression

4.1 Estimated expenditure on access, retention and progression measures for 2016-17

- 4.1.1 The University expects to spend approximately £1,272,000 in 2016-17 on financial support, access, student success and progression measures. This equates to approximately 23% of the forecast higher fee income.

This expenditure will be broadly split between direct financial support for students (£692,000) and access, student success and progression measures targeted at under-represented groups (£580,000).

- 4.1.2 All of this expenditure is countable under the definition provided by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA).

4.2 Assessment of access and retention record to date

- 4.2.1 The University currently recruits a high proportion of students from under-represented groups and has exceeded the HESA benchmarks in this area

over the past 5 years. The University has set its targets to provide challenging targets that will be sustainable in the longer term. The following paragraphs outline key performance indicators.

- 4.2.2 Participation of young students from socio-economic class NS-SEC 4-7 at the University increased by 70% between 2007-08 and 2012-13. The University has continued to improve participation from this under-represented group from 35.5% of young entrants in 2011-12 to 41.7% in 2013-14, exceeding the location adjusted benchmarks in each year (35.2% and 35.7% respectively). Targets reflect a challenging but achievable level of recruitment in a period of uncertainty.
- 4.2.3 The percentage of undergraduate students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods has remained above the HESA location adjusted benchmark since 2007-08. Participation based on the Participation of Local Areas (POLAR3) classification shows that the percentage of students from LPNs has increased from 15.5% to 17.3% between 2010-11 and 2013-14 (location adjusted benchmark of 12.8%).
- 4.2.4 The percentage of mature students with no HE experience and from Low Participation Neighbourhoods declined from 22.1% in 2011-12 to 13% in 2012-13 with the introduction of new fees. In 2013-14 the proportion of mature entrants increased from 13% to 15%. The University will continue to focus on identifying effective mechanisms for encouraging mature applicants and has set its targets to reflect a return to at least 20% by 2019-20.
- 4.2.5 The number of new entrants with a declared disability has increased from 102 in 2007-08 to 152 in 2013-14. This represents an increase of 49% over the period. The proportion of disabled students accessing DSA support has increased from 8.6% in 2007-08 to 16.6% in 2013-14. We believe that this is a direct result of early intervention during the admissions process and targeted publicity aimed at students with disabilities. In view of the changes to the Disabled Students Allowance effective from 2016-17, it is no longer appropriate to compare the proportion of students accessing DSA pre and post change. The University will continue to evaluate the success of its recruitment and support for disabled students through measurement of retention and success outputs.
- 4.2.6 The University's recruitment of students from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds has increased from 5% in 2007-08 to 8% in 2013-14. The University encourages participation of potential applicants through focused outreach activities and its inclusive admissions processes.
- 4.2.7 The University has a robust retention record for all students and will continue to focus attention on retaining and adding value to applicants from under-represented groups. HESA indicators show that the percentage of young students who continue at the same HEI has been at or above the HESA sector benchmark since 2006-07. In 2013-14 the percentage of mature first degree entrants in 2012-13 who continued or qualified at the University fell slightly below the sector benchmark for the first time (83.6% compared to the

sector benchmark of 85.4%). The University monitors retention of under-represented groups as part of its ongoing commitment to widening participation.

4.2.8 Whilst achievement, retention, diversity and social mobility are all key elements within the glossary of widening participation and fair access, the University also feels that integration is a further, and often neglected, driver for inclusion, curriculum design and the delivery of day-to-day services for students. The nuanced and potentially invisible investment made to promote integration with a student body, we believe should also be 'counted' within the vocabulary of fair access and student opportunity.

4.2.9 The University's priority areas for widening participation are consistent with previous reporting and are as follows:

- To encourage access to students from low participation neighbourhoods and socio-economic groups 4 to 7 through its targeted outreach activities with designated schools and colleges (4.3.2).
- Ensuring access from mature students through targeted outreach activities (4.3.8).
- To ensure that students with disabilities are given opportunities for fair access through increased intervention and support prior to interview (2.3) and reasonable adjustment post-acceptance. .
- To encourage access, applications and enrolments to students from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds through targeted outreach work in areas with a high percentage of BAME pupils, including London, Bedford and Luton (4.3.9).
- To focus resources to address the differential in retention and achievement for students from widening participation backgrounds. This work will have a particular focus on students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and will build on work which concentrates retention and student success activity (4.4.6).
- To implement the revised Undergraduate Framework to more firmly embed enterprise, entrepreneurship and preparation for freelance working within the curriculum and to promote these as viable and accessible employment routes, particularly for students from underrepresented groups.
- To actively promote applications from care leavers through targeted outreach and dedicated advice, guidance and support (4.3.10).

4.3 Overview of investment in outreach and access

4.3.1 The University's outreach activities over the forthcoming period are based on statistical evidence and measurement of success of established and emerging practices in reaching WP students and are informed by feedback from schools, colleges, individual applicants and other public and private sector organisations. Our continued intention is to carry on building on such activities, which are concentrated around WP learner constituencies in schools, colleges and the wider community.

- 4.3.2 The University will continue to work with regional schools and colleges originally identified as priority partners through its AimHigher and NALN work between 2006-7 and 2008-9. In addition, a small number of new partners will be identified and engaged using the indices of multiple deprivation. Particular focus will be placed on local schools where art and design remains a key feature of the curriculum and which have been identified as underperforming. The university has set-up a Student Success Fund (SSF) of around £30k per annum to support and enhance the access, retention and attainment for WP students. The removal of former TQEF and TESS finding has led the University to create its own Learning and Teaching Fund from central funds to support a range of initiatives such as Learning and Teaching Days which have focused on a range of themes to support staff in inclusive practices in teaching learning and assessment.
- 4.3.3 Some of the most persuasive evidence gathered has been in the form of feedback on outreach activities (methodology: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews) gained from participants in ‘taster’ sessions and portfolio advisory sessions where pre- and post-activity sessions were conducted with participants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs). In a significant number of cases participants who stated that they were not considering applying to Higher Education prior to the session had changed their minds as a result of experiencing a ‘taster’ or other outreach session, and stated that they subsequently did intend to make an application to HE. It should be noted that this decision to apply did not solely pertain to the University, but that many then had a wider aspiration to enter UK HE within and beyond the region.
- 4.3.4 In addition to a continued presence at key Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) events across the region and beyond, the University works closely with an ever increasing range of feeder institutions, schools, colleges and community groups to engage with those groups who would not naturally consider Higher Education as a future prospect.
- 4.3.5 The Schools and Colleges Day in June each year is maintained and has gained increasing momentum over the past four years as a way to offer current IAG and to engage with teachers, advisors and education and industry professionals from feeder and partner institutions to encourage informed progression to HE. The maintenance of the significant number of Progression Agreements that the University has in place, is considered essential to supporting WP applicants’ entry into HE. This maintenance involves curriculum updating as well as engagement with school pupils and FE students from year 9 onwards, prior to any application being made.
- 4.3.6 In addition, in terms of ‘reaching in’ to schools at all levels, the Schools and Colleges Day and other associated events represent vital opportunities to provide accurate, clear and essential information to those (teachers) who carry great influence in terms of key career and subject choices for pupils from Primary to Tertiary level. School teachers are therefore not only given information regarding creative careers, but are also inducted into how to

usefully interpret this information for their pupils.

- 4.3.7 The University continues with its commitment to the established and very successful Student Ambassador scheme as an effective tool for communicating with prospective applicants, interviewees and other visitors to the University. Since its inception 9 years ago, the Student Ambassador Scheme has gone from strength-to-strength and is considered to have been a resounding success with prospective and current students and with staff from schools, colleges, and within the University community.
- 4.3.8 Taster sessions and short courses targeted towards attracting mature learners with no prior HE experience into a University environment continue to be extremely popular. In addition, the University will continue to work with local adult education providers delivering Access courses, and provide bespoke portfolio workshops for mature applicants to provide additional support through the application process.
- 4.3.9 The University strives to enhance its engagement with potential applicants of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) origin, and this has included outreach sessions at a number of feeder sources with BAME and WP demographic. In 2013-14 the University built on existing outreach activity with schools/colleges in Bedford, Hertfordshire, Leicester, Kingston and London in order to reach out to students from BAME backgrounds. The impact and effectiveness of these will continue to be monitored.
- 4.3.10 Targeted outreach activities aimed at raising aspiration among applicants who have been in local authority care, and provision of dedicated advice, guidance and support aimed at supporting care leavers through the application and admissions process. In 2013-14 the University delivered CPD sessions on higher education opportunities to Norfolk Social Workers responsible for managing care leavers' pathway plans, and we will continue to work with the local authority to target outreach activity aimed at raising aspirations of young adults leaving local authority care.

4.4 Overview of investment in student retention

- 4.4.1 The University's retention record and our accompanying data confirm that we continue to exceed our adjusted sector benchmark for young, mature, Low Participation Neighbourhoods and overall aggregated entrants, but we acknowledge that there are areas for improvement as reflected in our targets.
- 4.4.2 The retention activities outlined in this section are specifically intended to support those HE students originating from WP backgrounds who are statistically more prone to withdraw from higher education during their course of study, but will, by the inclusive nature of our delivery, benefit all students.
- 4.4.3 In the light of changes to the fee regime, and in order to maintain current levels of retention, the University anticipates it will need to continue to increase its ongoing support to students from under-represented groups in various forms.

- 4.4.4 A cornerstone of the University's retention strategy is its continuing support for the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Mentoring Scheme, which provides training for undergraduate and postgraduate students to become subject-based mentors for students in successive year groups. The PAL Mentoring scheme has been implemented across all undergraduate courses at NUA since 2006, and in conjunction with refinements to student support, finance, disability support, pastoral guidance and counselling, retention has steadily risen to its current level of 94% average across all years of study. PAL Mentors are supported by a dedicated PAL Mentor Coordinator whose responsibility is to organise training for the mentors and to provide an academic and pastoral lead for the scheme. The PAL Mentor Coordinator will continue to focus retention initiatives and support on students from under-represented groups in HE and will be supported by the Academic Registry in terms of relevant data sets where appropriate.
- 4.4.5 The University will continue its specific retention initiative aimed at better supporting first year undergraduate students which is specifically targeted at students within the priority groups (4.2.7). The project concentrates on enhancing the effective coordination of existing student support in all its aspects, working closely with the SU Student Welfare Committee and the NUA Coordinated Support Group, to better understand some of the more subtle, underlying issues that face students entering into, and adjusting to, Higher Education. The NUA Coordinated Support Group comprises senior academics, managers and professional services staff and targets support specifically towards learners from WP backgrounds. The NUA Coordinated Support Group has proven itself as a mechanism which effectively identifies and supports WP students who statistically, are more likely to withdraw from their HE course of study.
- 4.4.6 The University is committed to making reasonable adjustments, wherever possible in order to encourage and accommodate learners from WP backgrounds. The integrated approach to the identification and support of students with additional needs was recognised as a feature of good practice by the QAA (QAA Institutional Audit Report, November 2010). As part of this initiative, during 2012-13, the University financially supported the expansion of the Students Union staffing to enhance the SU capacity for representing students. Particular initiatives developed by the SU and NUA in partnership over this period have included continued work on Black History Month, Mental Health Awareness campaigns and the formation of the University LGBT society.
- 4.4.7 In addition, the following retention initiatives to support WP learners have been delivered since 2012-13 and will continue:
- Continued investment in proven retention activities for WP learners that were intended to have maximum impact. Focus on outreach activities for year 9 to 13 pupils at schools, colleges and academies identified as high priority through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation saw applications increase by 82% from 2007-08 levels with enrolments at NUA increasing

by 25% over the same period.

- The programme of CPD for academic and professional services staff has served to better support the integration of study skills delivery to WP students has been implemented. This consisted of additional funding for extra taught sessions delivered specifically to WP students to ensure that the skills of study and cultural capital required for academic success were appropriately reinforced. This evidence is visible through retention rates and achievement statistics for student from WP backgrounds.
- The programme of staff CPD to support improved Behaviourial Management in classroom and workshop contexts has seen such issues mediated at an earlier stage by trained staff. This activity initially engaged those courses that have a higher proportion of learners from WP and SpLD backgrounds, but given improvements in early resolution and incident rates this has been rolled out across all academic areas.
- The review of the Award and Credit Scheme will enable the University to enhance its existing inclusive teaching practice and provide curricula which prioritise learning opportunities and formative assessment and reduce the number of summative assessment points from 8 to 6 over 3 years of study for the majority of its courses. (BA (Hons) Architecture has its own course structure to comply with Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) expectations.)
- The University 'Job Shop' scheme which aims to support employability. The scheme is run through the Careers service and offers targeted support to WP students in finding employment that is concurrent to, and compatible with, their course and pattern of study.
- New investment by the University of £30,000 to replace the TESS allocation (previously supported through HEFCE funding) to create a replacement fund to support staff and students in projects with a clear focus on Widening Participation and student attainment. This fund, mentioned earlier in this report (4.3.2), was named the 'Learning and Teaching Fund' and over the past year has supported a wide range of initiatives in support of WP, fair admissions, student focus groups and professional development for staff.
- The University will continue to build on the outcome of the JISC-supported project to review and improve communication mechanisms within the University with a particular focus on WP students. The project was run by staff and students from a course (BA Hons Textiles) with a high WP profile, including a significantly high proportion of students with dyslexia and dyspraxia. The University invested additional resources to support this project. The findings of this project were rolled out by JISC and NUA staff at the Learning and Teaching Day in July 2013 and its findings were seen as incredibly influential; essentially significant changes have been implemented to the University intranet as a result of this project with WP learners. With the support of IT and academic staff,

WP students effectively re-designed the NUA intranet Course and Library pages. The outcomes of this project are being used to inform the redesign of the Academic Registry section of the University's intranet.

4.5 Overview of investment in student progression to employment or further study

- 4.5.1 Our students progress to careers which engender their creativity. These may be through entrepreneurial routes in their own business or on funded projects, through employment within the creative economy or within other businesses or organisations providing creative thinking. Employability is a key strand within our curricula, with live project briefs and projects undertaken throughout the course, many through our design consultancy ideasfactory@NUA. This enables students to develop commercial, client-facing skills; to work to a specific brief and timetable.
- 4.5.2 Employability skills are developed through the Professional Practice component of the curriculum and is a compulsory element for all UG and PG students at the University. Students receive sessions from HM Revenue & Customs, banking organisations, IP and Patent Attorneys and other professionals associated with creative industries in addition to a range of work-based learning opportunities and industry engagement. Portfolio working and freelance careers are also encompassed as part of this work, which can present particular challenges for WP students in terms of history, experience and confidence.
- 4.5.3 Taught sessions on pricing work and creative services to business are also encompassed, with expert advice to support students in making the transition from HE to employment. Opportunities such as New Designers, the Designers and Art Directors Awards (D&AD) and Graduate Fashion Week are also seen as key opportunities for learners to embark on their careers.
- 4.5.4 Since the introduction of the ERASMUS Widening Participation premium for students, NUA undergraduates from under-represented backgrounds have been successful in receiving these targeted awards to support their mobility in studying in a European partner University
- 4.5.5 The NUA Business Strategy identifies targets for the number of students across all courses who have worked on ideasfactory@NUA projects, with commercial partners, supported by the Business Director and their academic tutors.
- 4.5.6 Ideasfactory@NUA is furthermore supported by strong links to the city's vibrant industry meet-up groups, such as Hot Source and SynchNorwich, as well as start-up networks such as Eastern Enterprise Hub, Archant's Future 50 Group, and the Hethel Centre.
- 4.5.7 The University has recognised the importance of support through progression into employment and entrepreneurship and is investing in an ambitious project to bring graduating students through business start-up and providing

the necessary support until they are ready to grow their businesses and take up commercial premises. Our new Digital Creative Incubation Unit for digital creative businesses is supported by the HEFCE and the Regional LEP (New Anglia). Uniquely, it provides facilities for collaboration within the unit with other start-ups, current students and with NUA staff. It provides high quality shared facilities and access to NUA's extensive professional facilities and equipment. This will offer the structure and network they need to establish their enterprise. The new Digital Creative Incubation unit will open in 2015.

- 4.5.8 From the perspective of internal progression to further study, a number of in-house events are held each year to acquaint undergraduate students with information regarding Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR) opportunities within the University and within the HE sector more widely in terms of subjects not offered by NUA.

4.6 Long-term outreach

- 4.6.1 The University has continued to work with its existing AimHigher schools in delivering outreach including taster sessions, portfolio sessions and general information session to students in years 9 – 11 and will continue this activity. During the 2012-13 academic year the University delivered outreach to 750 pupils within this age range. In 2013-14 the University increased this activity to reach 1100 pupils.
- 4.6.2 The University will be seeking to strengthen its collaborative partnerships in order to develop longer-term outreach over the forthcoming period. This is in order to ensure that resources are directed towards the most effective outreach initiatives which represent genuine value for money.

4.7 Financial support

4.7.1 Norwich University of the Arts financial support package

To maximise support from students from under-represented backgrounds the University will provide additional financial support. The University remains committed to the provision of bursaries for students with low household incomes as an effective measure in encouraging students to remain on their course. Evidence routinely monitored by the University shows that the percentage of students withdrawing from their course who are eligible for bursaries is lower than the percentage of students withdrawing who are not eligible for financial support. In 2010-11, 4% of students who were eligible for a bursary withdrew from study compared with 10% who were not. In 2011/12 the differential was 2.6% of students eligible for a bursary withdrawing compared with 3.2% of students who were not eligible. In 2012-13 the percentage of bursary recipients who withdrew was 3% compared with 5% of students who were not in receipt of a bursary. The figures for 2013-14 continue to bear this out with 2.1% of students eligible for a bursary withdrawing compared with 4.3% of students who did not get a bursary. We acknowledge that this will be attributable to a range of retention measures in operation of which the bursary is but a part. However, evidence from a

survey of bursary students indicates that 100% of respondents were clear that the bursary has had a positive impact on their ability to study and make the best use of the learning opportunities available. The University will continue to monitor this data to ensure that it is effectively targeting its bursary provision.

In 2016-17 the University plans to offer a bursary of £1,000 per annum to new entrants who qualify for full government maintenance support and a bursary of £500 per annum to new entrants who qualify for partial government maintenance support. The bursary will be payable in February 2017. Students who withdraw prior to 1 February 2017, or who are not in regular attendance at this date, will not receive the bursary payment.

The affordability of this financial support is based on our estimates of additional fee income and our assumption that we will continue to receive the HEFCE Student Opportunity grant in 2016/17 onwards. If the latter is reduced, we will have to consider which areas of activity should be prioritised, which may mean a reduction in funds available for bursaries.

Whilst some research has shown that bursaries have not influenced students' choices of institutions under the current system, we believe that linking our bursaries to the maintenance grant assessment has played a significant role in our successful retention of students.

We will continue to honour existing bursary commitments for continuing students in 2016-17. These students should refer to the earlier years Access Agreements for the terms of these bursaries, which can be found at www.offa.org.uk.

5. Targets and milestones

5.1 Measures to support access

The overarching aim of the University is to ensure that students from under-represented groups continue to feel able to aspire to higher education study and that this remains a viable option for students from these groups. This will be achieved through a combination of outreach activity, inclusive admissions procedures and high quality information, advice and guidance to encourage applicants from all groups in society to apply to NUA. The following targets and milestones are designed to measure the success in terms of the outcomes of measures to support access to higher education. The targets set are aspirational and will be challenging for the University to accomplish within the timeframe. With uncertainties in the future of higher education policy there is still some question over whether recent trends in participation are sustainable. In the event of a significant reduction in national participation which makes our absolute targets unachievable we will at least exceed the location adjusted benchmark for participation of the under-represented groups that we are seeking to attract and retain.

5.1.1 Target: To increase the proportion of young full-time undergraduate entrants

from NS-SEC 4-7 and to remain above the location adjusted benchmark in all years (HESA Table T1a). In 2013-14 the proportion of young entrants from SEC4-7 was 41.7% against a HESA location adjusted benchmark of 35.7%.

Milestones:

Year	Proportion
2015-16	Young NS-SEC 4-7 = target of 42.5%
2016-17	Young NS-SEC 4-7 = target of 43.0%
2017-18	Young NS-SEC 4-7 = target of 43.5%
2018-19	Young NS-SEC 4-7 = target of 44.0%
2019-20	Young NS-SEC 4-7 = target of 45.0%

- 5.1.2 Target: To increase the proportion of young full-time undergraduate entrants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and to remain above the location adjusted benchmark in all years (HESA Table T1a). In 2013-14 the proportion of young entrants from LPNs was 17.3% compared with a HESA location adjusted benchmark of 12.8% (POLAR3).

Milestones:

Year	Proportion
2015-16	Young LPN = 18.0%
2016-17	Young LPN = 18.7%
2017-18	Young LPN = 19.5%
2018-19	Young LPN = 20.3%
2019-20	Young LPN = 21.0%

- 5.1.3 Target: to increase the proportion of mature full-time undergraduate entrants. In 2012-13 the University experienced a decline in applications and enrolments for mature undergraduate entrants, in line with national trends, from 22.1% to 13.0% of new entrants. In 2013-14, the proportion of mature undergraduate entrants increased to 15.3%.

Milestones:

Year	Proportion
2015-16	Mature undergraduate entrants = 16.0%
2016-17	Mature undergraduate entrants = 17.0%
2017-18	Mature undergraduate entrants = 18.0%
2018-19	Mature undergraduate entrants = 19.0%
2019-20	Mature undergraduate entrants = 20.0%

- 5.1.4 Target – outreach: to work with the Suffolk and Norfolk Network of Collaborative Outreach to deliver a programme of interactive taster events for potential applicants and parents. The target set is a nominal figure based on initial discussions and will be subject to agreement of all partners involved in the collaborative network.

Milestones:

Year	Number of events
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2015-16	1
2016-17	2

Targets beyond 2016-17 will depend on ongoing funding commitments.

- 5.1.5 Target – to continue to work with regional schools, colleges and academies identified as high priority through the Indices of Multiple Deprivation Index (IMD) to target pupils from under-represented groups and raise awareness of and aspirations to undergraduate study from year 9 through to year 12/13 - target expressed as number of targeted activities

Milestones:

Year	Number of targeted activities
2015-16	30
2016-17	32
2017-18	36
2018-19	38
2019-20	40

- 5.1.6 Target – outreach: to develop, maintain and renew Progression Agreements with targeted schools and colleges. The University has committed itself to increasing the number of projected Progression Agreements for the forthcoming period. This is in line with a revised assessment on the impact of existing agreements, and an increase in the interest expressed by feeder courses in putting these in place for the future.

Milestones:

Year	Number of targeted activities
2015-16	35
2016-17	37
2017-18	38
2018-19	39
2019-20	40

- 5.1.7 Target – outreach: to increase the proportion of UK domiciled students from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic origin, through targeted outreach activity at potential feeder courses outside the Eastern Region.

Milestones:

Year	Number of targeted activities
2015-16	9.0%
2016-17	10.0%
2017-18	10.5%
2018-19	11.0%
2019-20	11.0%

- 5.1.8 Target – To work with local and regional networks to provide outreach events for mature students, to raise awareness of, and aspirations to, study at undergraduate level - target expressed as number of targeted activities.

Milestones:

Year	Number of targeted activities
2015-16	10
2016-17	15
2017-18	20
2018-19	25
2019-20	25

5.2 Measures to support retention and success

The overarching aim of the University is to ensure that students from under-represented groups are supported to remain 'on course' and achieve their full potential in their chosen award. This University supports all students through its inclusive curriculum and student support services, but recognises that some students from less advantaged backgrounds may need additional support measures to enable them to achieve to their full potential. These have been implemented in the form of additional support for academic writing for WP students in years 2 and 3 of undergraduate study.

- 5.2.1 Target - retention: to ensure that the margin of differential for the retention of students from under-represented groups and the remainder of the cohort does not fall below -5% in these categories (SEC 4-7, students with a declared disability, Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Groups).

Milestones:

Year	Margin of differential
2015-16	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2016-17	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2017-18	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2018-19	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2019-20	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%

- 5.2.2 Target – retention: to continue to ensure that the percentage of young entrants who drop out of Higher Education falls below 5% and the percentage is lower than the HESA benchmark. In 2011-12 7.1% of young entrants were no longer in higher education compared with a HESA location adjusted benchmark of 11.3%. In 2013-14, the proportion of young entrants from 2012-13 who were no longer in higher education was above the HESA location adjusted benchmark for the first time in 5 years (8.0% compared with a HESA location adjusted benchmark of 7.7%) indicated an area of challenge for the University.

Milestones:

Year	Proportion no longer in HE
2015-16	7.0%
2016-17	6.0%
2017-18	5.0%
2018-19	4.5%
2019-20	4.0%

5.2.3 Target – retention: to continue to ensure that the percentage of mature entrants who drop out of Higher Education falls below 10% and the percentage is lower than the HESA benchmark. In 2011-12 this figure was 2.2% compared with a HESA location adjusted benchmark of 11.3%. In 2013-14, the proportion of mature entrants in 2012-13 who were no longer in HE was 13.7% compared with the HESA location adjusted benchmark of 12.6%.

Milestones:

Year	Proportion no longer in HE
2015-16	13.0%
2016-17	12.0%
2017-18	11.0%
2018-19	10.0%
2019-20	9.0%

5.2.4 Target – retention: to reduce the percentage of young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods who drop out of Higher Education and continue the University's successful performance in this area of retaining drop out levels below the HESA benchmark. In 2011-12 the proportion of young entrants from LPNs who were no longer in HE was 7.5% compared with a HESA benchmark of 10.9%. In 2013-14, the proportion of young entrants from LPNs who were no longer in HE after starting a course in 2012-13 was 7.9% compared to a HESA location adjusted benchmark of 8.4%.

5.2.5 Milestones:

Year	Proportion no longer in HE
2015-16	6.8%
2016-17	6.4%
2017-18	6.0%
2018-19	5.5%
2019-20	5.0%

5.2.6 Target – retention: to increase the number of student peers on the Peer Assisted Learners scheme (PALs - see paragraph 4.4.4).

Milestones:

Year	Proportion no longer in HE
2015-16	75
2016-17	80
2017-18	85
2018-19	90
2019-20	95

5.2.7 Target - success: to ensure that the margin of differential for student achievement levels from under-represented groups in HE compared with their peers not from these groups does not fall below -5%. (SEC 4-7, students with a declared disability, Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic Groups)

Milestones:

Year	Margin of differential
2015-16	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2016-17	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2017-18	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2018-19	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%
2019-20	Margin of differential to remain at or above -5%

6. Equality and diversity

- 6.1** The University is committed to creating an inclusive and supportive learning and working environment based on mutual respect and trust. Our Equality & Diversity Policy Statement looks at ways to positively promote equality of opportunity and to challenge and strive to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The University acknowledges the duty of higher education in promoting equality of opportunity and furthering social inclusion, and our commitment to equality and diversity is made explicit throughout our Strategic Plan and Student Experience Strategy and is integrated into all aspects of our culture.
- 6.2** We have taken equality issues into account in designing this agreement and have paid due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.3** Our targets include increasing the proportion of UK domiciled students from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) origin (5.1.7). We have also set targets to ensure that the margin of differential for students from such under-represented groups does not fall below the rest of the student population for either retention (5.2.1), or achievement levels (5.2.7). In addition to this, the University Gallery continues to actively promote community awareness of wider cultural and social equality issues through its programme of events.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

- 7.1** The outcomes of the activities outlined in this Access Agreement will be monitored annually and reported on as part of the Access Agreement and Student Opportunity allocation monitoring returns, or other statutory reporting requirements as outlined by OFFA.
- 7.2** Progress will be evaluated by measuring outcomes against the targets and milestones set out in section 5, gauged against the University's management information data, and where appropriate, benchmarking against published HESA data and location adjusted benchmarks.
- 7.3** Outreach activity will be monitored on the numbers of targeted students at schools and colleges reached in each academic year, and management information data on the University's admissions and recruitment records.
- 7.4** Retention measures will be evaluated and judged against achievement against the milestones and targets and also using measures of success (successful progression on course and successful achievement of the intended award).

- 7.5 In addition to statistical measures, methods of evaluation involving interviews, focus groups and surveys of participants of both outreach and retention activities will be used to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of activities undertaken to fulfill the University's commitment to its Access Agreement.
- 7.6 Progress will be reported on an annual basis to the University's Senate. The Students' Union President will represent students on the Senate.
- 7.7 The delivery of the commitments outlined in this Agreement is the responsibility of the whole University community, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and monitored by the Senior Management Team. Deans of Faculty and teaching staff, staff in Marketing and Recruitment and staff in Academic Registry, Course Administration, Student Support and Careers work collaboratively towards the success of measures outlined above.

8. Student involvement in the Access Agreement

- 8.1 The University has consulted with its Students' Union in the drafting of the 2016-17 Access Agreement.

The Students' Union President has asked that we include the following declaration within this agreement:

As President of the Students' Union at Norwich University of the Arts and a member of NUA's Equality and Diversity Committee, I confirm that I have played an active part of the discussions and consideration of fair access and widening participation here at the University.

The Students' Union has an ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, both in terms of access to higher education and support throughout a student's time at university. Progressive action is being taken across the student movement, with the NUS's campaign to introduce Liberation Officers to support under-represented groups in every in almost every Students' Union across the UK. We are looking forward to introducing these positions to help support members of NUA's student community.

We are particularly pleased to see documentation showing transparency in relation to course costs in what is becoming an increasingly difficult economic climate for students. It is essential that we continue to support diversity in the student body and to focus our energies on those with ability who most deserve the opportunity of Higher Education, regardless of ethnic or socio-economic origin, age, postcode or background.

Charlotte Reeve
President of the Students' Union, 2014-15

- 8.2 The University involves students directly in the implementation of the Access Agreement through their direct participation in outreach activities with local schools and colleges; leading discussion groups, working with small groups, or assisting in practical skills workshops under the supervision of the Recruitment Officer. In addition, in November/December of each year, focus

groups of undergraduate students by course are hosted by senior managers of the University to ensure student awareness of the overall strategy and focus.

- 8.3 Students also play a vital role in helping to support the University's retention activities directly through participation in the Peer Assisted Learning mentoring Scheme (PALs) as outlined in section 4, paragraph 4.4.4, and through participation in the Student Representatives System and Students' Union.

9. Provision of information to prospective students

- 9.1 The University is committed to providing timely and accurate advice on its fees and the financial support available to prospective and current students.
- 9.2 The University will publish information on fees and financial support for 2016-17 on the University website and through the UCAS Entry Profiles. In addition, the University is developing an advisory section within its information entitled 'The Student Experience at NUA' which outlines clearly and explicitly to applicants what is included in the course fee and what is not, and those elements that are optional.
- 9.3 Information on fees and financial support for students who enrolled on a course of study prior to September 2016 will be published on the University intranet for current students, and on the University website to assist any student who wishes to apply for a transfer into the University from another course of study.