

Royal
Agricultural
University
Cirencester



ACCESS AGREEMENT

2017-18

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) is the oldest agricultural college in the English-speaking world. The RAU took a strategic decision to move to public status in 2001. This offered opportunity to widen access and promote agricultural education and careers to students from diverse backgrounds, with a continuing aspiration to:

“...lead the development of teaching and research in agriculture, agri-business, equine, food, and land & property management¹.”

The small Cotswold campus provides a unique and community-centred learning environment for courses delivered at foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The RAU has steadily increased in student numbers over the last two decades, with ongoing growth aspirations articulated in the RAU’s 2014-2019 Corporate Plan.

The RAU offer prides itself on *‘career-focused courses [that] are designed and updated to meet the changing needs of the employment market and combine academic excellence with practical application’².*

1.1.1 A commitment to widening access and participation

The RAU has a continuing strategic commitment to widening access and participation across the *student lifecycle*, which is embedded at the highest level in the Corporate Plan 2014-2019. Specifically:

- **Strategic priority 1 - To develop an outstanding and sustainable academic environment for study and work both on and off-campus through increases in the numbers of high quality students and staff.**
 - Make the RAU the institution of choice for students wishing to study in the areas we serve:
 - Continuing to **promote widening access** to the University’s courses
 - **develop and broaden the methods of learning for a wider range of students nationally and internationally through distance and blended learning, using the range of existing and developing technologies**
 - continuously review and improve the UK and overseas **student experience**, including assessment and development of the student journey from initial interest through to application and enrolment
 - further develop the **system for interacting with careers advisors in schools and colleges**
 - ensuring that courses are intellectually relevant, equipping students with skills of **enterprise and entrepreneurship**, innovation, sustainability and leadership to further **enhance graduate level employment**
 - ensuring courses and **employer links** make graduates highly sought after: ready to have real world impact.

¹ <http://www.rau.ac.uk/the-rau/history-heritage>

² <http://www.rau.ac.uk>

- **Strategic priority 2 - To develop a range of unique, industry-relevant and accessible courses**
 - To extend its portfolio of courses that meet the requirements of students and industry:
 - *provide a **range of financial and other support** through bursaries, scholarships and other appropriate means to **widen access to courses***
 - review and develop undergraduate courses including opportunities for ‘top-up’ degrees at Cirencester or by **flexible or distributed learning**
 - develop the range of **sub-degree courses** offered by the University.

1.1.2 Widening access and the recruitment agenda

As necessary in its position as a small and specialist institution, the RAU recruits heavily from the national base. The University has established partnerships with Further Education Colleges (FECs) across England, primarily with the purpose of validating degrees and offering top-up programmes to FEC-delivered foundation courses. These sites are a targeted area of widening participation work.

Over the past year, the RAU’s Access activity has developed significantly and includes both a locally-focused and national programme. Effective targeting has been a major consideration in executing this agenda, ensuring resources are deployed in areas and ways that we believe are most likely to secure outcomes for the widening participation agenda objectives at the national/ government (macro) level and the local (meso) level, as well as the institutional (micro) level. This has considered where specifically RAU can effectively contribute, being:

1. A small and specialist institution with a niche offer
2. A small institution in relation to staff base and systemic infrastructures

To ensure we make *faster progress*³, the strategic approach presented in this Access Agreement remains one of alignment with institutional drivers and embedding widening participation across the University. This is an orientation that has provided excellent returns over the last eighteen months, in terms of internal capacity building to improve performance.

The RAU is committed to an ongoing process of furthering understanding of how best the widening participation agenda can be effected at the micro level, specifically to contribute to rich learning environments. We also recognise our contribution to national priorities, including upward social mobility and economic productivity outcomes.

We expressly maintain our recognition of widening participation in terms of university business outcomes, for example as a contributor to core institutional drivers such as recruitment and community engagement; teaching and learning; and research and innovation. As indicated in our previous Agreement (2016-17), over the course of the next five years we are shifting the institutional narrative of widening participation and associated metrics to be inclusive of business and process outcomes. We have already noted progress in this regard over the last twelve months, and we are particularly encouraged to have witnessed an increasing cross-institutional understanding of how the widening participation agenda contributes to corporate agendas and KPIs. We see this as an ongoing process which will be further influenced by the predicted introduction of the Teaching Excellence

³ OFFA Strategic Priority as identified in the OFFA Strategic Plan 2015-2020 <http://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/OFFA-Strategic-Plan-2015-2020.pdf>

Framework⁴ and the complementary orientation of linking strategy and outcomes across *Access, Success and Progression*.

1.1.3 On Being a Small and Specialist Institution

As a Small and Specialist institution we have the opportunity to make a distinct contribution to the widening participation agenda nationally, using a thematic base for showcasing the value of higher education through the lens of our niche land-based disciplines.

In our 2016-17 Access Agreement, we articulated the opportunity we had identified to leverage our specialisms and disciplinary expertise, to provide a rich range of targeted outreach programmes to identified schools and colleges, with the possibility of being linked to national networks. Our Access activity has been reoriented and now includes a national approach to widening participation. This also helps to address the particular challenges we face as a small and specialist institution in our capacity to deliver outreach work, as articulated in the 2016-17 Agreement.

As such, we are very pleased to specifically note our new “Education Alliance” with an established network of schools (with approximately 115 secondary and primary school members) with the following objectives:

- To improve awareness of, access to and participation in land-based education particularly for non-traditional or disadvantaged students, with pathways from primary and secondary school and on to higher education
- To deliver a range of school and community activity, training, resources and capacity development for the purposes of increasing access and participation in land-based higher education
- To advocate for, encourage and promote land-based education and provide support and development for schools and communities.

Institutionally, we continue our journey in developing our capacity, resource, support infrastructure, and information and guidance to learners regarding the nature of *small and specialist* institutions. This supports raising awareness and aspirations through delivery of a focused, thematic widening participation agenda.

1.2 Background

Drawing on outcomes from our recent 2014 review of widening participation, subsequent recommendations and the implementation and launch of our new strategic framework, the RAU continues to align its widening participation agenda to a *whole-of-institution approach* and coherent frameworks across key domains of *Access, Success and Progression*. This *student lifecycle* approach, from outreach/transition and induction through to completion and exit, is increasingly becoming our framing approach. The RAU acknowledges that widening participation extends beyond access; that what happens through university and what outcomes are achieved also matter.

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/474227/BIS-15-623-fulfilling-our-potential-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice.pdf

1.2.1 OFFA Key priorities for 2017-18 access agreements

OFFA's strategic priorities⁵ for the 2015-2020 period⁶ and the Strategic Guidance, *Developing your 2017-18 Access Agreement*⁷ have informed the development of RAU's identified strategic and operational priorities articulated in the 2016-17 Access Agreement. The strategy and priorities, built on a multi-year phased framework (3-5 years) remain relevant and are continued in this 2017-18 Access Agreement.

Strategic priorities for OFFA for 2017-18 are⁸:

- Whole of institution approach
- Student lifecycle approach
- Greater emphasis on long-term outreach
- More effective collaboration
- Smarter, evidence based spend
- Equality and diversity
- Stretch targets to make faster progress, collectively across sector and the institution

2 Our Strategic Approach

The RAU has mapped and is currently implementing its WP Strategy, which applies an embedded *whole-of-Institution* methodology and seeks to better align three key overarching agendas:

1. OFFA strategic priorities with regards to widening participation
2. University corporate agenda and drivers
3. Stakeholder goals and drivers (e.g. local community, schools, further education colleges, etc.)

Enhanced delivery work now underway in the *Access* agenda is providing additional understanding of our external stakeholders and partners, due to the *partnerships* methodology we have applied particularly to engaging with identified target schools and colleges. This understanding will increase as these relationships grow, and provide the necessary evidence base and underpinning data to inform future practices with a view to maximising potential outcomes.

2.1 Underpinning framework

The following conceptual framework guides thinking to inform the development of an embedded, tailored and targeted approach to widening participation activity and investment. The resulting *whole-of-institution* embedded agenda links to specific objectives, metrics and aspirations for various Schools and Departments in the University; for the University as a whole; and for identified external key stakeholders. The first phase, already in implementation since February 2015, attends to alignment of agendas (1) and (2) above. In the diagram below these are *HE provider performance indicators* and *HE provider context*, respectively.

⁵ OFFA's priorities have been informed by the National Strategy for Access and Student Success (April, 2014).

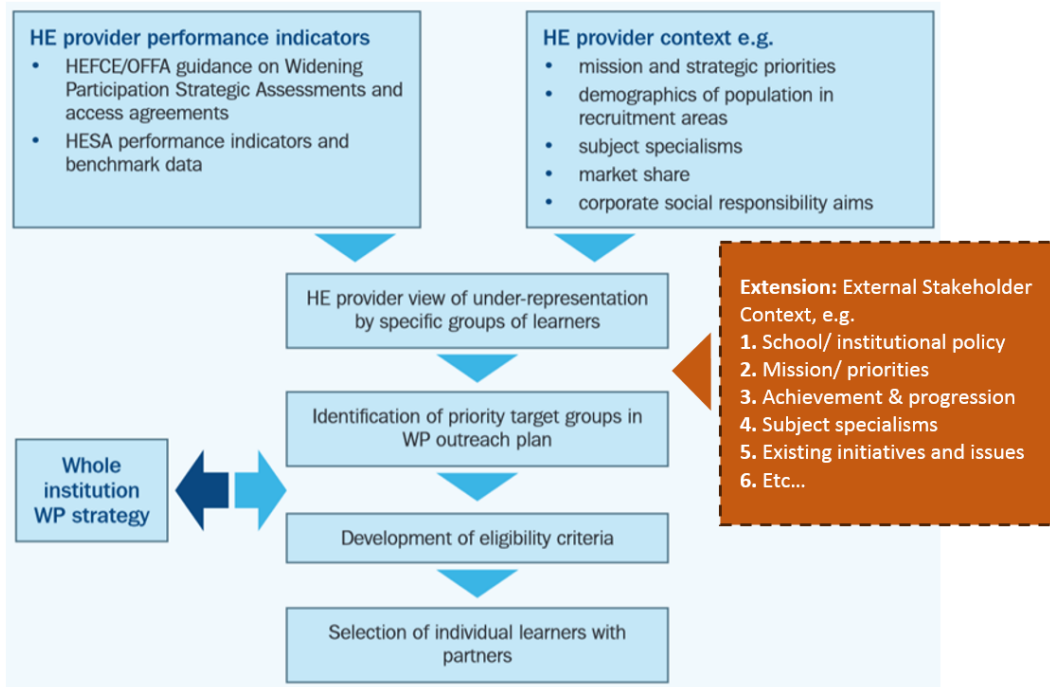
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299689/bis-14-516-national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success.pdf

⁶ OFFA Strategic Priority as identified in the OFFA Strategic Plan 2015-2020 <http://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/OFFA-Strategic-Plan-2015-2020.pdf>

⁷ OFFA (2016) Strategic guidance: developing you 2017-18 access agreement (<https://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/strategic-access-agreement-guidance.pdf>)

⁸ Introducing the guidance, Chris Scrase, OFFA (2016) (http://www.slideshare.net/UniversitiesUK/introducing-the-guidance-chris-scraseoffa?next_slideshow=1)

As a more rigorous programme of widening participation activity and partnerships in the *Access* domain are established over the immediate- to short-term, agenda (3) above, or the “*Extension: External Stakeholder Contexts*” identified below will be shaped and integrated on a continuous action learning cycle.



2.2 Mapping the strategy and establishing priorities

The proposed strategic approach aligns directly to OFFA’s articulated priorities, as contained in the OFFA Strategic Plan 2015-2020. As articulated in our 2016-17 Access Agreement, the University will continue to apply OFFA priorities as either:

1. **Conceptual frameworks**, namely:
 - a. The Student Lifecycle approach
 - b. Whole of Institution approach; or,
2. **Strategic themes**, namely:
 - a. Emphasis on long-term [early] outreach
 - b. Effective collaboration
 - c. Smarter, evidence-based spend
 - d. Equality and diversity
 - e. Stretching targets to make faster progress

Aligned projects are implemented within our programmatic planning methodology.

3 Fees, student numbers and fee income

OFFA Strategic	-	Faster progress
Priorities attended to		

3.1 Fees and fee income

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) intends to lift its fee charge in line with new government inflationary fee caps, to £9,250 per annum for full time undergraduate study for students commencing in 2017-18. The RAU intends to maintain the existing fee of £9,000 for full time continuing undergraduate students who started their studies paying the previous £9,000 fee. These charges will apply irrespective of mode or qualification type.

Part-time study charges are on a 'per module' basis students studying on a part time or fractional basis, which is typically four (4) modules per annum. The maximum charge per annum is £4,950 based on four modules.

3.1.1 Fee increases

Course charges will be reviewed annually and may rise in line with inflation and any other permitted increases announced by Government each year.

3.2 Student Numbers

The University continues to actively seek to increase student numbers. The RAU is currently working towards an ambitious target of approximately 1,110 domestic under-graduate students by 2020-2021. In the 2017-18 academic year, the University anticipates approximately 990 full-time undergraduate students, including 40 students studying through its new franchise partner, Capel Manor College.

4 Access, student success and progression measures

OFFA Strategic	-	Whole of institution approach
Priorities attended to	-	Student lifecycle approach
	-	Long-term, sustained [early] outreach
	-	Effective collaboration
	-	Smarter, evidence-based spend
	-	Faster progress

This section provides performance assessments (based on published HESA data); descriptions of activity; and priorities and targets for each of the Access Agreement focus areas: *Access, Student Success, Progression* and *Financial Support*. It also provides information on future investment and activity strategies, based on assessment and review of our performance to date. In exploring these assessments and in setting out performance against HESA benchmarks, we reiterate the following significant factors that are duly considered:

- The RAU is a niche land-based institution, with a history of service to the land-based industries.

- The University is a small institution, and has grown significantly over the past two decades. In 2013 was granted University status.
- The land-based disciplines offered at the University have not traditionally attracted students from widening participation target backgrounds; there is much perception-shifting work to be undertaken (including increasing understanding regarding the “Royal” tag in the University’s name, which might constitute a barrier for some target groups).
- Some of the methodologies the University has put in practice to encourage access and widen participation have not yet brought large changes in results in the student data; however the commitment to, for example, providing a range of degree routes (e.g. foundation degrees, access programmes) and to ensuring access for students with vocational qualifications through equitable admissions processes is considered core business. The University has a significant per cent of new students annually who are accepted with vocational qualifications.
- In acknowledgement of the need to make *faster progress*, the University commissioned a comprehensive WP Review from September 2014 to February 2015. The University acknowledges its point on a journey, and has made significant commitment to ensuring widening participation efforts and outcomes are built, evidenced by a complete redesign and realignment of the agenda across the *whole of institution*. This is underway and is generating excellent engagement at various identified *levels* and *locations* across the institution.
- Widening participation represents a significant growth opportunity for RAU.

4.1 Access

4.1.1 Performance assessment - participation

Absolute performance against HESA benchmark

The RAU continues efforts to progress towards HESA benchmarks in target student categories, setting and striving to achieve stretching targets.

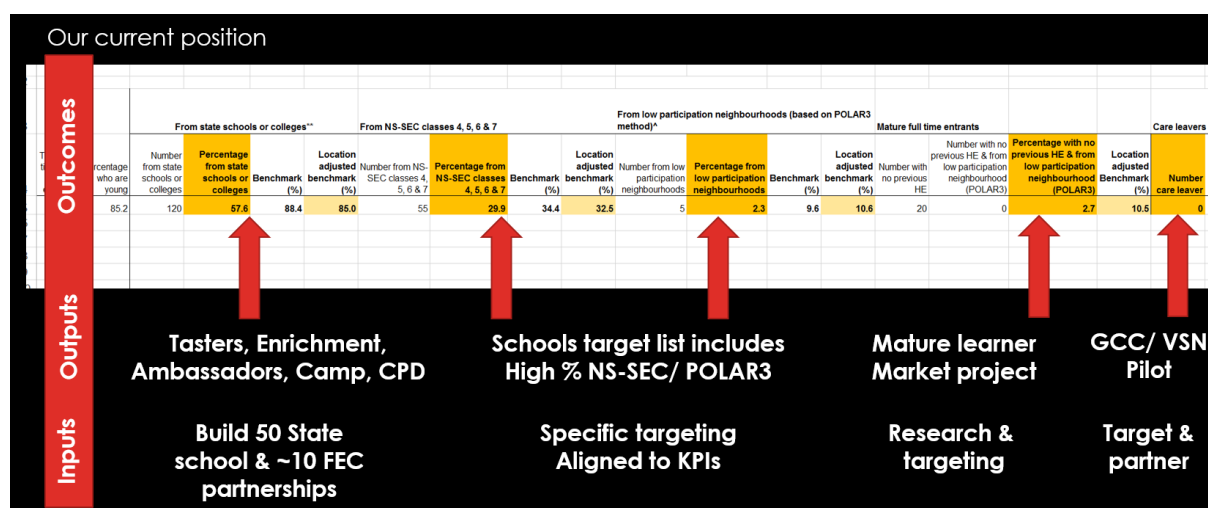
The table below provides a summary of performance in identified target groups against HESA locally-adjusted benchmarks, from 2009-10 to 2014-15.

Target group	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
% young full-time first degree entrants from state schools or colleges	46.0	51.8	54.5	50.3	47.6	57.6
<i>HESA Local-Adjusted Benchmark</i>			84.5	81.5	83.8	85.0
% full-time first degree entrants from NS-SEC classes 4-7	-	-	40.7	35.8	35.0	29.9
<i>HESA Local-Adjusted Benchmark</i>			32.0	34.6	33.9	32.5
% full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3)	4.3	2.2	3.7	3.8	2.1	2.3
<i>HESA Local-Adjusted Benchmark</i>	7.8	9.0	8.9	9.2	9.7	10.6

% Mature full-time first degree entrants with no previous HE and from low participation neighbourhood (POLAR 3)	4.0	5.1	0.0	-	2.4	2.7
<i>HESA Local-Adjusted Benchmark</i>	5.3	9.8	4.3	-	7.7	4.7

Inputs, Outputs, Outcomes Approach

We have aligned our activity and delivery with intended outcomes under each target group, summarised in the example as follows:



Students from State Schools and Colleges

The University’s student body has been fairly consistent over the last four years with approximately half of its students coming from private, and half from the state schools and colleges. As an identified target area, and as addressed in our previous Access Agreement and into this Agreement, the University is committed to increasing the number and percentage of students from state schools.

To this end, we have increased investment and effort not only driven from the widening participation agenda but also from the wider recruitment area, also linking strategically with RAU academic Schools.

The data indicates an underserved group of students in the state school system from which additional students may be drawn. Over the past year, the University has launched its enhanced schools partnerships programme, proactively engaging with targeted state schools to increase recruitment from the state schools sector. This required a targeted and integrated approach to widening participation and recruitment agendas that increased investment flow, identified priority schools and adopted a collaborative partnerships model with schools to understand specific contexts.

Building our Student Pipeline through Outreach and Access

- Targeted partnerships with local schools
- Reaching wider: partnerships with target schools nationally

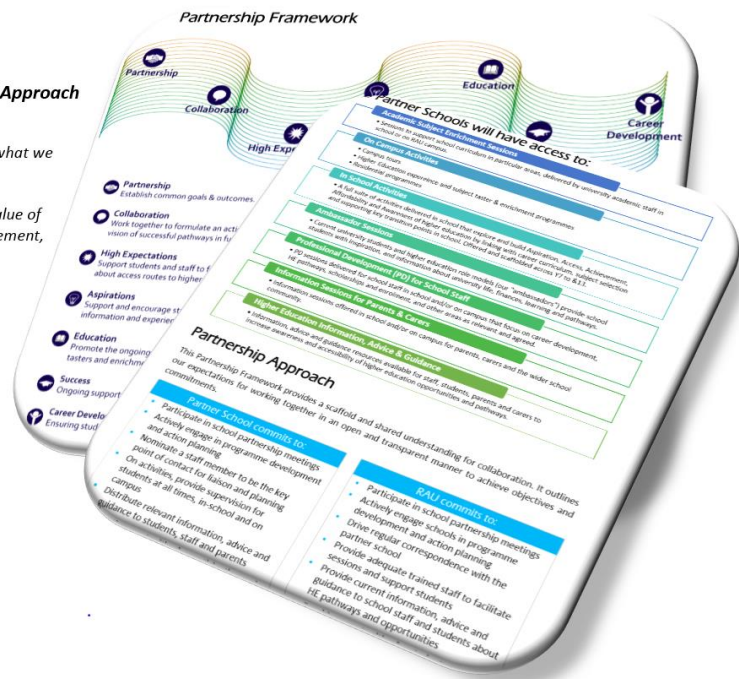
TARGETING INDICATORS



The School Partnership Approach

"This is fabulous. We haven't had any university actually ask us what we need for our students and school..."

"This partnership looks excellent. We need to advocate for the value of land-based education and the value it brings... to student achievement, behaviour and wellbeing"



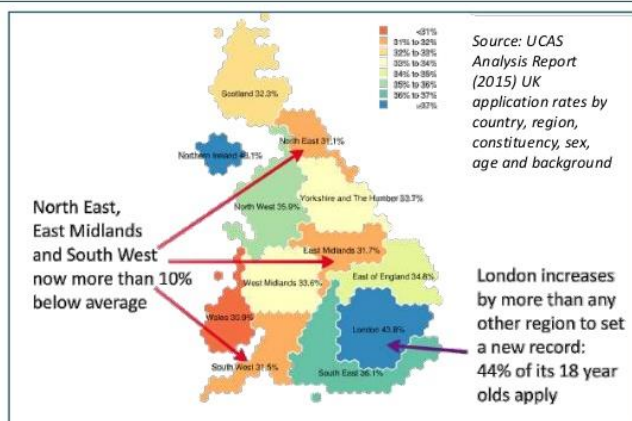
Students from low income (NS-SEC 4-7) backgrounds

The University generally performs well against the HESA locally-adjusted benchmark in the target category of full-time first degree entrants from NS-SEC classes 4-7. However due to the discontinuation of this HESA dataset, this target has been removed in the 2017-18 Resource Plan. Whilst this does not represent an issue due to our commitment to other Targets in the Access domain, it is envisaged that we will apply the new HESA measure in due course, which will replace the NS-SEC Groups 4-7 target.

Students from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3)

We have set targets to increase our percentage of students from low participation neighbourhoods (using the POLAR 3 method) to 6 per cent by 2017-18. As the South West area is more than 10% below average for higher education application rates (UCAS, 2015), a local approach is required.

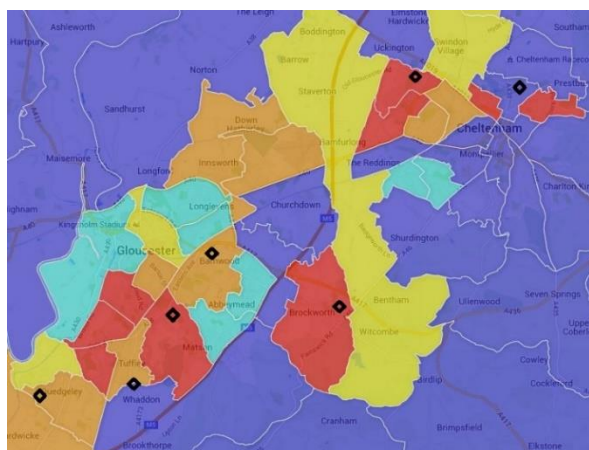
Regional gaps widen as London grows faster



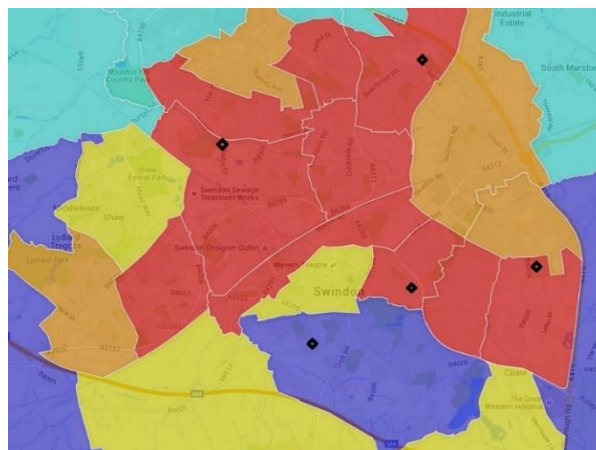
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In the local and immediate catchment area, the major centres of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Swindon have identified areas of low HE participation and constitute key target areas for activity being delivered under the new local school partnerships programme, now underway. These areas largely align to the identified target wards under the new National Collaborative Outreach Program (NCOP), April 2016, indicating that there are under-served populations in these areas with the capacity to enter higher education (based on GCSE outcomes). This reflects our previously identified targeting criteria, where we have considered % students with GCSE A*-C grade in target schools.

Gloucester and Cheltenham



Swindon



(POLAR3 Q1 = red)

Flags identified on these maps indicate new partnerships with local schools. We see significant room for development of the widening participation programme to better align with local agendas in order to further address performance. For example, our local approach will seek to leverage employability and entrepreneurship to address employability concerns articulated by target cohorts. It is envisaged that local employers may be identified for partnerships and contribution.

⁹ <http://www.slideshare.net/UniversitiesUK/access-agreement-themes-for-2016-17-david-barretoffa>

In our complementary national school partnerships programme, now underway with its initial 30 schools, we recognise our special responsibility within the widening participation agenda in relation to showcasing and increasing access to our specific disciplines and also to raising awareness and understanding of the particulars of studying at small, campus-based niche institutions.

Working with Further Education Colleges

The University also has a local further education college in its immediate proximity, which draws approximately 50 per cent of its cohort from the target Swindon area. The University seeks to increase collaboration with this College, and targeted others, to mutually beneficial outcomes. Our strategy with Further Education Colleges acknowledges the potential barriers to transition from an FE to HE institution, in terms of finance, attainment and aspiration, and activities developed and delivered will continue to seek to address this. The new strategy will expand on existing work to inform FEC students of student finance, and to utilise academics to deliver careers in industry talks. The University is taking a bespoke approach to each college, developing a programme of activities relevant and valuable to each.

Activities will include specific open days, campus visits including finance talks, and collaborative stands at community events to demonstrate potential progression routes from FE to HE and into the workplace. We are considering student ambassador drop in sessions, at which our ambassadors would visit on a frequent basis to talk to students.

Mature students with no previous HE from low participation neighbourhoods

RAU proposes increasing its widening participation activity to target mature learners through working with employers seeks to address participation of mature learners, alongside the development of increasingly flexible and industry-informed course offers, which appeal to needs of mature learners in up-skilling or re-skilling for career progression outcomes. The University is currently undertaking an investigation into provision and support for mature learners, which will take into account specific barriers such as:

- Non-traditional qualifications
- Competing responsibilities
- Alternative access/ provision
- Course and learning flexibility

4.1.2 Performance evaluation – Outreach and partnerships

The University now provides a range of activities under a coherent framework for widening participation. Rather than a reactive approach our partnerships and activity now represent a proactive, targeted and clear methodology, which is being positively received by our target schools. We expect this work to translate into *outcomes* in terms of progression towards our HESA targets and milestones, and benchmarks, particularly over the medium-term. This is a long-run, pipeline agenda and therefore whilst we strive to make *faster progress* quicker, we at the same time acknowledge that returns are likely to be achieved across three horizons.

Over the last year, under our ***Initiative: Building Student Pipelines through Outreach & Access***, we have or are in the process of:

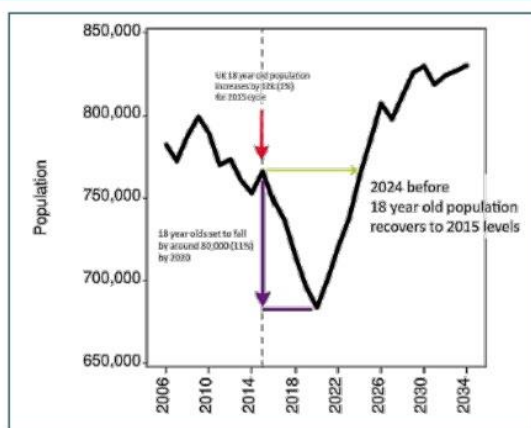
- Establishing meaningful partnerships with approximately 50 targeted schools

- Implementing meaningful activity delivery plans that leverage in-school programmes
- Delivering a range of activities, including:
 - o A signature residential camp
 - o A Young Ambassadors programme
 - o A HEROs Ambassadors programme
 - o Schools Roadshow

We have utilised the School Partnership Framework (SPF) and individual School Implementation Plans methodology. The Partnerships agreement document provides a framework under which delivery can take place and expectations / intentions are set; flexibility in the implementation plans behind the framework allows us to respond to individual school need; to add value to existing infrastructures / programs; and help to prevent additional admin burden schools.

This Initiative has also enabled us to start building a better understanding of the mature learner market, which is currently under-developed in terms of widening participation, recruitment and outreach. This is a significant issue given the falling numbers of school-leavers over the next 5 years, as well as the almost halving of mature learner participation in higher education since 2009.

UK 18 year old population 2006-2034



Source: UCAS Analysis Report 2015

The University continues to undertake a range of outreach activities, including parent’s evenings, road shows, careers fairs, community shows, school visits, primary school experience days, HE experience days. We have also delivered a range of workshops and guidance sessions. We have increased employment of student ambassadors, and continue to use ambassadors in our outreach activities as key influencers of the young people with whom we wish to engage. Ambassador training includes specific sessions on widening participation. We have also added value to the programme through training a cohort of ambassadors on the enhanced “HERO” ambassador programme (“Higher Education Role-models in Outreach”).

Collaboration

With Universities and FE Colleges

The University is working with the University of Gloucestershire, Hartpury College, Gloucestershire college and South Gloucestershire and Stroud College to effectively collaborate to deliver long-term

outreach, operating at a wider regional level to reach a larger number of learners and particularly those in pre-16 education and from under-represented groups. The collaboration, which was developed with HEFCE funding, will continue using a commitment to partnership principles and supporting and collaborating on a range of activities. We hope to continue the successful collaborative work of the network by bidding for continued funding, we are however currently collaborating with sustainability in mind.

The RAU has strategic and formal partnerships in place with seven Further Education Colleges (FECs) for whom we validate degrees and in some cases offer top-up programmes to bachelor level. We support access through these networks, and we have identified an opportunity to further leverage the FEC partnerships to further our widening participation work.

The RAU is particularly pleased to be working in partnership with Capel Manor College, Enfield, for the delivery of land-based provision of relevance to the greater London area. Opportunities relating to the sustainable management of urban green spaces and of food production in urban and peri-urban locations provide an exciting opportunity for the RAU to not only widen its portfolio of provision, but to also achieve significant progress in reaching out to its target WP audience through the validation and shared delivery of novel, and accessible, HE provision.

[With Gloucestershire County Council](#)

The RAU has progressed its relationship with the local Gloucestershire County Council Children in Care team and the Virtual Schools Network (VSN) to explore collaboration to promote, encourage and support higher education access and participation for young people in or leaving care. We recognise the low levels of participation in higher education amongst young people who are in or leaving care, as well as the barriers faced by those students who are care-givers. We are committed to supporting these target groups, highlighted by OFFA as a priority group. Again this has been reflected in our *Resource Plan* Targets and Milestones.

[With the Western Vocational Progression Consortium \(WVPC\)](#)

The University continues to participate in and support development of *Careerpilot* and *Lifepilot* websites as mechanisms to provide information advice and guidance to target audiences. The University is one of eleven universities in the South West region collaborating to fund, maintain, develop and promote the careers support websites managed by the Western Vocational Progression Consortium (WVPC):

- Lifepilot, engaging and supporting mature and part-time students (www.life-pilot.co.uk)
- Careerpilot, providing inspirational pathway and progression
- Information to the full range of 13-19 year olds in the South West region and used by 50,000+ young people a month (www.careerpilot.org.uk)
- HE Skills Map supporting post 16 students in recognising skills and experiences relevant to progression to HE.

Partners support the development of the websites; develop further strategies to embed the websites into outreach and IAG activities; maintain the 'Parent Zone' developed as part of the four National Network for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) partnerships in the South West; and work with universities and partnerships in the region to support plans for sustaining their integration of the Careerpilot site in their offer to all South West schools.

4.1.3 Priorities in 2017-18 Access

The University maintains a number of identified priorities for Access, consolidating and building upon activity in the 2016-17 Access Agreement. Given the strategic framework implemented in 2015, which included a phased model across a 3-5year pipeline; alignment with OFFA's Strategic Plan (2015-2020); and specifically a long-term agenda of developing capacity and embedding across the whole of institution, the priorities contained in our 2016-17 Access Agreement remain relevant.

The University will continue to increase investment in access and outreach work. By 2017-18, we expect that our partnerships with schools and colleges will have significantly deepened, with scaffolded programmes operating with schools and colleges; and evaluation and reflective assessment practices that allow us to progress understanding of our partners and 'what works'. Our partnerships will have increased in breadth, and will include for example, employers, councils and youth support agencies.

A range of targeted and scaffolded activities will continue or be put in place, for example:

- Working with parents and carers programme
- Looked after children/ care leavers aspirations and development programme
- Engaging mature and adult learners
- School Awards scheme
- Professional Development Series for teachers and school/college staff
- Curriculum enrichment and alignment projects – “uni at school” initiative
- Careers, Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship challenge programme
- *Innovate!* Programme linked specifically to increasing use of the Rural Innovation Centre (RIC) and leveraging the local Agri-tech agenda
- Mentoring / Buddy programme
- Extended Ambassadors/ Role Models programme

Priorities are as follows:

1. Maintain and continue to enhance the Access programme of activities in-line with recommendations from the WP Review and other emerging opportunities, which includes ongoing attention to:
 - a. Further embedding and enhancing strategic alignment across the institution
 - b. Embedding the new governance, reporting and monitoring model
 - c. Continue capacity development at the systems and human levels
 - d. Continue and enhance communications, engagement and partnership development
 - e. Ongoing programme and activity development, including targeting, evaluation and monitoring, which is based on significant partnership development and a developing evidence base.
 - f. Consider and advise on specific institutional mechanisms and programmes, such as contextual admissions processes and the development of new course offerings.
2. Increase and monitor engagement with widening participation activity internally, as part of the new embedded, *whole of institution* approach. This includes:

- a. Showcase and recognition of engagement; celebrating success
 - b. Review and monitoring embedded metrics model (launched 2015-16)
 - c. Continue to implement and review systems and structures that promote ease of access and participation in the agenda
 - d. Ongoing provision of guidance that targets and drives the agenda and aligns with core institutional objectives
 - e. Working with academic Schools to continue to pilot activities and projects to encourage access to our niche university courses that have more traditional cohorts.
3. Continue to develop research and evidence base for *Access* activity, including implementation and review of effective targeting, and implement effective monitoring, evaluation and data capture systems. The university will endeavour to leverage and exploit the university's existing data capture systems. Also, explore community and key stakeholder information and data to improve the University's practices in relation to raising aspirations and achievement within under-represented groups and communities through targeted and relevant activity.
 4. Building from practice in 2015-16, continue to enhance and widen external partnerships and collaboration, particularly at the local level and with target priority schools and colleges; and, exploring deeper partnerships and collaborations at the national level.
 5. Development of improved pathways and courses to support and improve access. This strategy seeks to revitalise courses and modules and where it is considered appropriate build new academic programmes specifically designed to enhance access.

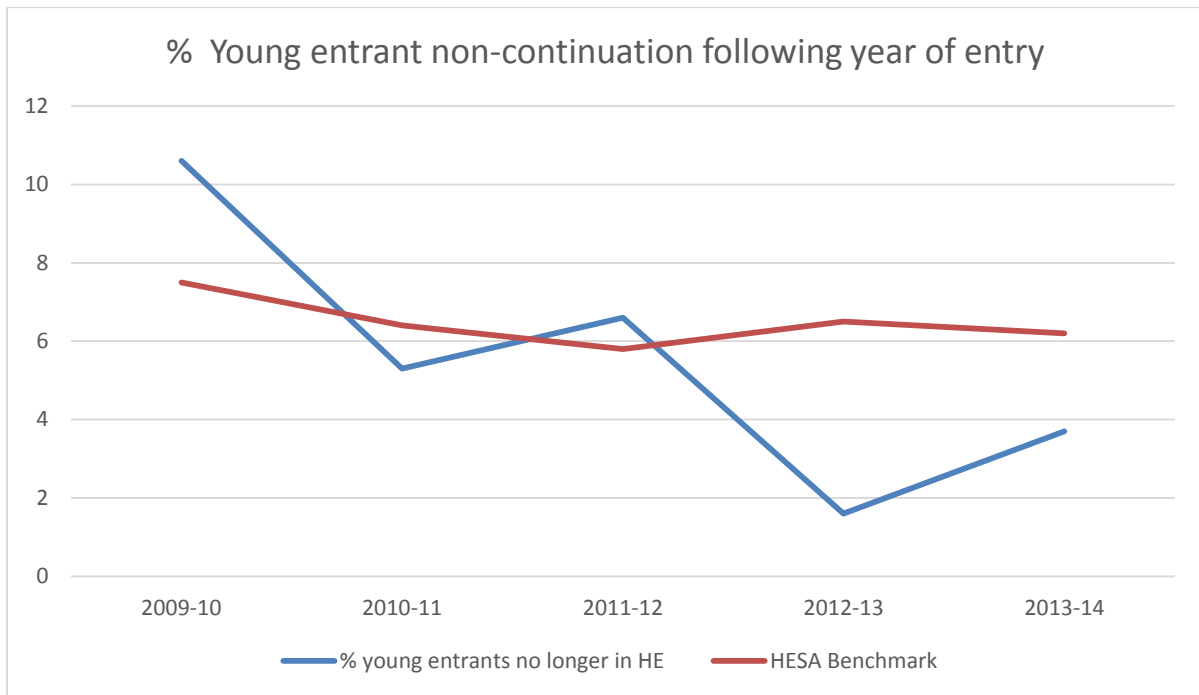
4.2 Student Success

4.2.1 Performance Assessment – Retention and Success

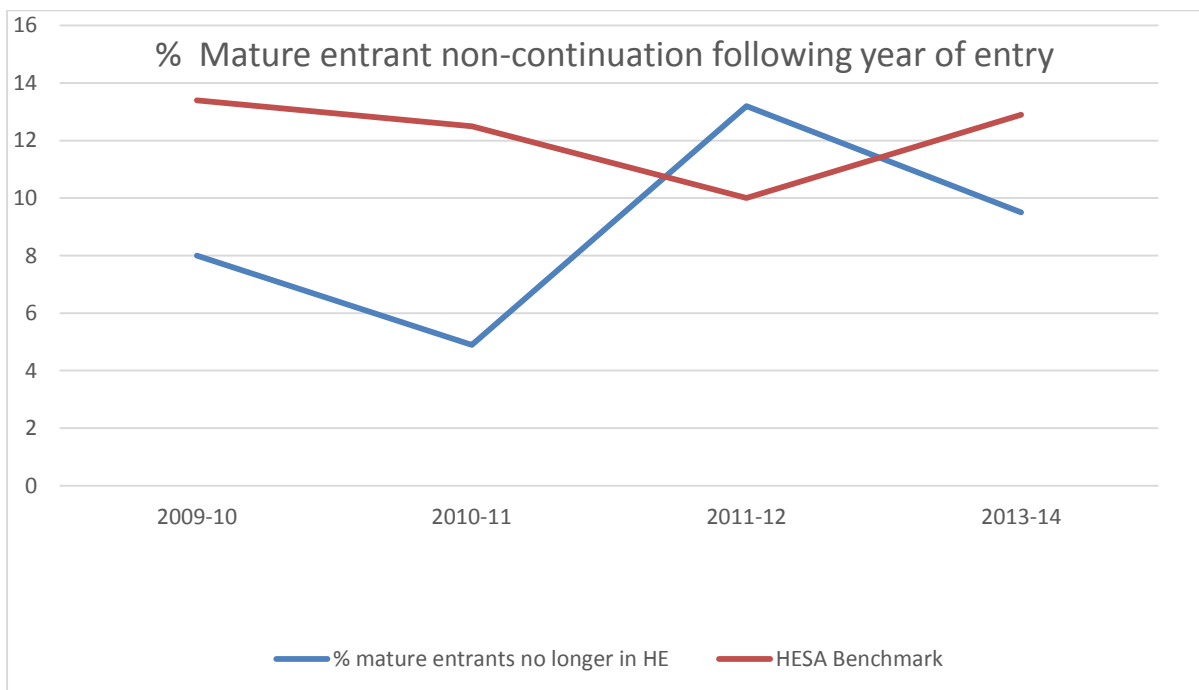
The university has a strong reputation in securing high rates of retention for all students. In 2014-15, we achieved 96.3 per cent of young full-time first degree entrants qualifying or continuing study following their year of entry. A proportion of those not continuing at the RAU also stay in higher education generally, which we view as positive attrition.

We have a consistent high performance in retaining students (measured by HESA Table 3a). The graphs below illustrate our performance since 2009-10 for Young and Mature entrants.

Non-continuation following year of entry: full-time first degree Young Entrants



Non-continuation following year of entry: full-time first degree Mature Entrants



HESA data not available for 2012-13

The University will build on its excellent track record and reputation to ensure student support and success strategies are in place for increasing and widening student base, which includes monitoring success and completion of target groups to ensure gaps in outcomes are proactively addressed.

4.2.2 Performance evaluation – Retention and Success

The University adopts an integrated approach to inclusive learning, teaching and support strategies which are embedded into standard practices and available to all students. The University's commitment to inclusive teaching practice is embedded in teaching and learning policy. There is particular focus on experiential and practical learning, with employability and skills developed integrally to the curriculum.

Transition-in

We acknowledge the importance of the transition-in phase of the *student lifecycle* as a critical juncture for student participation and ongoing success. Our support and development activities around the transition-in phase include the student "My RAU" portal; various information, advice and guidance literature; a full O-week programme; pre-induction days; "Experience Days" for students with an offer; taster experiences; Applicant Days and, connecting with parents, carers and extended family. These events offer opportunities to connect with the campus community, including a wide range of academic and support staff.

Following on from the *Applicant Journey* mapping project in 2015, the University intends to explore the student conversion point as a key period in the transition-in phase. A recent investigation, which focused on the applicant experience and explored reasons for non-enrolment, has provided insight into areas for improvement and further exploration. As part of an ongoing commitment to ensuring accessibility and offer attractiveness, the University will explore:

- Barriers to access and enrolment, including consideration of specific target groups
- Required improvements to products, services and processes, including consideration of specific target groups
- Required developments, including consideration of specific target groups (this links into considerations under *success* and *progression* including the University Offer)

Retention and Success

Across the whole degree, academic, learning and pastoral support is available to all students. In particular, the University hosts a responsive range of additional study skills workshops, which are provided on a group-level basis and by request can be facilitated one-to-one. These sessions are offered as extra-curricular activities, or are embedded into some of the university curricula. The careers and employability service also provide continuing advice and support to students, up to three years after graduating. Availability of part-time employment on and off the campus is promoted and students looking for employment during their studies, as well as career development, are supported.

Student Support

As the RAU moves towards its aspirational recruitment targets over the next five years, and particularly with increased and recalibrated efforts to widen participation, we are acutely aware of the need to continuously review and develop our provisions in student support and success.

To this end, the University undertook a review of services, developing a more efficient and effective, cohesive, evidence based and enhanced service model which integrates a range of best practice.

Key identified objectives

- Student Support Service at the University provide a professional, responsive service which enables and empowers students to fulfil their potential.
- The Student Support Service is a confidential support service which is student led, student specific and tailored to the student needs.

The University collaborates with a range of partners, including healthcare, students, mental health services, the police and the Council, etc.

Key services include:

- A flexible Wellbeing drop in service to help students find strategies to cope with common issues while at the University
- A small confidential counselling service for students where students can talk about personal issues in order to find a new perspective on them and feel more able to cope.
- Access to an external confidential Counselling service which provides appointments face to face or by phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- An important link between the University-wide support structures. To act as a first point of contact for the majority of questions students may have.
- Assistance with any medical concerns and ailments and for general health promotional advice.
- A confidential, free, friendly contraception and sexual health advice.

Future Improvements

- STARs – Support Team Advisor Reps have been appointed from September 2016 to provide out of hours peer support, guidance and signposting services for residential students. STARs are all second or third years students and they are a mix of international students with both males and females being appointed.
- Duty Officers have been implemented to support the security team who provide front line support for students out of hours. Duty Officers work on a rota basis and provide cover for a week at a time being on call either on the phone or coming onto campus to deal with an issue.

Academic support and curriculum

All students are allocated a personal tutor who is a member of academic staff within the School to which they are associated.

As part of the RAU's commitment to student engagement, and linked to the University's retention agenda, a pilot study on peer-to-peer learning sets will be undertaken during 2016-17, using volunteer groups of students from a range of programmes and year groups, working with academic tutors to develop their academic skills and enhance their academic potential and supported by external educators. There will be a need for the development of specific resources and regular developmental meetings with those involved in the pilot project, which can be supported through the use of these

additional funds, and which will provide for an effective and embedded institution-wide approach from 2017 onwards.

The University is also currently piloting a number of supporting technologies to enhance teaching and learning activities and provide an improved student learning experience. These include lecture capture software enabling recordings of lectures and practical sessions to be available for subsequent review by students and the provision of a range of educational training and skills development resources designed to enhance the skills required for more effective and supported learning in higher education.

Process and Service Improvements

An institutional, cross-disciplinary team including staff from Registry and Admissions, Management Information Systems, IT, the Web Development Team and Marketing has been established to explore improvement of services provided to students. Currently, we are developing an electronic online platform (e.g. digitisation of current paper forms means using the web as a means of widening participation by providing access to services and an online 24/7 helpdesk) for all Student Registry services accessed via the University website and Student Portal.

Furthermore, we are currently completing the UAT phase of the Student Attendance Monitoring system SEAtS with a view of going to pilot in early May 2016. The University is committed in improving the attendance of all students as we recognise that attendance offers students the skills and knowledge required to successfully complete their course. The Attendance Monitoring will act as an early warning system and will help develop longer-term and more intensive interventions from Student Support Services which are embedded and sustainable. The system is expected to contribute to the improvement of student retention, monitoring of student engagement, space utilisation as well as help the University to meet various institutional needs.

Disabled Students

HEIDI data for 2012/13 (the most recent available) academic year shows the RAU having 21.88% disabled students in the first year degree intake that year (8th highest in the league tables); our Institutional data suggests nearly 25% over the entire University student population in academic year 2015/16. Our dyslexic student population is the 5th highest of all universities. The proportion of students claiming DSA is significantly higher than HESA benchmark, at 11.4% in 2014-15 compared to the benchmark of 8.1%.

The University continues to provide an excellent level of service to support disabled students, as evidenced by our high rate of retention. We operate an inclusive learning environment based on the learning styles of SpLD students, providing all information electronically to an accessible document standard via Moodle [VLE]; this includes all lecture notes, presentations and other learning materials which are published at least 2 days in advance of the lecture.

We encourage disabled students to disclose their circumstances on application and provide advice prior to entry in an endeavour to get supporting arrangements in place as quickly as possible. To this end, the university employs directly in-house a dyslexia tutor and a counsellor who can both provide learning support without the need for a DSA, and therefore also meet the needs of those students who are not eligible for DSA funding.

Information is provided via the website, prospectus, Open Days and Applicant Days, at Induction and repeated by email during the year; in addition the Disability Officer is a member of the SENCo Forum and spreads information about the DSA to school and college SENCos.

RAU has high profile national representation on boards such as NADP and of ADSHE, STEM DC and the newly formed BIS Disabled Students Leadership Group, which was set up to establish the criteria for an inclusive learning environment to replace the DSA.

Areas identified for development and improvement

Wider recommendations from the 2014-15 WP Review, informing required developments, remain relevant and are summarised below:

- Development and enhancement of the widening participation agenda to provide **targeted support** across the *student lifecycle*:
 - Phase 1 – Pre-entry
 - Phase 2 – Offers, enrolments and acceptances
 - Focus area is the applicant / student journey (transition to university)
 - Phase 3 – University experience (success)
 - Focus areas are personal tutor system, provision of student support and career and employability support and development
 - Phase 4 – Graduate outcomes (progression)
 - Focus area linking to employers and industry
- Further **embedding widening participation into academic programmes** and curriculum, e.g.:
 - Course offer (development of, course name, communications and messaging)
 - Subject/module curriculum design
 - Pedagogy/ andragogy
- Recognition **for widening participation in teaching and learning** practice improved through a reward and recognition programme, acknowledging good practice in different areas, e.g.:
 - Academic teaching practice – inclusive curriculum
 - Best widening participation advancing team
 - Support programme practice
- Enhanced **research agenda with widening participation outcomes**. Recognition and awareness of widening participation can be improved through making small, targeted research grants available to researchers (particularly internal academics), for specific research related to widening participation outcomes.
- Development of the **careers and employability strategy**, working across academic curriculum to embed employability in a systematic way and attend to outcomes for target groups.
- Development of **consultation strategy and platform for staff and students**, to enhance engagement with a range of issues and challenges and particularly in issues related to access, participation, success, financial support and progression of different target groups.

- Development and implementation of a range of **metrics and indicators** regarding widening participation outcomes, as embedded into core institutional monitoring and metrics systems, and which are positioned in all stages of the *student lifecycle*.

4.2.3 Priorities in 2017-18 *Retention and Success*

The university has identified the following key priorities for student success and retention:

The university has identified the following key priorities for student success and retention:

1. Evaluate the development of a new student services model to **ensure provision supports target cohorts** and provides inclusive, informed, engaged best practice retention and success agenda.
2. Enhance **staff development** in inclusive practices, to ensure course and curriculum design, and assessment, feedback and student support recognise the diverse backgrounds of students.
3. Implementation of an **institutional research project looking at retention and success in land-based education**, to help identify retention risk characteristics and student achievement against profiles. It is envisaged that this analytical approach to monitoring, coupled with feedback from students, will reveal a series of pilot projects that will be developed and implemented proactively.
4. **Review and development of contextual admissions** processes. The University is a recruiting rather than selecting institution, and we typically receive applications from a broad range of backgrounds and abilities. We aim to make all applicants standard offers and pay particular attention to work experience and other factors detailed in personal statements, applying concessions for mitigating information relating to educational or personal disadvantage.

4.3 Progression

Employability at the University is a key pillar of our offer, and includes opportunities for employment and employment experiences as embedded in our degree programmes and post-graduation. The employability agenda is an integrated programme that operates in-curriculum, co-curricular and extra-curricular engagement. It includes specific curriculum-linked and assessed activity; career development and planning support; personal and professional development; access and engagement opportunities with employers; and a range of available employment options. Postgraduate study options are highlighted and discussed with students on an individual basis as part of the careers advice and guidance offered. Programme managers also raise the possibilities of appropriate progression routes to undergraduate students.

4.3.1 Performance assessment – Graduate destinations

The university is ranked in the top ten per cent nationally for graduate employability, and in 2014-15 we maintained a high level of progression at 94.4 per cent of rate of full-time students in employment or further study six months after graduation. This figure was 80.2% for graduate level progression outcomes.

The University provides Careers Information, Advice and Guidance to all students and alumni for up to two years post-graduation. We support students with employability skills development, organize annual careers fairs and manage an on-line jobs portal.

Employer collaboration occurs on daily basis, including advertising of vacancies and student engagement activities. The University processed 825 vacancies in total during 2015 and various employer talks were facilitated. The University organises Careers Fairs involving more than 60 employers across 3 events, giving students valuable opportunity to network and build contacts with industry and employers.

Graduate employment is a primary focus, and is included as a key target in the corporate plan 2015-2020. As stated in our 2016-17 Access Agreement, the University is further exploring progression outcomes, particularly for target cohorts, including what employment type is being secured and where students are being employed. The policy agenda has been flagged by HEFCE¹⁰ that student employment in jobs at graduate level and in degree-relevant areas will become a larger issue.

This has provided impetus for further exploration with a view to developing a comprehensive employability strategy, into which considerations for a diverse range of students will be mapped. It is also envisaged that this will consider an Employer Engagement Strategy and database of contacts to facilitate sharing of information. This is scheduled for commencement in 2016-17.

As flagged in our 2016-17 Access Agreement, it is envisaged that the result will be the development of a Careers & Employment Strategy that works across the curriculum to embed employability in a systematic way and position RAU students as premium employment prospects in their field. As part of this, we undertake to monitor progression outcomes for different student groups, and ensure any identified gaps in progression are addressed.

Specifically, this is intended to also include the development of a more effective target for *Progression*, for inclusion in the 2018-19 Access Agreement. This will likely be related to graduate level employment across target student groups.

Further, we will specifically consider our development and advancement agenda, incorporating the potential of our excellent alumni base, to effect outcomes particularly for target groups.

4.3.2 Priorities in 2016-17 Progression

Identified priorities in the area of progression remain as:

1. **Data capture and monitoring** to better explore, understand and compare/contrast progression of different target groups and according to student attributes.
2. In-line with institutional development of the **careers and employability strategy**, ensure support and development strategies for, and consideration of, students from widening participation backgrounds, including:
 - a. Provide support to secure and incentivise work placements
 - b. Establishment of a career / professional mentor programme (leveraging alumni and employer partnerships)

¹⁰ Conversation with officers in HEFCE's widening participation unit February 2015

3. Enhanced **links and partnerships with employers and leveraging alumni**.

4.4 Activity investments and underpinning evidence

4.4.1 Literature and good practice

Key practices taken into account in this Access Agreement include:

- Targeted and progressive programs including intensive support
- Reaching out to mature learners and employees
- Identifying and working with key influencers and role models
- Working to address identified attainment gaps
- Clear strategies for delivering information, advice and guidance
- Collaborative and engaged community partnerships which are *integrative or transformational*
- Creating a sense of belonging and identity, particularly at transition in (orientation)
- Simple financial support packages coupled with information
- Starting employability support at pre-entry
- Strategies for monitoring and evaluation; collaboration between academics and practitioners
- Application of findings to part-time as well as full-time learners

Particularly in the *Access* area, the University continues to apply the findings of Moore et al. (2013), identifying a number of items that contribute to successful widening participation programmes. Of particular note:

1. Consistent and sustained interventions with structured and coherent frameworks
2. Early interventions
3. Partnership activity
4. Access to HE-related information, advice and guidance (IAG)
5. Reaching out to key influencers, evaluating interventions
6. Acknowledgement that friends, family and peers have an important supporting role
7. Addressing retention and success by approaches which develop peer relations; staff-student interaction; identity as successful HE learners; and, a career-relevant HE experience.
8. Ensuring employer engagement in widening participation and the employability of graduates.

4.4.2 Recommended approach and practices: guidance to providers

Of particular relevance to this Access Agreement, Moore et al. (2013) encouraged higher education providers, management practitioners to:

- **Higher education providers and management:**
 - Continue to examine organisational culture and to **explore the fitness for purpose of current structures** and practices
 - Continue to enhance and **embed organisational widening participation** strategies
 - Ensure that **clear targeting** strategies are in place where appropriate (e.g. in relation to outreach and progression activities) and link these to **evaluation processes**
 - Continue to join **policy with practice and research with action**.
 - Build on and **enhance existing partnership** practices, both within and outside the organisation

- Support and **add value** to existing provision
- Engage a **wider range of 'influencers'**.
- **Practitioners:**
 - Continue to contextualise and **apply** what is already known about '**good practice**', e.g. in relation to retention and success
 - Strive to foster sound **learning relationships** and continue to **engender high expectations** and to support aspirations
 - Develop outreach programmes that are '**professional**' and **engaging**
 - Support the development of **better monitoring and evaluation** (including linking with academics for **research** purposes)

These items are taken into account in the development and maintenance of the widening participation programme along with items below, which have been identified in the *OFFA Key Statistics on 2015-16 Access Agreements* and *OFFA Key Statistics on 2016-17 Access Agreements* documents as best practice items. These have been mapped across the *student lifecycle*:

The student lifecycle		
Access	Success	Progression
Tracking the progress of students that attend outreach schemes who subsequently apply to university	Implementation of infrastructure such as online support and flexible learning	Interview skills training and workshops
Assessing the attainment of students who have been reached by access activity	Examining withdrawal, degree outcome, and employability rates for students from underrepresented groups, before and after introduction of student success and progression schemes	Information sessions about postgraduate study and careers
Collaborations with local employers	Specific activity and support targeting mature and part-time learners	Collaborations with local employers
Interview skills training and workshops	Careers elements built into curricula	Volunteering opportunities
Careers advice targeted at students from underrepresented groups	Entrepreneurship and business skills courses and training	Bursaries to enable students to attend interviews
Use of contextual information in admissions	Analysing the impact of financial support schemes on access and retention	Careers advice targeted at students from underrepresented groups
Academic staff conducting research within institutions on the range of issues affecting under-represented and disadvantaged groups	Development and expansion of part-time and flexible provision	Entrepreneurship and business skills courses and training
	Academic staff conducting research within institutions on the range of issues affecting under-represented and disadvantaged groups	Employability and progression support directed at mature and part-time learners
	Whole institution focus groups to research and develop good practice in relation to supporting p/t and mature students	
	Targeted financial support for mature and p/t learners	

4.5 Investment Strategy for Access & Student Success

In 2017-18, the University proposes to allocate 30.1 per cent of additional fee income to access, student success, progression and financial support measures. This is in line with OFFA Guidance regarding investment and performance.

Building on commitments in our 2016-17 Access Agreement, we propose a further slight shift in weighting of investment across *Access*, student *Success*, *Financial Support* and *Progression*, in accordance with our performance assessment and a *smarter, evidence-based spend* strategy; and in consideration of current research being undertaken regarding the impact of financial support¹¹ (scholarships, bursaries and waivers).

4.5.1 Spend across access and student support measures

It is predicted that for 2017-18 the total higher fee income investment in outreach and student success will be £875,850. The following table provides a broad overview of the University's proposed investment in outreach and student success over the next five year period (2016/17-2020/21), including the percentage of total fund allocated to each area.

	2016-17	%of HFI	2017-18	%of HFI	2018-19	%of HFI	2019-20	%of HFI	2020-21	%of HFI
Access Expenditure	£389,453	14.25%	£399,000	14.00%	£416,213	13.75%	£440,963	13.75%	£440,963	13.75%
Success Expenditure	£76,524	2.80%	£81,225	2.85%	£90,810	3.00%	£96,210	3.00%	£96,210	3.00%
Progression Expenditure	£40,995	1.50%	£42,750	1.50%	£51,459	1.70%	£54,519	1.70%	£54,519	1.70%
Expenditure on Financial Support	£321,128	11.75%	£334,875	11.75%	£355,673	11.75%	£376,823	11.75%	£376,823	11.75%
Total Expenditure	£828,099	30.30%	£857,850	30.10%	£914,154	30.20%	£968,514	30.20%	£968,514	30.20%

Given the increasing likelihood of a future reduction in formulaic Higher Education funding from Government, and the expected introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework with associated metrics relating to student success, achievement and progression, the University is seeking to initially pilot, and subsequently to embed, a range of student-centred educational enhancement initiatives within mainstream academic delivery and support functions. Such a programme will reduce current reliance on additional funding streams and ensure the sustainability of development activities for students. Such initiatives will include peer-supported learning sets, employability skills development modules and a range of blended training and development opportunities designed to enhance the academic, technological and personal skills of students to meet the challenges of their future careers.

4.6 Financial support for students

The University is committed to ensuring all students are successful in their studies, and to minimising negative attrition. Particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, we recognise that the upfront costs of study at Phase 2 on the *student lifecycle* "Offer, Acceptances, Enrolments"; and also costs embedded in successive years of study (e.g. materials, study trips and work placements), constitute potential barriers to access and ongoing participation. Whilst the impact of financial support packages has been found to be negligible in recent studies, at the institutional level there is evidence for the positive impact of financial support on retention, student experience and employability. We are aware from experience that our ability to offer financial support has resulted in retention of students who would have postponed or discontinued studies.

¹¹ This builds on previously cited literature and findings, in particular *Nursaw Associates (2015) What do we know about the impact of financial support on access and student success? Report to the Office for Fair Access*

To advance our understanding and provide a more robust evidence base and methodology for ongoing assessment and evaluation, the University is participating as one of five universities in a pilot research study into the impact of financial support. This was commissioned by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and is being conducted by Dr Colin McCaig at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). The study includes an evaluation of our financial support offer. Findings will be applied into the future, with a supporting toolkit for evaluation.

In lieu of the findings of this investigation, we have maintained the 2016-17 level of funding investment in financial support in this Access Agreement.

4.6.1 Objectives

We identify the following objectives in relation to provision of financial support to students:

1. Continue to seek ways in which to add value to financial support packages; for example, through support, professional development or employer connectivity linked to awards.
2. Further develop financial support packages for disadvantaged students and at-risk learners that are responsive and flexible to meet changing needs.
3. Monitor, evaluate and critically assess the impact of institutional financial support packages to gain better understanding of outcomes and to inform future practices. This includes implementation of relevant evaluation practises resulting from the recent study into the impact of financial support (as per above); and, consultation with the student body regarding how financial support can be improved, tailored and leveraged for outcomes that support student success and progression.

4.6.2 Performance evaluation: scholarships and bursaries

The University has consistently targeted bursaries, scholarships and fee waivers at students from the lowest income households, where income is <£25,000. In addition, we have actively sought to establish and guide scholarships and awards from other income streams (e.g. philanthropic) to prioritise the most disadvantaged students. The range of scholarships are provided on the website.

In addition, the University has provided and continues to provide:

1. A hardship fund, which is available to disadvantaged students experiencing short-term financial difficulties and pressure and which is accessible at any point in the academic year.
2. Free professional financial support and advisory services at the individual level, provided by an accountant who is familiar with the higher education sector.
3. Opportunities for students to undertake part-time paid employment on campus, for example in facilities, administrative and/or student ambassador positions.
4. A Cirencester Alumni fund providing support for students to undertake significant career enhancement activities linked to their studies, such as support for internships and work placements, which otherwise would not be feasible due to financial constraints.

4.6.3 Priorities 2016-17 Financial Support

The university has identified a number of key priorities, as follows:

1. **Review and implement appropriate findings from the SHU research study** in order to increase effectiveness of our financial support packages and to promote progression and success through, for example:
 - a. Strategic targeting and ongoing development of the evidence base informing decision making.
 - b. Flexibility of packages across student fee and/or accommodation waivers, scholarships and other grants that are responsive to individual student need.
 - c. Ensure relevant, targeted financial support is provided across the student lifecycle.

2. Continue development and implementation of **data capture, analysis and monitoring** system; and, application of the evaluation toolkit for assessing the impact of financial support. Key stakeholders include:
 - a. Students (and particularly scholarship target groups), including current and prospective students, and alumni. Explores, for example: impact and fund use; financial barriers and influence of financial support on choice; and, opportunities for employer sponsorships and/or value-add, respectively.
 - b. Staff, with an emphasis on understanding ‘cost hotspots’ across degree programmes; financial implications of any work integrated learning and/or study tour requirements; and previous experience of supporting students with regard to financial disadvantage.

4.6.4 Spend on fee waivers, bursaries and scholarships

The following table illustrates the proposed range of financial support packages offered by the university for 2017-18.

Award type	Amount per new student	Brief description
Core Bursary (Means Tested)	£1,000 per annum	Awarded automatically to all students who accept a firm offer prior to the middle of May with an assessed household income of <£25k p/a. Awards paid in three termly instalments throughout each year of study.
Support Bursary (Means Tested)	£1,000 per annum	Awarded upon application to students not in receipt of any other support with household incomes <£42,600 p/a. Students must also demonstrate financial need by fulfilling a minimum of one Eligibility Criteria* or by providing other supporting evidence and statement(s). Awards paid in three termly instalments throughout each year of study.
Skills Bursary	£250.00 First and second year only	Bursary to support students in the acquisition of degree relevant professional skills to enhance employability and progression and complement academic programme. Available to all students. Where additional bursaries are available, priority will be given to disadvantaged students (as identified by either of above methods).

* Eligibility Criteria:

- 1) First generation higher education student
- 2) Specified school or college
- 3) Students with a disability

- 4) Low higher education participation neighbourhood background (POLAR3)
- 5) Member of a black minority ethnic (BME) group
- 6) Mature student
- 7) Part-time student
- 8) Care leaver / care giver

5 Targets and milestones

OFFA Strategic	-	Student lifecycle approach
Priorities attended to	-	Faster progress
	-	Collaboration
	-	Long-term, sustained [early] outreach

Targets and milestones are contained in the Access Agreement Resource Plan, annexed. Given our performance assessment, the University has set stretching targets in the *Access* domain, that acknowledge our position but which represent a commitment and effort to make *faster progress* institutionally, as well as contributing to the sector.

The University acknowledges that more progress is required to achieve a more socially representative intake, and this journey will also require ensuring iterative consideration and improvement of student success and progression measures to ensure maintenance of high performance in these areas. Although targets are stretching, through adopting recommendations of the WP Review (which align with the OFFA Strategic Plan priorities), we are confident and committed to progressing outcomes.

6 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

OFFA Strategic	-	Whole of institution approach
Priorities attended to	-	Smarter, evidence-based spend
	-	Faster progress

A number of recommendations regarding future monitoring and evaluation processes were made in the 2014-15 WP Review, and these remain relevant. The University continues to apply the models and practice identified as part of the WP Review as a means by which progress can be measured. We will continue to review policy, best practice and emerging literature to add further robustness and ensure relevance of our evaluation processes.

6.1 An Institutional framework

Monitoring and evaluation of the Access Agreement and widening participation agenda continues to be integrated more strategically into a wider Institutional framework, which is inclusive and embedded across the University. In interpreting the implementation of a *whole of institution* approach and framework, the University considers:

1. **Location:** Activity is located at all relevant sites across the Institution, which means in academic Schools; key professional and administrative/supporting Departments; and, in key Governance areas.
2. **Levels:** Activity is located at all levels of the Institution, including governance and strategic; managerial; operational (programmatic) and administrative.

This institutional framework provides the opportunity for multiple layers of accountability and transparency, as well as shared ownership of the widening participation agenda and outcomes. We continue to progress this agenda, having noted excellent progress since our last Access Agreement. In particular, this has included planning and metrics embedding and development in:

- The Corporate Plan and its annexures
- Academic School strategies and planning
- Marketing and Recruitment strategy and planning

Institutional level evaluation is underpinned by evaluation of programmatic elements (projects and activities), which include qualitative and quantitative assessment and analysis.

6.1.1 Strengthening our data and evidence base

The University is currently reviewing the way it uses data including for effective monitoring and evaluation of activities. As part of this, the University is participating in the HEDIIP Data Capability Project pilot. The Information Group project is looking at reporting by groups (including target student groups) to effectively monitor progress, retention, attainment, attendance and other key performance indicators. It is hoped the information will directly feed into enhancement activities, programme review and individual student support. The project is expected to run over a two-year period.

In addition, we are reviewing the possibility of using Learning Analytics to monitor individual student engagement with a range of learning resources throughout the academic year, and to identify individuals who appear to be lagging behind for appropriate intervention and support.

6.1.2 Aims and objectives

The following objectives remain relevant in progressing our monitoring and evaluation:

1. Establish institutional **monitoring and evaluation mechanisms** for widening participation outcomes, which are embedded into existing institutional performance frameworks across relevant **locations** and **levels** of the institution.
2. Ensure **strategic governance** of the Access Agreement and access, success and progression agendas generally to ensure the University is an inclusive, diverse and sustainable institution.
3. **Enhance communication** flow up- and down-stream so that:
 - a. Operations, programmes and administrations align with and contribute to achievement of strategic priorities, high-level performance metrics and governance;
 - b. Strategy and governance is informed by operations, programmatic evaluations, stakeholder consultations (internal and external), and administrative processes.
4. **Evaluate and assess performance** in relation to **collaborative** and partnership work.
5. Ensure the **dissemination and recognition of successes** in widening participation through celebration of achievement and recognition and reward mechanisms.

6.1.3 Monitoring through an embedded metrics model framework

The University is in the process of implementing a series of institutionally-mapped metrics for widening participation, as an embedded strategy for performance assessment and to deliver *faster progress* and *smarter, evidence-based spend* using a *whole of institution* and *student lifecycle* approach. This results in established metrics across the following domains:

- Institutional Measures *e.g. Change in recruitment levels from state schools*
- Strategic Measures *e.g. WP engagement in Corporate Plan*
- Departmental / Managerial measures *e.g. Reporting controls in place*
- Programmatic Operational Effectiveness *e.g. Project Plans in place for all activity*
- Compliance and Reporting *e.g. Reporting to Government, management and committees occurring regularly and on time; collection of relevant data and evidence*
- Engagement *e.g. Partnership Agreements in place with External Stakeholders*
- Operational Efficiency *e.g. Productivity: Events/Activity/FT Employee Trend Assessment*
- WP Effectiveness/ Outcome Measures *e.g. programmatic /Activity evaluation; monitoring activities and partnerships outcomes*
- Aspiration raising and pre-university *e.g. Increase aspirations of attending university amongst under-represented groups*
- Applications and Transition *e.g. Increase applications from under-represented groups*
- University Experience and Progression Assessment *e.g. Proportion of students satisfied with standard of learning and teaching support and assessment*
- Graduate Success Assessment *e.g. Employability statistics (DLHE)*

6.2 Institutional processes for monitoring, evaluation and reporting against targets and milestones

Performance outcomes are currently reported and monitored through the Academic Registrar and the Head of Marketing, who report through to the University Executive. There is also reporting to Academic Board and Board of Governors when required; these Boards are inclusive of student representation.

Performance measures in the *student success* domain (including retention) are monitored by academic Schools and at corporate level through Academic Board and the Senior Management Group. These operational arrangements are complemented by the University's planning, monitoring and review cycle, including annual quality review.

The *progression* domain and graduate destinations is operationally monitored by the Careers and Employment team, with reporting and review/ monitoring line to the Academic Registrar and through to the University Executive.

At the individual activity level, staff and teams responsible for delivery evaluate their achievement and assess this against performance measures.

6.2.1 A Collaborative approach to redesigning institutional reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The University continues its process of establishing increasingly rigorous, transparent and consistent reporting mechanisms across the Institution.

Reporting processes and templates

The University is implementing a refreshed Monitoring and Reporting Model, which includes underpinning templates for reporting, as well as recommendations regarding widening participation metrics and function of the newly created Student Affairs Liaison Group. We are also progressing a reporting and monitoring model as related to our external partners and partnership work.

Planning, reporting and monitoring of widening participation funds invested across the Institution

The *Widening Participation Guidance, Funds Application and Monitoring* toolkit, provided as part of the WP Review, is being implemented.

The toolkit ensures accountability and transparency of funds allocated across the Institution by ensuring funds have dedicated activity plans, objectives and metrics (milestones and targets); lead responsible officer(s); and follow the established internal reporting and acquittal process. Guidance provided as part of the toolkit ensures that applications for activities are strategically aligned with the institutional widening participation agenda, and respond to key identified areas of priority or need.

Aggregation of activity monitoring will provide an assessment of performance against Institutional targets and milestones contained in the Access Agreement. To support this process, representative officers have now been established across the Institution, for example in each academic School. These bring together key staff covering outreach, equality and diversity, teaching and learning, student support and progression to support annual monitoring and reporting to HEFCE and OFFA.

6.3 Responsible persons

Following an inclusive *whole of institution* approach, the University has embedded responsibility for commitments contained in the Access Agreement as per the following table. At the corporate level overarching responsibility for the Access Agreement rests with the **Vice Chancellor** working closely with the **Director of Finance**, the **Academic Registrar** (for financial support, success and progression) and **Head of Marketing** (for Access).

Institutional location & level	Responsible person(s)	Responsible for
Governance Executive	Vice Chancellor	Review, input and approve Access Agreement and return.
Governance Executive	Director of Finance	Student numbers and financial data. Funds oversight. "Assurance" contact officer for OFFA.
Governance Committees	Governing Council Senior Management Academic Board	All responsible for receiving/ reviewing data & reporting. Input and contributions to strategy as required. <i>All committees have student representation.</i>
Governance Committee	Student Affairs Liaison Group	Receiving, providing input and reviewing strategy and programmes. Consideration of equality and diversity, including provision of relevant data. <i>Student representation.</i>
Registry and Admissions	Academic Registrar	Provision of student data and key information; data analysis. Strategically contribute to, review and approve Access Agreement.

Senior Management		<p>Overarching Budget responsibility.</p> <p>Provide information to and gain approval from executive.</p> <p>Delivery of documents (Access Agreement, return, etc.) to OFFA.</p> <p>Management responsibility for widening participation delivery team, strategy and programme.</p>
Academic Schools Senior Management	<p>Deans of Schools (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>School of Agriculture, Farming & Environment</i> - <i>School of Equine and Equine Science</i> - <i>School of Real Estate & Land Management</i> - <i>School of Business & Entrepreneurship</i> 	<p>Strategic input and embedding widening participation into academic School plans, including setting metrics. Receive and review reporting on widening participation performance for respective Schools; contribute to solving challenges and/or recognition of achievements.</p> <p>Provision of lead/contact person(s) for widening participation and direction for academic School staff engagement with widening participation, including contribution to drafting of School widening participation reports.</p>
Registry and Admissions Management, Operations & Administration	Widening Participation Management and Delivery	<p>Management and operational delivery of the widening participation programme and commitments. Facilitation and relationship management across the institution and with external partners.</p> <p>Ensuring the construction and implementation of a <i>whole-of-institution</i> approach across the <i>student lifecycle</i>, attending to <i>Access, Student Success</i> and <i>Progression</i>.</p> <p>Ongoing liaison with OFFA, as required.</p>
Marketing and Recruitment Department Management, operations and administration	<p>Head of Marketing and Recruitment</p> <p>Widening Participation Management and Delivery Team</p>	<p>Management of Widening Participation delivery team. Management and operational delivery of the widening participation programme and commitments. Facilitation and relationship management across the institution and with external partners, including new partnership with the University of Gloucestershire for Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO). Reporting internally and externally; monitoring outputs, outcomes and impact, including draft Access Agreement.</p> <p>Strategic input and integration with wider recruitment agenda.</p> <p>Wider operational contribution to the <i>Access</i> elements, including Recruitment staff engagement with widening participation activities.</p> <p>Ensure provision of relevant information regarding activities, etc. and responsibility for website information.</p>
Registry and Admissions Operations and Administration	Admissions team	<p>Operational contribution to the <i>Access</i> and <i>Student Success</i> (particularly at transition-in) elements, including delivery of activity.</p> <p>Ensuring equitable, fair and accessible admissions processes, including contextual admissions method.</p> <p>Provision of relevant, up-to-date admissions/ financial information.</p>
Registry and Admissions Operations	Careers and Employment team	Operational contributions to the <i>Progression</i> elements, including staff engagement in delivery of activity.

6.4 Evaluation in the Access domain

The widening participation team ensure that ongoing evaluation and action learning review takes place across activities in the *Access* area. These evaluations are incorporated into internal reporting. Whilst this area will be reviewed as part of the institutional evaluation framework described in Section 6.2, current practices include:

- Output measures
 - Number of events, activities
 - Number of participants
 - Number of partners (e.g. schools)
 - Depth of engagement
 - Event and activity design integrity
- Outcome measures
 - Number of student applications/ enrolments from target backgrounds
 - Feedback via surveys to participants and teachers and student ambassadors
 - Case studies

6.4.1 Collaborative evaluation in Access

As part of the remodelling of evaluation and monitoring process and methodology, the University is exploring collaborative evaluation processes with partners and stakeholders. It is envisaged that these mechanisms will not only ensure evaluation, but contribute to meaningful stakeholder engagement, through establishing vision and performance goals; sharing understanding and best practice; and, agreeing a set of evaluative tools for implementation.

6.5 Composite list of all current evaluative and reporting practice

Type	Level	Description
Pre- and post- event Questionnaires	Operational	Feedback (questionnaire / verbal / groups) is collected pre- and post-outreach events
Student ambassador & delivery staff ratings	Operational	Feedback (questionnaire / verbal / groups) is collected post-outreach events
Event Reports	Operational	Individual outreach event reports collated to draw out participant, visiting staff and RAU staff / ambassador evaluations and to inform future practice
Student Feedback	Operational	RAU Student feedback from committees and groups, including course representatives, members of Inclusivity, Equality and Diversity, the student union and student feedback forums
National Student Survey (NSS)	Management	Data from NSS used to inform practice and development
Student Performance Report	Management	Annual report detailing student academic performance
Collaborations Report	Management	Full annual report detailing provision, co-ordination and delivery on collaborative activity. Recommendations for further collaborations, development of existing practice and future investments
WP Annual Report	Management	Annual report to Governing Council and SMG detailing provision over year and offering recommendations for future activity
Student Registration system reporting	Management	Student data system has reporting mechanisms; identification of under-represented students, applicants and entrant data, students accessing financial and non-financial support measures
WPSS monitoring return	Management	Annual report on WPSS targets
Access Agreement return	Management	Annual report on Access Agreement milestones and targets
Review and Impact Assessment	Strategic	Bi-annual review of services and provision, including impact assessment in context of wider institutional objectives

7 Equality and diversity

OFFA Strategic	-	Equality and Diversity
Priorities attended to	-	Whole of institution approach
	-	Smarter, evidence-based spend
	-	Faster progress

The University's Corporate Plan 2015-2020 affirms our commitment to inclusion, equity and widening access as part of the University's mission and as a core institutional responsibility. The University is dedicated to providing opportunity for all and is committed to maintaining fair and equal access to the higher education experience for all those who wish to access it. We believe this is morally right, socially responsible and positively contributes to business outcomes, efficiency and effectiveness and a rich and diverse teaching and learning environment.

7.1 Institutional review, analysis and reporting

The University publishes an annual equality report and conducts reviews of diversity impact, which are based on a *whole-of-institution* approach and which are contained as action plans in the RAU Equality Plan (2014-2017). Responsibilities and commitments under this Plan are reviewed by both Senior Management Group and Academic Board, under the direction of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and reported to Governing Council.

The Equality Plan sets an institutional intention to ensure that the services the University provides take account equality duty factors, and provides the monitoring mechanism to review performance against protected characteristics covered by the duty.

The University facilitates and delivers events to increase visibility and awareness, recognise and celebrate its commitment to inclusivity, equality and diversity, bringing together the campus community together to share achievements, exchange knowledges, and discuss issues of inclusion and equality.

7.2 Inclusivity, Equality & Diversity and integration with the Access Agreement

The widening participation agenda is closely aligned with the Equality Plan and diversity assessments, and is incorporated specifically as an area for continuous review. Equality is embedded and intrinsic to the widening participation agenda at the University, given the nature of the work and target groups served. The Access Agreement contributes to the University's equality and diversity commitment and outcomes across the *student lifecycle*.

Many of the protected characteristics are reflected in the Access Agreement targets and milestones, with specific targets for example to ensure access, financial support, success and progression for students from under-represented backgrounds such as mature students and care leavers, as well as students from low income backgrounds and areas where participation in higher education is low.

7.2.1 Monitoring impact on equality and diversity – current status

Equality and diversity issues are monitored by the Senior Management Group and Academic Board, under the direction of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and reported to Governing Council.

7.2.2 Monitoring impact on equality and diversity – opportunities for development

The University is improving and enhancing the way in which the widening participation team currently report into and communicate upstream reporting. It has been identified that there is much potential to enhance engagement in:

- Formal consultation and strategic discussions about the widening participation which have potential to align with and move the WP agenda into core business
- Wider priority issues or understanding of the national landscape for widening participation in the context of the University
- Co-creating solutions and identifying potential areas for leverage, development and/or innovative practice and research
- Celebrating achievements in the areas of widening participation as it relates to a diverse and inclusive institution, and formal recognition of staff engagement across the institution.

The University continues to:

1. Increase the level of **understanding of the value of widening participation** to the University corporate mission and values.
2. Increase the appreciation of the **value added to wider University aspirations** in a fully engaged widening participation agenda.
3. Increase **coherence and ability to engage** in widening participation across the University.
4. Increase **recognition and incentives to engage** in the widening participation agenda.

8 Provision of information to prospective students

OFFA Strategic	-	Student lifecycle approach
Priorities attended to	-	Effective collaboration

8.1 Our Commitment

The University is committed to publishing a range of clear and accessible information for our existing and prospective students, and particularly to ensuring access to information regarding fee charges and financial support packages offered.

The University also affirms its commitment to provide relevant well-timed accurate information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC) to enable key bodies to populate course databases in a timely manner to inform applications.

8.2 Methods and tools

The University employs a range of tools and distributes information to prospective students via multiple channels.

The University continues to implement process improvements, and also product and service improvement, in relation to informing and communicating with students particularly at the transition-in phase of the *student lifecycle*. We are in the second year of implementing “*the applicant journey*”,

process, conceptualising this to be from initial contact with the University (for example, request for a prospectus), to enrolment. A part of this project, the University maintains:

- 1) An *Applicants Portal* for all students who are offered a place at the RAU (conditional or unconditional), with access is via the 'My RAU' tab on the website homepage.

The *Applicant Portal* is a micro-site offering applicants up-to-date information and help regarding their application and next steps for accepting their place; applying and paying for accommodation, fees and funding; and registration and induction. Information is updated regularly to ensure that the portal provides a conversion tool, not only positively impacting students but fostering a whole-of-institution approach by helping to bridge identified gaps and improving service alignment between the Marketing and Admissions teams.

- 2) A *Prospective Student and Applicant Communications Plan*, mapping information and communications to students and identifying/addressing gaps in information provision. Particularly, fees and financial support feature in communications (print and digital/email).

We are currently updating the RAU student and applicant portal to provide a more informative resource for incoming and returning students. A full week of induction activities are currently being planned for this autumn, to include both pastoral and academic support activities which will extend also into the first few weeks of the academic year.

Particularly, we will seek to establish better mechanisms for data capture, transfer and application with an emphasis on understanding and responding to emerging barriers and challenges particularly for our under-represented target groups; and developing relevant and targeted resources further downstream into the *Access* agenda.

8.2.1 Tools and channels

Online and digital

The RAU website has dedicated fees and financial support areas accessed through prominent homepage links. Our webpages provide up-to-date and detailed information, including:

- Fees, financial support and Student Finance England (SFE)
- Scholarships, waivers, bursaries and loans
- Support, information, advice and guidance
- Admissions and enrolment processes
- Entry requirements
- Student support and pastoral care
- Information and support for students with disabilities
- Career development and employability
- Access and outreach
- Courses and prospectus
- Open days, applicant days and other events

The information on the website is regularly reviewed and updated.

Printed materials

Literature specifically containing information on fees, finance and financial support, and a range of other supporting information, is available at recruitment and engagement events and on-campus open events (e.g. open days, applicant days and community events). These materials are also readily available by request on the website.

Face-to-face

The University has dedicated staff who provide offer information, advice and guidance to prospective and enrolled students. Advisers have a presence at many recruitment events and deliver talks for example in schools and community, and at on-campus and career/ university ‘fair’ events. RAU Student Ambassadors also receive specific training on university finance and draw upon their recent personal experiences of university fees and affordability, transferring knowledge and information to the students and key influencers (parents, teachers) with whom they work in schools and community.

9 Consulting with students

OFFA Strategic	-	Student lifecycle approach
Priorities attended to	-	Effective collaboration
	-	Smarter, evidence-based spend

The University places high value on the student voice and has a number of established mechanisms by which student consultations take place across the student body.

9.1 Current consultation points and mechanisms

The Student Union and its various student representatives constitute the central formal mechanism for student consultation. In particular, student welfare and support staff work with the Union to ensure ongoing knowledge exchange, consultation, feedback and action learning towards institutional improvements across teaching and learning, social welfare, support and development.

Students also sit as representatives for consultation on a range of major university committees, including the university Governing Council; the newly created Student Affairs Liaison Group; Academic Quality and Standards; and, Academic Board.

In addition to this *whole-of-Institution approach*, the university has a dedicated Student Affairs Liaison Group, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and attended by representatives of support and academic staff, students and Governing Council. The Student Union is also reinstating their Student Management Committee with student representatives from each academic programme, from each year level. This committee is chaired by the Student Union’s student Chairman/Executive Officer.

The University has consultation capacity at the pre-entry and post-graduation phases. Our cohort of student ambassadors (over 60 students), who support delivery of outreach activities, provide valuable insight and reflection for activities undertaken with target schools, colleges and community. Consultation with ambassadors occurs through informal action learning process following events, which helps to improve our activity under the Access Agreement particularly in the Access domain.

The views and input of our diverse and well-connected alumni are also valued and encouraged, with an emphasis on consultation that informs the future direction of the university and its developing offer; and, leveraging the diverse range of knowledge of the employment market into which our alumni are embedded and networked. This is a valued component of our alumni consultations, which impacts positively upon the career development and experience outcomes for our undergraduate and postgraduate students. The University has an established alumni base of over 12,000. There are formal mechanisms for consultation and engagement through, for example: monthly e-newsletters and an annual magazine for which they are encouraged to send stories and feed back into; invitations to a range of events; conversation and feedback forms via the website; a strong alumni focused social media presence, sharing good news stories and relevant RAU information; and specific telephone campaigns seeking input, feedback and contributions to the University.

9.2 Consultation performance and opportunities

9.2.1 Performance

With the exception of consultation with student ambassadors through ongoing action learning, the current model of consultation relies on interpretation of general input from students at the above 'meeting' points, and then application for widening participation outcomes, for example:

- Input from Academic Board and Academic Quality and Standards includes consultation on inclusive teaching practice; employability in the curriculum (work integrated learning through placements, etc.); and academic support and resourcing particularly for equity groups.
- The Student Affairs Liaison Group is targeted at identifying issues faced and raised by students across all areas of the university, including widening participation, to allow resolutions to be planned and actioned.

Committees operate on a quarterly basis, with student representatives at all meetings.

9.2.2 Opportunities and Priorities

The University continues its improvement process, targeting and progressing the level of student consultations for benefit of the University as a whole, and to specifically to address elements of and issues for widening participation, across the student lifecycle.

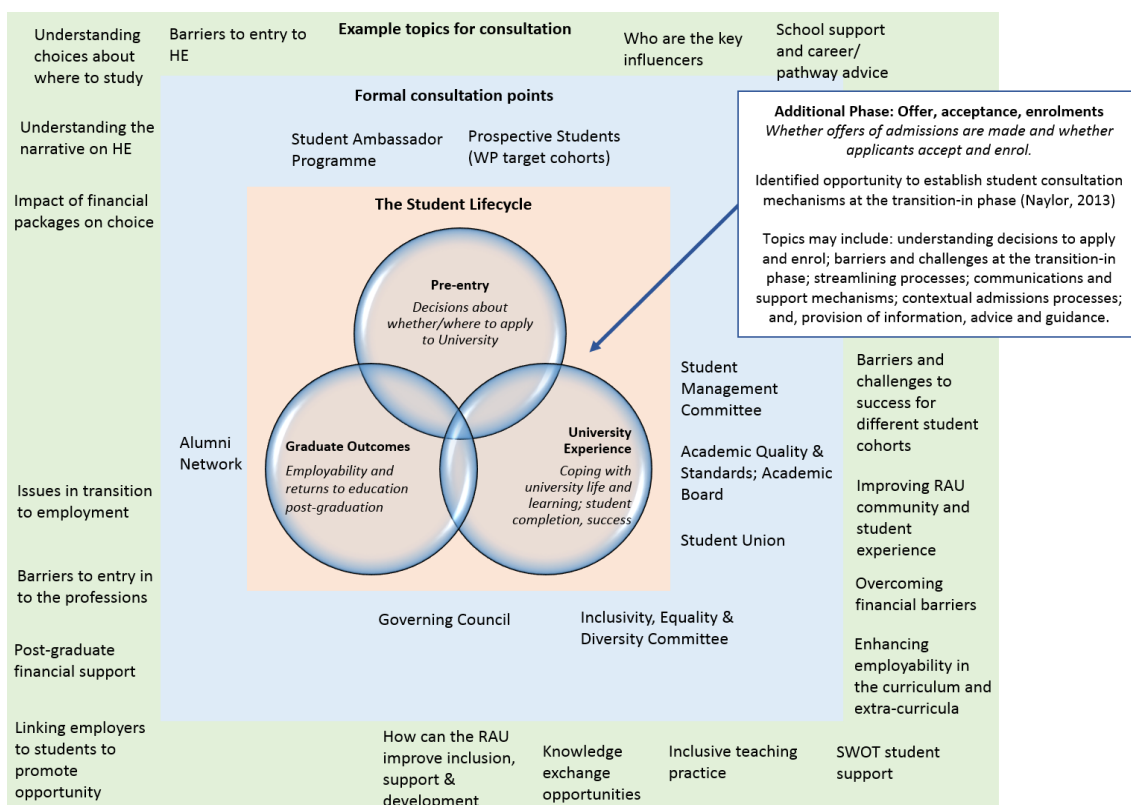
Out four overarching aim remain relevant:

1. **Broadening Consultations:** Establish the mechanism for increasing the volume of student voice, providing consultation opportunities for larger, diverse cohorts to engage.
2. **Deepening Consultations:** Provide opportunities for feedback and input along the journey as a continuum (across the student lifecycle), rather than relying upon specific formal and time-measured input points, e.g. committees and meetings.
3. **Targeting Consultations:** Ensure a meaningful and targeted range of topics or 'challenges'.
4. **Engaging Consultations:** Ensure consultation is engaging and empowering, contributing to a unique and cohesive university community, a sense of belonging and ownership. Providing consultative opportunities that engage students in a meaningful way with regards to developing their employability, professional and personal skills.

The University is pleased to note progress in these areas over the last year. This includes development of a student communications plan and online platform, which is currently being piloted. This is a co-created agenda with the Student Union.

9.3 Our strategic approach to consultation

As per our 2016-17 Access Agreement, we continue to apply a *student lifecycle* model for consultation, identifying examples of key topics which are positioned in their relative domains of *Pre-Entry (Access)*; *University Experience (Student Success)*; and, *Graduate Outcomes (Progression)*.



9.4 Student Union Comment

The Student Union are looking to broaden the reach of student voice, allowing a more holistic view of student opinion from all cohorts of the student body. We aim to do this by reaching out to groups of students who we feel aren't currently fully represented by the SU. In partnership with the University, the SU are committed to identifying wider groups of students and individuals to contribute to our increasing network of student voice resources. As well as reintegration of our Student Management Meetings, we are also looking to utilise online idea management and engagement activities in collaboration with the University's widening participation strategy. It is important to us to work closely with students to progress the widening participation agenda for the direct benefit of all students. We feel that the widening participation agenda is being more thoroughly embedded and taken seriously throughout all levels of the University, to the benefit of students, and this is something that we want to encourage to grow and evolve.

END.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: The Royal Agricultural University
 Institution UKPRN: 10005545

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (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)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16a_01	Access	HESA T1a - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase percentage of enrolments from state schools.	No	2013-14	47.6%	52%	53%	55%	57%	59%	Updated milestones according to latest data and statistical modelling undertaken for institution. New targets still represent challenging target in order to progress HESA benchmark
T16a_02	Access	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase percentage of enrolments from areas where participation in HE is low. Measure from new POLAR3 method (replaced POLAR2).	No	2014-15	2.5%	5%	6%	8%	10%	10%	Updated milestones according to latest data.
T16a_03	Access	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Increase percentage of enrolments from all low-income backgrounds, i.e. students in receipt of non-repayable support	No	2013-14	35%	40%	40%	42%	43%	n/a	Milestone discontinued on OFFA advice.
T16a_04	Access	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	Percentage with no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood (POLAR3)	No	2014-15	3.4%	4%	4.5%	5%	5.5%	6%	Updated target to better reflect WP outcomes in relation to mature learners with multiple disadvantage indicators (POLAR3 and no previous HE)
T16a_05	Access	Other statistic - Location (please give details in the next column)	Increase percentage of enrolments from local target areas, approx. 25mile radius	No	2014-15	11.6%	15%	17%	18%	20%	20%	Updated milestones according to latest and revised baseline and trend data.
T16a_06	Access	Other statistic - Care-leavers (please give details in the next column)	Increase number of enrolments from students who are leaving care / in care. Reflects OFFA target priorities, working towards new partnership with local county council and Virtual Schools Network, which may lead to collaborative target in future years.	No	2014-15	0	2	3	3	4	4	Number not percentage.
T16a_07	Student success	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Ensure low level of non-continuation/ completion is maintained, with the increasing number and widening of enrolments anticipated in our targets.	No	2014-15	5.1%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	Updated milestones and adjusted benchmark according to 2013-14 HESA Table 3a data - % not continuing
T16a_08	Access	HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	Maintain above benchmark position in % of full-time, first degree entrants in receipt of DSA	No	2014-15	11.4%	11.5%	11.5%	12%	12%	12%	New target
T16a_09	Progression	Other statistic - Progression to employment or further study (please give details in the next column)	Of those respondents employed in the UK who studied full time at the University, % in Professional/Managerial roles as defined by the SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) code (DLHE)	No	2014-15	80.2%	81%	81%	81.5%	81.5%	81.5%	New target

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Please select target type from the 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)
							2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
T16b_01	Access	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Partner in collaborative outreach activity, e.g. NNCO, NNOP, other networks specifically with University of Gloucestershire and others	Yes	2015-16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The RAU has maintained relationships, contributed to the partnerships, provided required IAG and/or activities to support School engagement

T16b_02	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Partnerships with target state schools and colleges, with Partnership Frameworks and Activity Plans in place	No	2015-16	0	18	25	30	33	33	Number of schools/ colleges with partnerships
T16b_03	Access	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Relationships with national target state schools and colleges, with min. 2 visits p/a	No	2011-12	5	20	25	30	35	35	Number of schools/ colleges with some relationship
T16b_04	Other/Multiple stages	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Relationships with other relevant organisations, e.g. employers, councils, youth services, trusts, community learning programmes/ centres, etc.	No	2015-16	n/a	4	6	8	10	15	Number of organisations with relationship
T16b_05	Access	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	Establishment and delivery of extended on-campus activities with overnight accommodation at halls of residence to increase awareness and aspiration to higher education	No	2011-12	2	60	80	100	120	150	Number of participants
T16b_06	Access	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Delivery of a range of targeted outreach activities that apply the 5A framework and are scaffolded across school Years 7 to 13, and for mature learners	No	2014-15	n/a	6000	8000	10000	12000	12000	Number of meaningful participant engagements
T16b_07	Access	Contextual data	Review and formalise contextual admissions process to ensure access and recognition of education disadvantage at the application/ offer stage	No	2015-16	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Review is complete. Process is formalised and provides equity of access for students who have disrupted or disadvantaged educational backgrounds
T16b_08	Student success	Student support services	Redevelopment of support service structures and programmes; implementation of strategy for Student Transition, Retention and Experience, embedding targeted support in the curriculum and paying particular attention to teaching and learning.	No	2013-14	91.8%	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%	HESA Table 3a data "% who continue or quality at same HEI" column
T16b_09	Other/Multiple stages	Operational targets	Review and implement data capture and monitoring system for more robust datasets and to build understanding and an evidence base for future practice.	No	2014-15	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Data capture and monitoring system is effective and efficient, and relevant for reporting and programme evaluation and design needs
T16b_10	Other/Multiple stages	Operational targets	Increase consultations and engagement with students; promotion of student voice in relation to evaluating and designing widening participation practices. Implement mechanisms for this to happen.	No	2014-15	not available	75	80	100	120	150	Number of RAU students inputting on WP and Access Agreement measures/ programmes
T16b_11	Access	Operational targets	Increase consultations and engagement with external stakeholders (pupils, teachers, schools, parents, community, etc) in relation to evaluating and designing widening participation practices. Implement mechanisms for this to happen.	No	2014-15	not available	3	4	6	8	8	Number of external stakeholder consultation forums for inputting on WP and Access Agreement measures/ programmes
T16b_12	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	Scope, identify and conduct research to inform practice and contribute to institutional and sector knowledge in the widening participation space	No	2014-15	0	2	2	3	3	3	Number of research projects /studies completed
T16b_13	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	Embed widening participation across the institution, including framework agreements; activity planning and acquittal mechanisms; and, embedded metrics	No	2014-15	0	5	6	6	6	6	Number of academic Schools and administrative Departments with activity plans and metrics
T16b_14	Other/Multiple stages	Management targets	Ensure effective coordination and management of the widening participation programme at the strategic level. Includes reporting structures to the highest level; effective deployment of funds; monitoring and achievement of targets and milestones; embedding across the institution and across the student lifecycle in a coherent way; and, ensuring human and system capacities are effective and efficient for purpose.	No	2014-15	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The institution is making "faster progress" towards targets and milestones and the widening participation programme is strategically aligned and contributing to institutional goals and drivers